

February 10, 2020

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

End mental health bias

Lynette Guastaferrero's work on equity-focused education and Chancellor Richard Carranza's plan for a culturally responsive curriculum are vital for preparing New York's future leaders. Yet as today's business leaders learn to harness the power of inclusion, belonging, diversity and equity practices focused largely on race and ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation, they continue to overlook the value of hiring those with lived experiences in categories still unduly burdened by stigma, discrimination and exclusion, such as individuals living with mental health concerns or with a history of incarceration.

Many nonprofits are turning the page on this trend. At the one I lead, affirmatively hiring those whose life experiences may be considered liabilities by others has significantly enhanced our organization's service delivery and subject matter expertise.

We can't have a real conversation about equity and belonging without taking full stock of those exclusionary practices still deemed acceptable.

CAL HEDIGAN
CEO, Community Access