



June 1, 2023

Inside Mount Sinai's Adolescent Health Center

Happy Thursday, Mount Sinai Community –

In recognition of [National Adolescent Health Month](#), which ended earlier this week, we want to highlight Mount Sinai's efforts to care for younger patients—especially Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), low-income, and uninsured youth. In fact, Mount Sinai has long been on the leading edge of adolescent health, founding the [Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center](#) (MSAHC) in 1968, which was one of the city's **first** primary health programs to address teenagers' specific needs.

The good news is we didn't need to look far for this week's expert! *Bulletin* co-author **Angela Diaz, MD, PhD, MPH, Jean C. and James W. Crystal Professor in Adolescent Health, and Dean for Global Health, Social Justice, and Human Rights, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai** [serves as the center's Director](#) and agreed to answer a few questions about her work.

Q: Angela, tell us about the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center's history and your role with the center.

The MSAHC was established in 1968 and has since grown into a nationally and internationally recognized model for adolescent and young adult health care. Our mission is to break down racial, social, and economic barriers to health care, health, and well-being for young people by providing vital services—high quality, comprehensive, integrated, confidential, and at no cost to them—for all who come to us. We provide these services to promote equity within the frameworks of racial, social, economic, and sexual and reproductive justice.



I came to the MSAHC in 1984 for a fellowship in adolescent medicine and never left—and I am extremely grateful to have served as the Center’s Director for almost 35 years. But my history with the MSAHC actually stretches back further: I was a patient at the Center myself as an adolescent, when I struggled with depression and dropped

out of high school. The Center helped me understand what I was going through and treated me for depression, which enabled me to return to school.

In addition to the main center on East 94th Street, there are six school-based health centers that serve 23 high schools and middle schools. Our services are trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and youth-friendly. Our talented faculty and staff reflect our patients’ backgrounds.

Q: According to [Youth.gov](https://www.youth.gov), the experience of adolescence can vary greatly depending on family and community, race/ethnicity, and poverty.

Adolescents who face multiple adversities over time can experience negative effects on their learning, behavior, social interactions, and health that last into adulthood. How do the interventions and programs you provide help improve health equity and outcomes?

While we provide care to any and all young people who walk through our doors, we cater to BIPOC, low-income, and uninsured youth:

- 98 percent are low-income,
- 94 percent are youth of color,
- 70 percent are uninsured, and
- 15 percent are immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers.

Young people seek services at the Center because they feel welcomed, respected, connected, safe, and not judged. We meet young people where they are and treat them with compassion and dignity, so they feel comfortable sharing not only their concerns but their hopes and dreams. We help youth heal so they can focus on their educational and career goals and fulfilling the promise of adolescence and young adulthood.

Although many of our youth have high rates of trauma and disenfranchisement and come from neighborhoods with histories of disinvestment: 90 percent of our patients graduate from high school on time (significantly higher than NYC’s overall high school graduation rate of 80 percent), and more than half of our patients attend college. Our patients also have lower pregnancy rates than expected, high rates of vaccination, and improved mental health outcomes.



"Youth are the thermometer of our society: when they are doing well, society is healthier and more stable."

- Angela

Q: What do you want readers to take away from this Bulletin?

At the MSAHC, we celebrate and value all our youth and embody Mount Sinai's goal of becoming an anti-racist health system. Youth as a population need to be supported and appreciated. They are very creative and hardworking and contribute immensely to our society. Black and Brown youth often feel that they are invisible or only seen in a very negative light and that they have limited opportunities. It is important to help all youth feel that they are seen for who they are and are given the opportunities they need in an equitable way.

To suggest a topic, highlight a coworker, or provide feedback on the Bulletins, send us an email at RoadMap@mountsinai.org.

All the best,

Shawn and Angela

Join Us for an Upcoming Event

A Guide to Nutrition and Your Well-being Panel

Monday, June 5, noon – 1 pm

Join the Heritage of Latinx Alliance (HOLA) Employee Resource Group for a health and wellness panel. Panelists will engage in an informative conversation on the significance of nutrition and the effects it has on one's overall well-being. Register [here](#).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Best Practices Webinar Series — Join us

on **Thursday, June 7, noon – 1 pm** for session three of a four-part series that helps hospitals and health systems implement best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion using a quality improvement framework. This session will measure the impact of DEI work. All employees, faculty, trainees, and students are welcome to join. Register [here](#).

Juneteenth Paint Reflection Night

Tuesday, June 13, 6 – 8 pm

In celebration of Juneteenth, the Black Leaders Advocating for Change and Community (BLACC) Employee Resource Group invites you to join us for Paint Reflections Night! Enjoy an evening of art and reflection with your colleagues as you recreate an image using the supplies of your choice and reflect upon the meaning of the month. The entire Mount Sinai community is welcome. Register [here](#) to join this virtual event.

Juneteenth Jeopardy

Wednesday, June 14, noon – 1pm

Test your Juneteenth knowledge and join the Black Leaders Advocating for Change and Community (BLACC) Employee Resource Group (ERG) for a Juneteenth Jeopardy. Join as a team, an individual, or a spectator! No matter how you join, we want to see you there! Register [here](#) to attend virtually!

***Let's Connect* – “How do Mount Sinai Health Care Workers Recognize and Honor Juneteenth Inside and Outside of the Workplace?”**

Thursday, June 15, noon – 1 pm

As part of the ongoing ***Let's Connect*** series, we invite you to join us in recognition of Juneteenth for the “How do Mount Sinai Frontline Workers Recognize and Honor Juneteenth In and Out of the Workplace?” panel. The entire Mount Sinai community is welcome. Register [here](#) to join and connect.

[Road Map for Action](#)

[Past Bulletins](#)