

Inaugural class of 12 physician fellows to advance health equity

JUL 12, 2021

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News Editor

What's the news: A dozen physicians have been named as the inaugural fellows for the Medical Justice in Advocacy Fellowship. This is a new collaborative initiative empowering physician-led advocacy to advance health equity and removing barriers to achieve optimal health for all.

The 12 doctors were selected from more than 300 applicants from across the nation. These physicians encompass multiple specialties, and each of them is committed to addressing the root causes of health inequities and improving the health and well-being of their patients and the communities they serve.

The fellowship program is a first-of-its-kind education initiative from the AMA and the Satcher Health Leadership Institute at the Morehouse School of Medicine that will prepare the next generation of physician advocacy leaders to generate and exchange solutions and drive meaningful policy and structural changes.

The 2021–2022 Medical Justice in Advocacy fellows are:

- Eileen Barrett, MD, MPH.
- Amber Clark, MD.
- Charles Calvin Coleman, MD.
- Lorenzo Antonio Gonzalez, MD.
- Omar Guzman, MD.
- Kamaal A. Jones, MD.
- Kameryn J. Lee, MD, MSPH.
- Melissa Palma, MD, MPH.
- Avani K. Patel, MD, MHA.
- Shilpen Patel, MD.
- Maya Ragavan, MD, MPH.

Ramona Rhodes, MD, MPH.

Why it's important: COVID-19 has exacerbated and laid bare the inequities that pervade American medicine, as shown in a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics detailing the pandemic's unequal impact on U.S. life expectancy.

"The AMA is committed to educating and empowering a new generation of physician leaders that can effectively advocate for advancing equity and justice within their own communities, bringing us closer to our goal of improving the health of our nation," said AMA Chief Health Equity Officer Aletha Maybank, MD, MPH.

Daniel E. Dawes, professor of health policy and executive director of the Satcher Health Leadership Institute, said the inaugural physician fellows will be equipped "with the tools, skills and knowledge to engage in institutional and political health advocacy—offering solutions for a more healthy, equitable and inclusive society." Dawes is the author of *The Political Determinants of Health*, a book published in 2020.

Under the mentorship of renowned multidisciplinary health equity experts, the fellows will work together to generate solutions for implementing healthy equity projects focused on ensuring better health outcomes and closing health gaps for patients and their communities.

Learn more: The inaugural Medical Justice in Advocacy Fellowship will take place September 2021–November 2022, meeting monthly. The fellowship program aligns with the AMA's strategic plan to embed racial justice and advance health equity released this spring.