



# Equity and Access to Radiation Therapy

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**NASEM Workshop on COVID & Cancer**

*Improving Cancer Care Delivery and Advancing Health Equity*

*Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic*

July 27, 2021



# Disclosures

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- Consultant
  - Merck
  - Bristol-Myers Squibb
  - Grail Bio, Inc
  - AstraZeneca
  - NIH: Inclusive Participation COVID-19
- Honorarium
  - Pfizer/AONN
  - BioAscend
  - Oncopeptides

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MEHARRY  
VANDERBILT  
ALLIANCE

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S I N C E 1 9 9 9

# Greatest Predictor of Health

- Socioeconomic status

- Income

- Occupation

- Education

Children living in poverty are 7X more likely to have poor health

**UNNATURAL CAUSES**  
...is inequality making us sick?

A seven-part documentary series exploring racial & socioeconomic inequalities in health.

Do we ALL have an EQUAL chance for HEALTH?

Replay »

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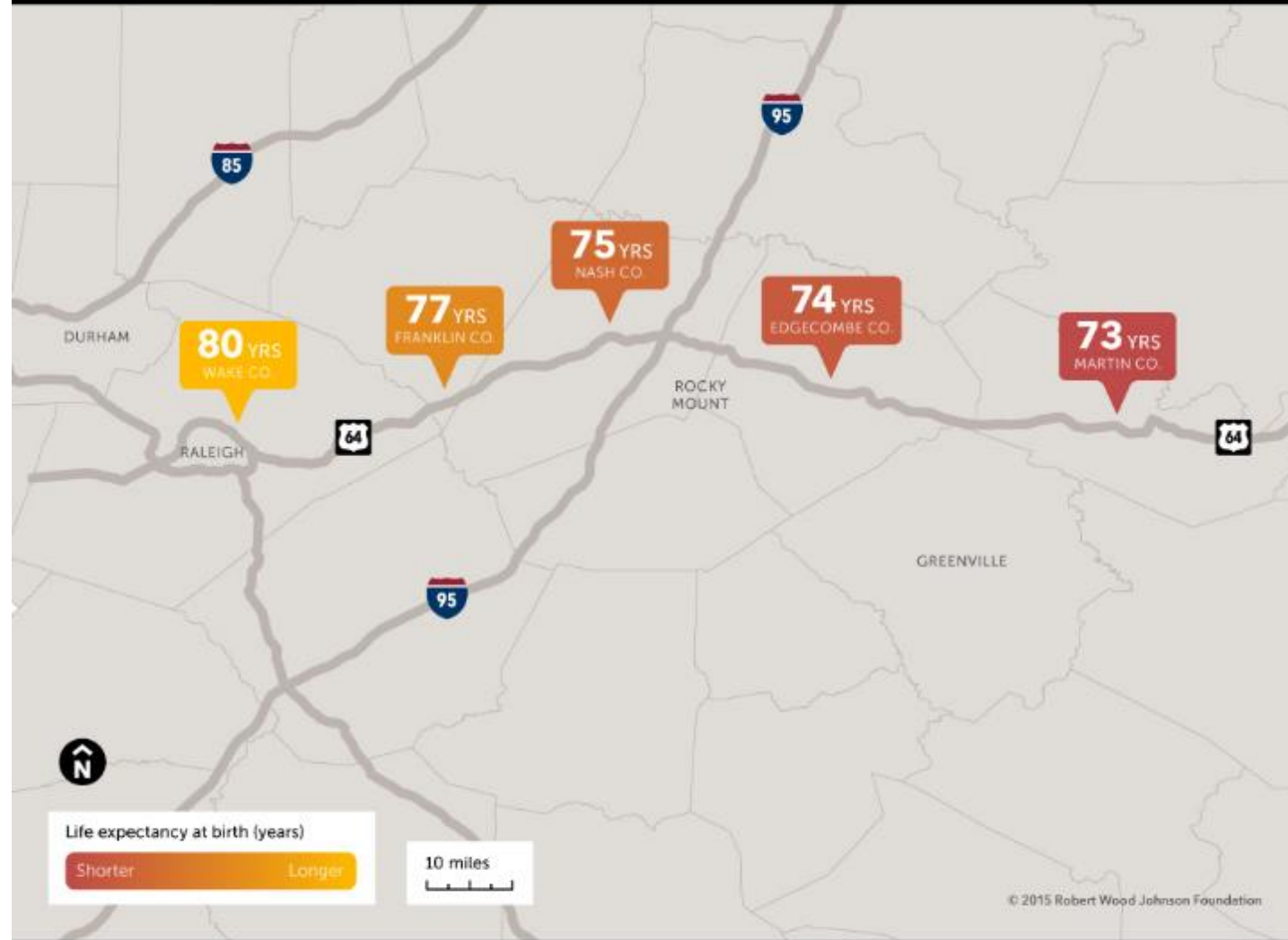
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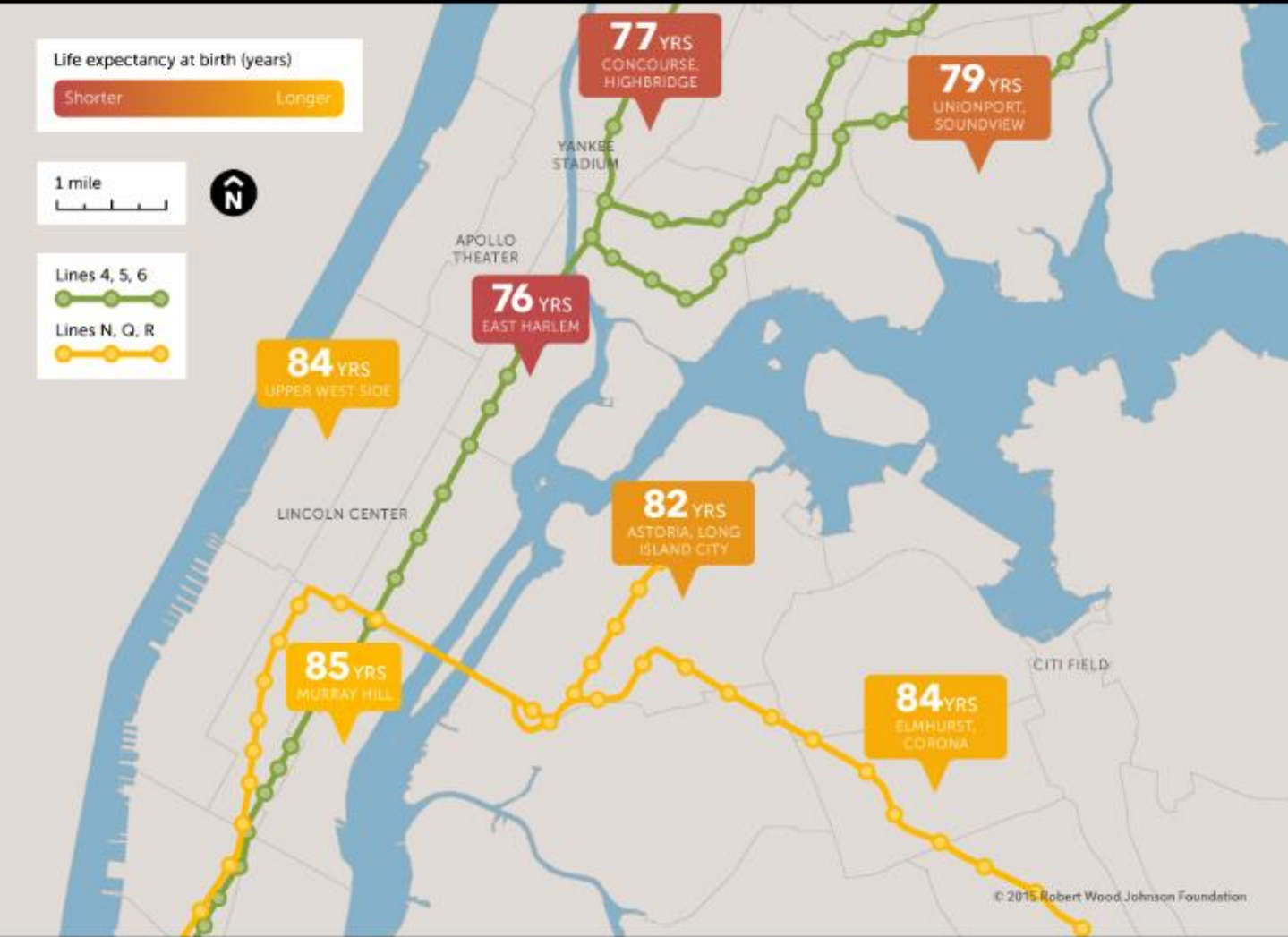
## 1 Highway, 5 Counties, 7 Years of Life

Follow the discussion

#CloseHealthGaps



# Short Distances to Large Gaps in Health



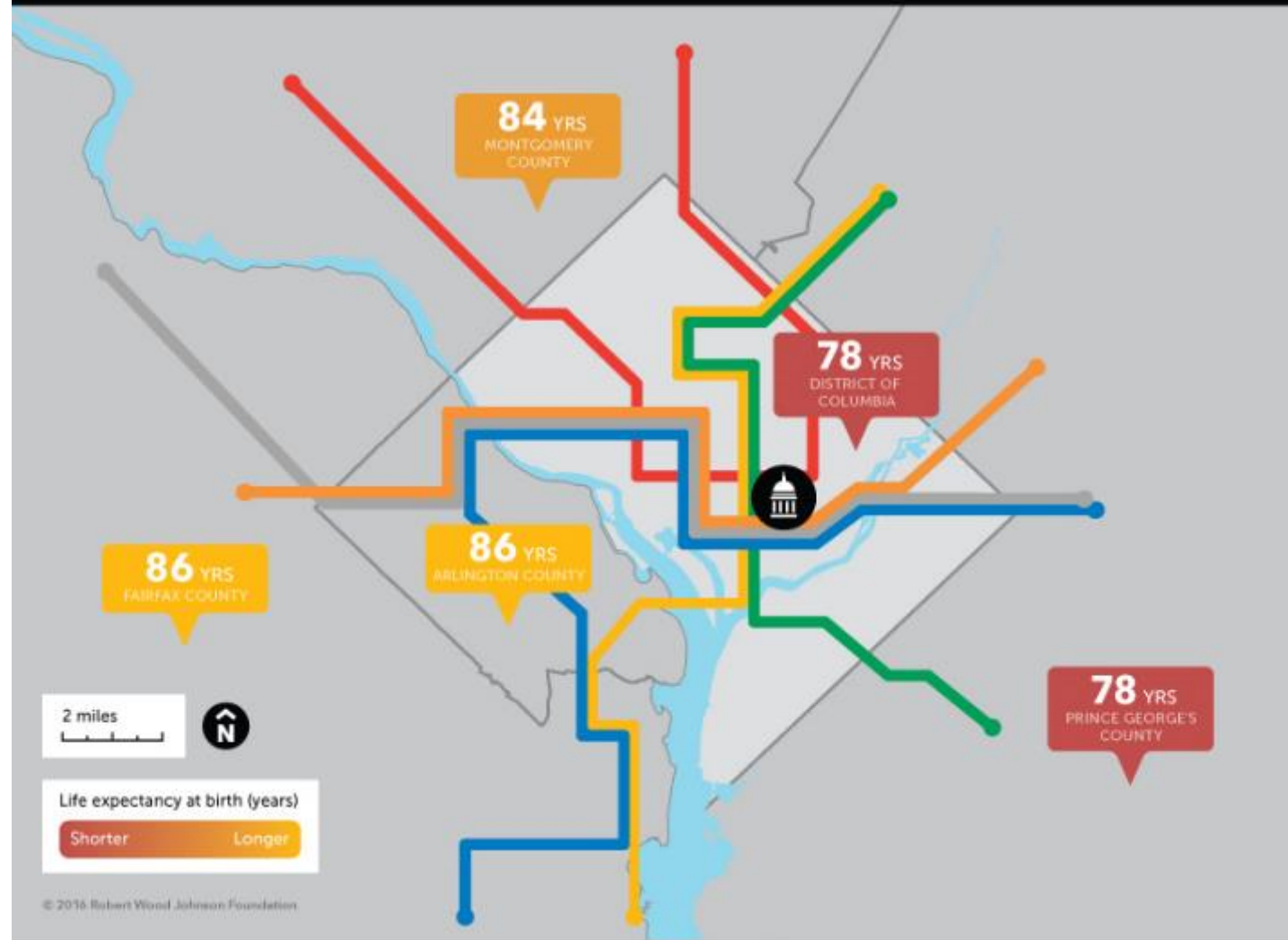


WASHINGTON, D.C.

Follow the discussion

#CloseHealthGaps

## Short Distances to Large Gaps in Health





## COVID-19 is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation.

[Public health information \(CDC\)](#) | [Research information \(NIH\)](#) | [SARS-CoV-2 data \(NCBI\)](#) | [Prevention and treatment information \(HHS\)](#)

Journal List > Elsevier Public Health Emergency Collection > PMC7462894

### Elsevier Public Health Emergency Collection

Public Health Emergency COVID-19 Initiative

*Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys.* 2020 Oct 1; 108(2): 475–478.

PMCID: PMC7462894

Published online 2020 Sep 2. doi: [10.1016/j.ijrobp.2020.06.042](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijrobp.2020.06.042)

PMID: [32890537](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32890537/)

## Lessons From COVID-19: Addressing Health Equity in Cancer Care

[Malika L. Siker](#), MD,\*\* [Curtiland Deville, Jr.](#), MD,<sup>†</sup> [Gita Suneja](#), MD, MS,<sup>‡</sup> and [Karen Winkfield](#), MD, PhD<sup>§</sup>

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The COVID-19 pandemic that continues to ravage communities all over the United States is serving to highlight some of the long-standing inequities that have plagued our nation. At the time this article was written, members of the Black community accounted for 52% of COVID-19 deaths in Milwaukee County.<sup>1</sup> This is a striking disparity in a county where only 27% of the population identifies as Black.<sup>2</sup> Similar disparities are noted throughout the United States as other minority and vulnerable populations fall victim to complications from the virus.<sup>3, 4</sup>

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[An Unfortunate Legacy: COVID-19 Reveals Inequities.](#)

[This Time Must Be Different: Disparities in the COVID-19 Pandemic.](#)

[COVID-19 pandemic highlights racial health disparities.](#) [Lancet D

[Suggestions for Radiation Oncologists during the COVID-19 Pandemic.](#)

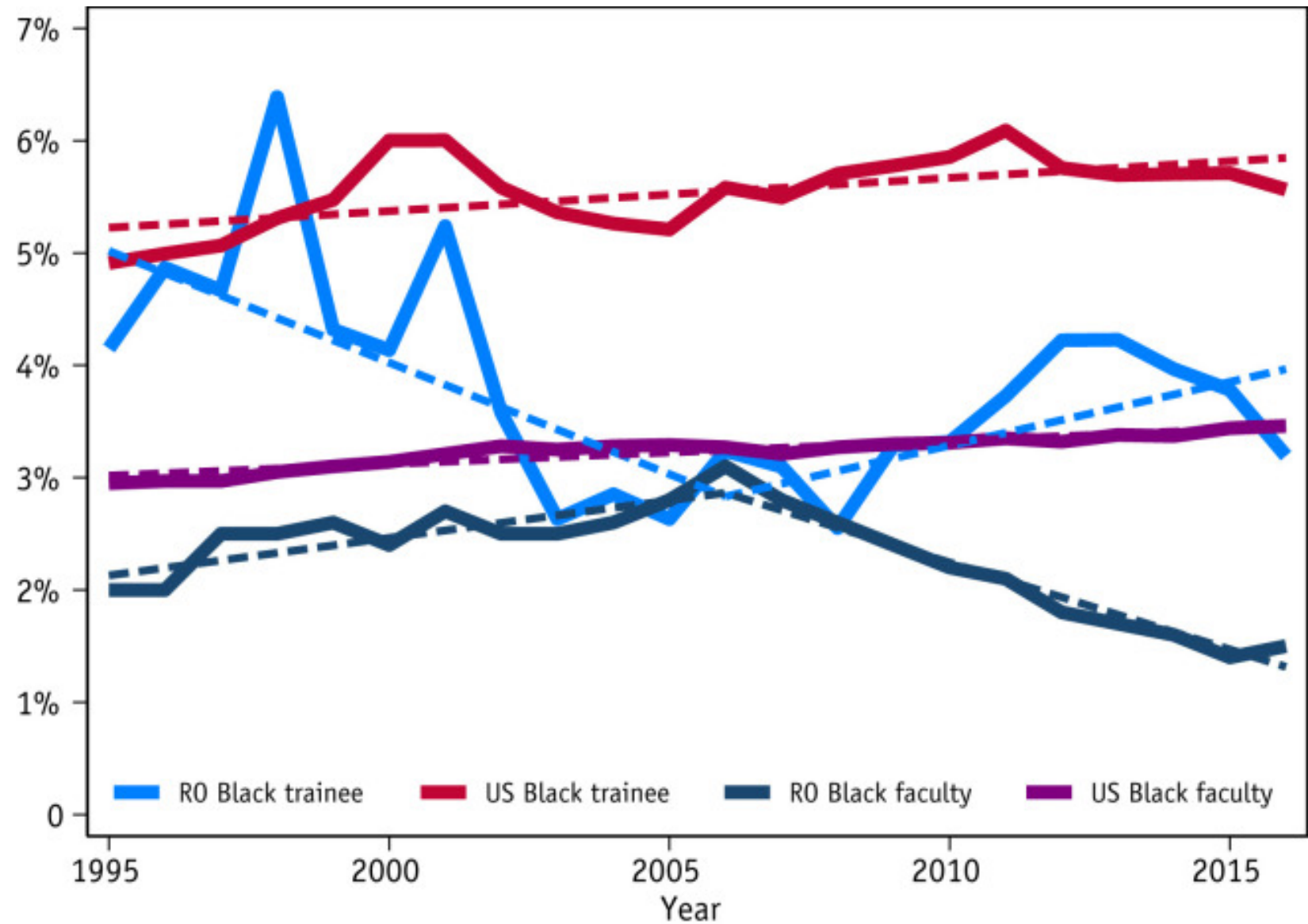
# How can radiation oncologists be engaged in bringing more equitable cancer care to the communities we serve?

- More Research and Advocacy for Health Equity
  - Clinical Trials
  - Policy implications for department, institution, etc
- Direct Collaboration With Communities and Community-Engaged Researchers
- Develop a Diverse Workforce Committed to Inclusive Excellence



# Representation of Black physicians in United States

Deville, et al. Int J  
Radiat Oncol Biol  
Phys. 2020 Nov 15;  
108(4): 856–863.



# It's Good for Business!!

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“Companies ranking high in gender diversity outperform their competition by 15%. Those who practice ethnic diversity do better than their competitors by 35%”

~Sheree Atchenson, Forbes 2018

“Workplace diversity is an important predictor of a company's sales revenue and profitability. Companies with the highest amount of racial diversity average 15X more sales revenue than those with lower levels of racial diversity.”

~American Sociological Review, 2009



# Advances in Radiation Oncology

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In Press, Corrected Proof



Brief Opinion

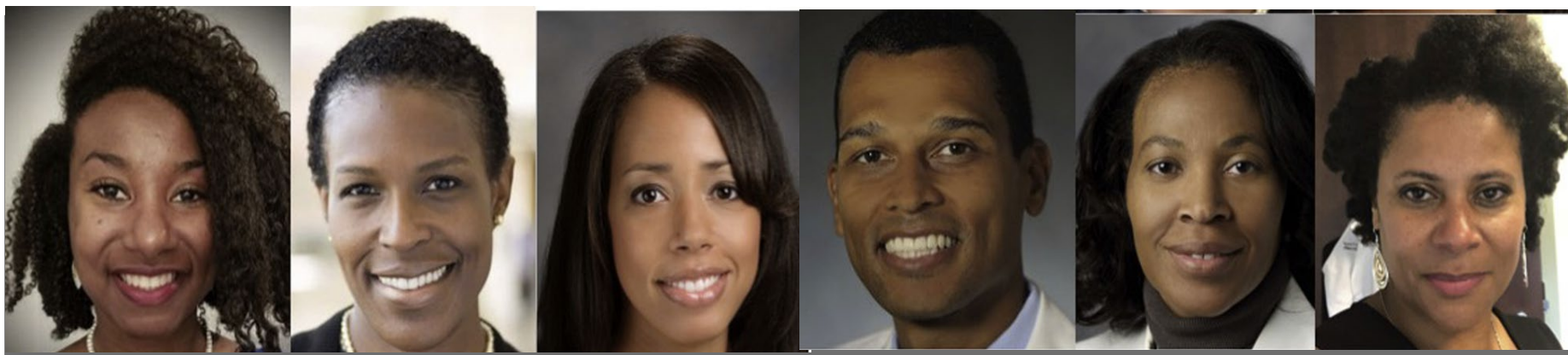
## Why Racial Justice Matters in Radiation Oncology

Christina Hunter Chapman MD, MS <sup>a, b</sup>, Darlene Gabeau MD, PhD <sup>c</sup>, Chelsea C. Pinnix MD, PhD <sup>d</sup>, Curtiland Deville Jr. MD <sup>e</sup>, Iris C. Gibbs MD <sup>f</sup>, Karen M. Winkfield MD, PhD <sup>g</sup>

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adro.2020.06.013>

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# ATIP: *A*cknowledgement, *T*ransparency, *I*ntentionality, re*P*resentation

## Intentionality

- Establish diversity, inclusion, and equity as a major area of focus within the ASTRO strategic plan
- Cultivate a Black leadership pipeline from the undergraduate through faculty levels
- Require demonstrated commitment to equity and inclusion as a prerequisite for ASTRO leadership positions
- Dedicate resources toward understanding and eliminating health disparities in radiation oncology
- Position diversity, inclusion, and equity activities in high visibility time slots and locations at ASTRO meetings

## rePresentation

- Commit to inclusive representation with critical mass, not tokenism

Elected leaders must demonstrate commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Candidate statements for all leadership positions and elections must include specific plans for improving diversity and addressing health inequities

ASTRO's advocacy lobby must address health disparities in addition to issues of reimbursement

Create a position on the board representing healthy equity from a racial/ethnic group UIM

# The LEADS Approach to Reducing Anti-Black Racism (in Radiation Oncology)

| Individuals |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Learn       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate yourself about implicit and structural and systemic racism and the effect on Black patients and colleagues</li> <li>• Read reputable literature and ask questions that will enhance understanding</li> </ul>                                                                                                                |
| Engage      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask Black patients and colleagues how they are coping</li> <li>• Engage your family members in conversations and action steps about racism and privilege</li> <li>• Speak to Black medical student groups about radiation oncology and offer to be a resource</li> <li>• Facilitate research and mentoring opportunities</li> </ul> |
| Advocate    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lobby for equitable health care reform</li> <li>• Vote in ways that eliminate racism and dismantle the rules, laws, norms, and structures that promote it</li> <li>• Create diverse publication teams</li> <li>• Look for Black representation on speaker panels</li> </ul>                                                         |
| Defend      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand up against anti-Black microaggressions<sup>20</sup> that perpetuate racial inequity</li> <li>• Stand up when patients make subtle or overt anti-Black comments</li> <li>• Set the tone that racism is not tolerated at any level.</li> </ul> <p>Do not leave it to your Black colleagues to point out racism</p>              |
| Support     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in success of Black colleagues</li> <li>Quote their research. Nominate them for positions of leadership</li> <li>Volunteer for their committees and help them produce great results</li> <li>• Donate to organizations that support equity and Black advancement (eg, United Negro College Fund)</li> </ul>                  |



# Thank you!!

## Questions?



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