

# Empowering the next generation of healthcare leaders

As part of the Beacon of Hope initiative, the Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research (NIBR) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, US, offers 10-week paid summer fellowships for students at Historically Black Medical Schools to gain experience in drug discovery, data analytics and clinical research practices - with the goal of training up to 250 scientific leaders over 10 years.

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Sadiq Walker-Baker, a student at the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia, was one of 17 Beacon of Hope Summer Fellows in 2022. The program enables students to gain experience that enhances their preparation for careers in biomedical research.

I have always loved to participate in team sports and study science – specifically about the human body – and I have an interest in caring for others. I knew that being a physician would incorporate these qualities of teamwork, science, and service.

**Sadiq Walker-Baker**

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Each student is paired with a Novartis scientist mentor to gain first-hand experience conducting biomedical research, clinical science, or technology projects. Sadiq Walker-Baker's research interests include retinal disease biology and predictive algorithms for drug candidate selection.

As a future Black physician, it is important that I take on the role of closing the health disparity gap through advocacy, education and mentorship. I want to focus on mentoring young minorities interested in medicine to build strong relationships and guide them to reach their goals.

**Sadiq Walker-Baker**

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KeAndreyia Morrison, a rising third-year Ph.D. student at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, was another 2022 Summer Fellow. Beacon of Hope aims to co-create effective, measurable solutions for health equity in the US.

Science is an integral part of my life. My journey into the biomedical sciences started when I applied to a toxicology program [as an undergraduate]. This experience opened my eyes to the value of research and solidified my goal to become a scientist in the field of pharmacology.

**KeAndreyia Morrison**

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Since NIBR's research covers many disease and technology areas, we can match each student's interests with mentors who have relevant expertise in one of our labs. KeAndreya Morrison's research interests include proteins that can be used to detect certain types of cancer cells.

Seeing the low number [of Black people working in STEM fields] could make others feel as though there is no room for them. But there is room for me and plenty of other young and innovative Black minds in STEM, and I hope that I could help inspire a few to join me.

**KeAndreya Morrison**

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