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**July 7, 2022**

**Road Map Bulletin: Closing the Gap for Black Residents**

Happy Thursday, Mount Sinai Community –

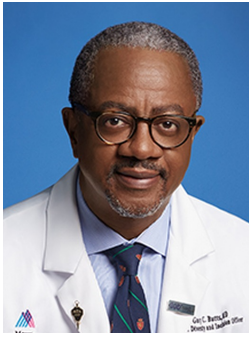
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We hope everyone enjoyed a safe Fourth of July this week. In light of the holiday, we want to take a minute to recognize that independence did not come for all Americans at the same time. Enslaved people were not free when the Declaration of Independence was signed, and to this day, Black Americans, among other marginalized groups, still receive disparate treatment compared to white Americans. To dive deeper, we encourage everyone to read Frederick Douglass' famous speech "What to a slave is the Fourth of July?," linked [here](#).

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A few weeks ago, *STAT News* published a [series of articles](#) exploring why Black residents leave medical training programs at disproportionately higher rates than white residents. The *STAT* investigation found that while **only 5 percent of all residents in 2015 were Black, they accounted for almost 20 percent of residents dismissed that year**. In specialty programs, like surgery, the disparity is even worse: 12 percent of Black residents were dismissed, compared to just 2 percent of white residents.

**Gary C. Butts**, MD, Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer for the Mount Sinai Health System and Dean for Diversity Programs, Policy, and Community Affairs at the Icahn School of Medicine, told us that this data underscores the need for action.



“This is not new news—but it validates some of what we have been seeing for years,” he said. “Failing to address the learning and training climate and structural concerns can lead to drastic negative outcomes. Many leave prestigious programs or medicine altogether—a major loss for our communities and our profession.”

The good news, he said, is that the conversation around residents from underrepresented minority (URM) groups has shifted over the last decade, from ensuring more residents with URM backgrounds are recruited into programs to ensuring they also complete them successfully.

Mount Sinai’s Dean for Graduate Medical Education, **I. Michael Leitman**, MD, FACS, told us that the Health System has made great strides when it comes to diversifying the resident ranks—**this year, 16 percent of our residents are from URM groups, up from less than 10 percent in 2012.**



While we continue efforts to further increase that number, including through Road Map [Strategy 8](#), the Health System is fostering a supportive environment for residents. Efforts include training program directors on unconscious bias and microaggressions, identifying and mentoring residents from URM groups who want to become fellows and program directors, and protecting residents of color from mistreatment, including through our policy on [racist patient](#) behavior.

“We had to ensure that the culture reflected that it’s not just about diversity—it’s about equity, inclusion, and justice too,” said Mike.



A key example of this culture shift is **Jessica Reid-Adam**, MD, Pediatric Residency Program Director and Associate Director for Diversity Initiatives in the Jack and Lucy Clark Department of Pediatrics.

Jessica told us she personally experienced isolation and loneliness as the only Black resident in her class. Now as a program director, she actively mentors students and residents from URM backgrounds and educates her residents, fellows, and colleagues about the importance of anti-racism. As she explained, anti-racist education and action are critical aspects of medical training and clinical practice because they make residents more effective doctors and better colleagues—and they send a welcoming signal to residents from URM backgrounds.

Jessica told us that, “Mentorship from Black pediatricians such as **Sharon Edwards**, MD, and others at the Center for Multicultural and Community Affairs allowed me to thrive as a resident and fellow. While I felt alone, there actually was a critical mass of Black and brown doctors, but we were all so scattered, every one of us felt isolated. When I connected with other physicians with a similar background, I found my ‘family’ in a way, and now I want to help my residents find that belonging, too.”

These efforts are helping pave the way for the next generation, like ophthalmology PGY4 resident **Giselle Lynch**, MD, who is the third Black woman ophthalmologist at New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai (NYEE). She says her mentors, Monica Dweck, MD, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology, and Medical Education—the first Black woman ophthalmologist at NYEE—and **Tamiesha Frempong**, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology, Medical Education, and Pediatrics, have not only helped her set goals and acted as role models, but served as advocates who made sure her concerns were heard and connected her with the resources she needs.



Because Mount Sinai has the largest residency program in the country, these improvements are helping create change beyond our Health System. Mike’s team is closely tracking whether residents from URM backgrounds are leaving their programs prematurely or taking longer to graduate. The goal is to ensure that our interventions to support residents from URM groups work, with the hope that they become a national model.

If you’d like to get more involved with this work and more, we welcome you to join us at an upcoming event listed below.

All the best,

Angela and Shawn

## Join Us for an Upcoming Event

**Self Care for the Caregiver** – On Wednesday, July 13, from 12:30-1:30 pm, Mari Umpierre, PhD, LCSW, Director of Behavioral Health for Employee Wellness and Shehan Chin, LMSW from the Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center will present tips and resources on self care for caregivers, register [here](#) to receive the Zoom link.

**Disability Etiquette and Awareness Webinar** – Join us on **Tuesday, July 19, from 1-2:30 pm** as we welcome the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities to discuss how we can be a more inclusive and equitable organization. Registration is required to receive the Zoom webinar link, sign up [here](#).

[Road Map for Action](#)

[Past Bulletins](#)

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