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Beacon of hope: Measurable solutions for health equity
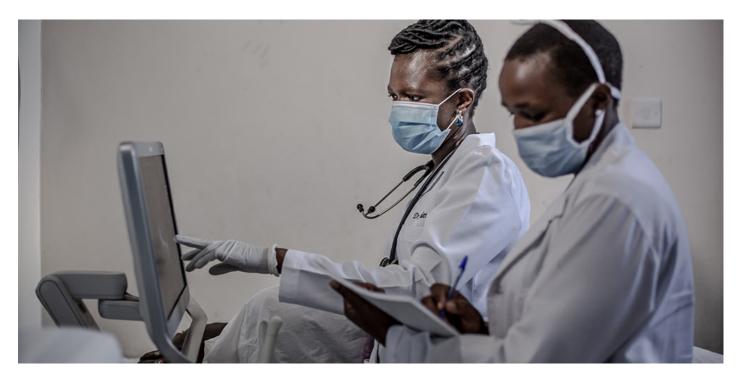
Enabling the next generation of leaders

The Beacon of Hope collaboration has made significant progress in empowering the next generation of African American, Black and Hispanic students to become healthcare leaders.

- **Thurgood Marshall College Fund-Novartis US Foundation HBCU Scholarship Program** – Over a period of 10 years, TMCF and the Novartis US Foundation will award 360 three-year scholarships of USD 10 000 (per year) to students at participating HBCUs. The first cohort of students is entering the second year of their three-year scholarships awarded by TMCF and the Novartis US Foundation in 2022. TMCF and Novartis US Foundation expect to award additional three-year scholarships again in 2025 and 2028.
- **Thurgood Marshall College Fund-Novartis HBCU Mentorship Program** – Each scholarship recipient will be paired with a Novartis mentor to help them navigate their academic career and prepare for their professional future. This mentorship program will also be open to select students who were not awarded scholarships. To date, the mentorship program has engaged approximately 200 mentees and 200 mentors, comprised of both scholarship recipients as well as those not receiving funding. The goal is to mentor up to 1,200 students over 10 years.
- **Thurgood Marshall College Fund-Novartis US Foundation HBCU Faculty Grants** – TMCF and Novartis will award USD 25 000 grants per year/over ten years to HBCU faculty for research substantiating key drivers of health disparities and informing areas for change. To date, the TMCF-Novartis program has awarded eighteen grants since the launch of Beacon of Hope.
- **Beacon of Hope Summer Fellowship at Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research** – NIBR is offering a recurring 10-week paid summer fellowship program for Historically Black Medical School students, to learn drug discovery, data analytics and clinical research practices. Recent HBCU graduates

will also be invited to participate in a two-year post-baccalaureate program to prepare them for competitive MD/PhD or PhD programs. Each student will be paired with a Novartis scientist mentor to gain first-hand experience running innovative research, science, and technology projects. These programs are expected to continue annually for 10 years, with the goal of training up to 250 scientific leaders.

- **Coursera virtual training courses** – Novartis and Coursera have entered into an industry partnership agreement to deliver healthcare content to more than 125 million learners and 7 000 enterprises, colleges, and governments around the world. The initial goal of the partnership is to help increase diversity, equity and inclusion in clinical trials. This month, Novartis is launching "Introduction to Good Clinical Practice," the first installment of a three-course series on Coursera. The remainder of the series, including courses in "The Fundamentals of Good Clinical Practice" and "Diversity Action Plans and Public Health Outreach," are expected to launch within the next 12 months.

Supporting the establishment of digitally enabled clinical trial Centers of Excellence

Centers of Excellence were established with the goal of developing self-sustaining clinical trial centers, increasing trust and diversity among principal investigators and trial managers, and improving the quality and inclusivity of clinical trials, while contributing to improved health outcomes for communities of color.

- The Novartis US Foundation has invested approximately 31.4 million USD to establish four clinical trial Centers of Excellence to increase diversity among clinical trial investigators and participants at Morehouse School of Medicine, Howard University College of Medicine, Meharry Medical College and Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science.
- Howard, Meharry and Charles Drew and Morehouse School of Medicine have formed a consortium under Beacon of Hope. Together they will collectively strengthen clinical trial capabilities and improve the quality and inclusivity of clinical trials to contribute to improved health outcomes for communities of color and help rebuild their trust in the healthcare system.

Supporting research on race-based clinical algorithms and

environmental impacts on health

In addition to promoting diversity in clinical trials, Beacon of Hope has created two additional Centers of Excellence at Morehouse School of Medicine.

- The Center of Excellence on the Validation of Digital Health Technologies and Clinical Algorithms will examine clinical algorithms that include race as a diagnostic factor that negatively impact patients of color, and how those algorithms can be recalibrated to remove race to improve decisions and outcomes.
- The Center of Excellence on Climate and Health will advance research focused on the impact of the environment and climate change on human health to help reduce the burden on already marginalized communities. It will seek to find actionable solutions to environmental and climate issues that disproportionately affect health among communities of color.

Our Collaborators

Novartis and the Novartis US Foundation have welcomed like-minded companies and organizations into the long-term collaborative effort to further health equity and create generational impact. We are proud to collaborate with the following organizations to co-create effective, measurable solutions for health equity:

- Historically Black Medical Schools: Morehouse School of Medicine, Howard University School of Medicine, Meharry Medical College and Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science
- 26 additional Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- Thurgood Marshall College Fund
- The National Medical Association
- Coursera
- The Global Black Economic Forum

- Sanofi, Merck, Amgen, Alnylam
- Advarra, Virb, BeeKeeperAI

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