Embedding Equity in Physician Recognition:
Building Inclusive Structures for Awards, Boards, & Committees

Authors: Dr. Alexis Botkin, Jaime McNicholl, Trina Larsen, Keir Johnson, and Kate McIntyre

Summary

Recognition, leadership opportunities, and visible representation play a critical role in shaping professional culture and physician engagement.

Historically, awards winners, Board, and committee participation at Doctors Manitoba (DRMB) did not reflect the diversity of the physician workforce.

This poster examines the deliberate and structured approach DRMB undertook to ensure recognition and representation more closely aligned with the diversity of its membership while upholding high standards and excellence.

Objectives

- Describe a practical, replicable approach to embedding diversity considerations into award, Board nomination, and committee selection processes.
- Examine longitudinal data demonstrating the impact of intentional diversity strategies on recognition outcomes.
- Identify transferable strategies to improve representation across personal and professional attributes in physician leadership and recognition programs.

Methods

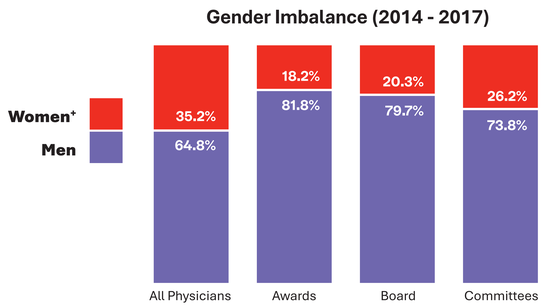
- Reviewed records of award recipients, Board, and committee members (2014–2025)
- Analyzed member-reported demographics (race, ethnicity, and Indigeneity (REI), gender, geography, specialty): *REI-diverse* excluded members identifying as "White" or "Francophone," and *Women*⁺ excluded members identifying as "Man"
- Collated equity interventions DRMB implemented
- Conducted pre/post analysis based on timing of equity interventions, using general DRMB membership as comparator
- Identified gaps to guide further action

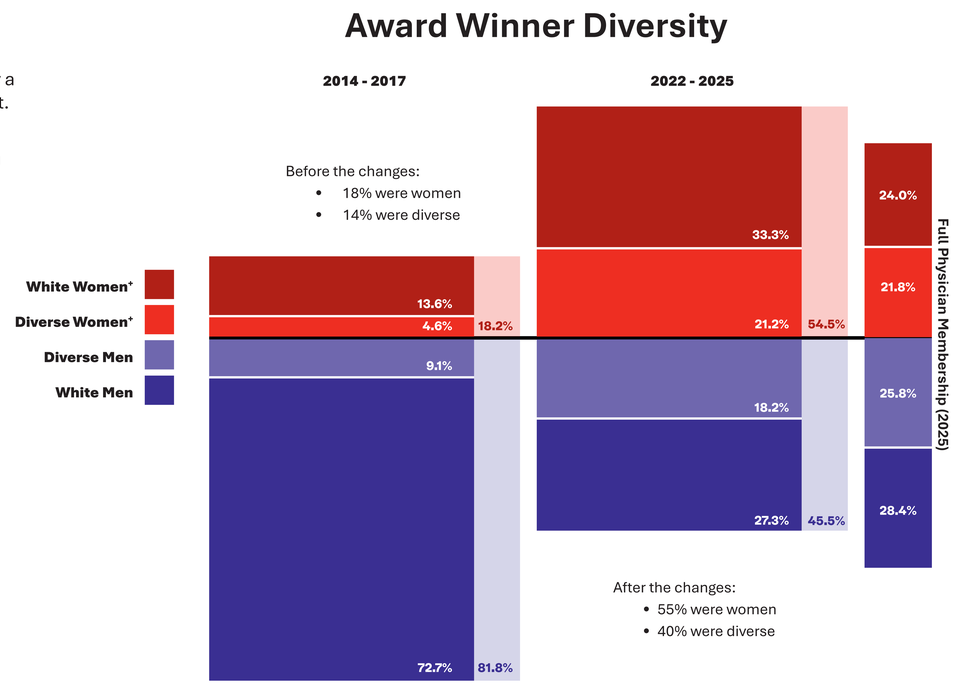
Limitations of Data Gathering

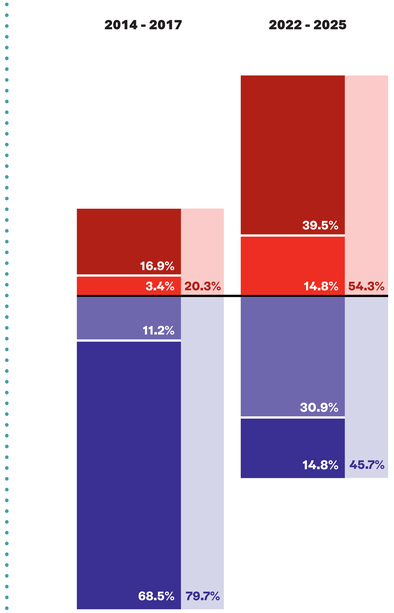
- DRMB Member demographic data is self-reported; "prefer not to say" responses were not counted as REI-diverse
- REI data collection began in 2021; earlier comparator data is unavailable

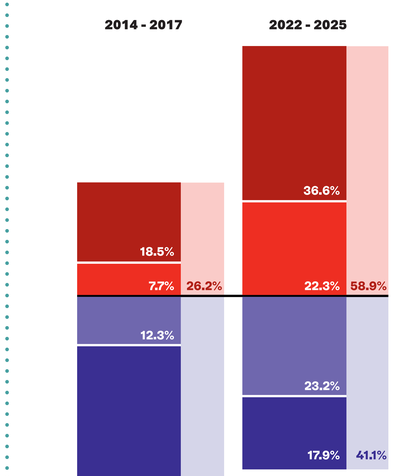
Intersectionality

- Individuals experience multiple components of their identity simultaneously. The data represents the intersections of gender and REI diversity but is unable to capture the totality of an individual's identities and lived experiences.









Action: Strategic Initiatives to Improve Recognition and Representation

Data Collection

- Collected REI membership demographic information (2021 - ongoing)
- Added inequity and mistreatment questions to the DRMB annual survey (2022-ongoing)

Governance Changes

- First female CEO hired in 110 years (2018)
- Board prioritized developing an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization (EDID) strategy in CEO goals (2021/2022); EDID Strategy developed in 2023
- Terms of Reference (ToR) for Board Committees updated to require that committees aim to be reflective of membership demographics (2021)
- Embedded EDID as a foundational component of the 2024-2028 DRMB Strategic Plan (2024)

Targeted Initiatives

- DRMB Awards Committee implemented an equity-informed process to intentionally consider diverse representation (2021).
- Staff & Board EDID education initiatives (2021-ongoing)
- Physician of the Week - Intentional recognition of diverse members (personal and professional attributes) (2023)
- Board recruitment outreach to underrepresented physician groups; added diversity statement to nomination materials (2023-ongoing)

Findings and Continuing Actions

- Governance and operational interventions significantly improved gender and REI representation among award recipients and Board and committee members.
- DRMB seeks to represent the intersectionality of members to reflect their complex, layered lived experiences. This approach strengthens the quality of governance and strategic outcomes, as diverse, intersectional perspectives foster more innovative, informed, and empathetic decisions. DRMB remains committed to continually asking:
  - Whose perspectives are missing?
  - Who faces compounded barriers to access or recognition?
  - Are we creating space for medical learners and physicians whose lived experiences bring multiple, often marginalized viewpoints?
  - How do we meaningfully engage with equity-denied groups to ensure recognition and representation?
- DRMB is engaged in championing a better health care system that celebrates and supports a physician workforce that is as diverse as the patients it serves.
- DRMB acknowledges that accountability, persistence, continuous learning, ongoing reflection, and intentional action is required to ensure a continued demonstrable commitment to equity.

Learn more.