



# A Brief History of Racism in Medicine: Where We Were, Where We Are, and Where We Hope To Go

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Holding Space



Where we come  
from

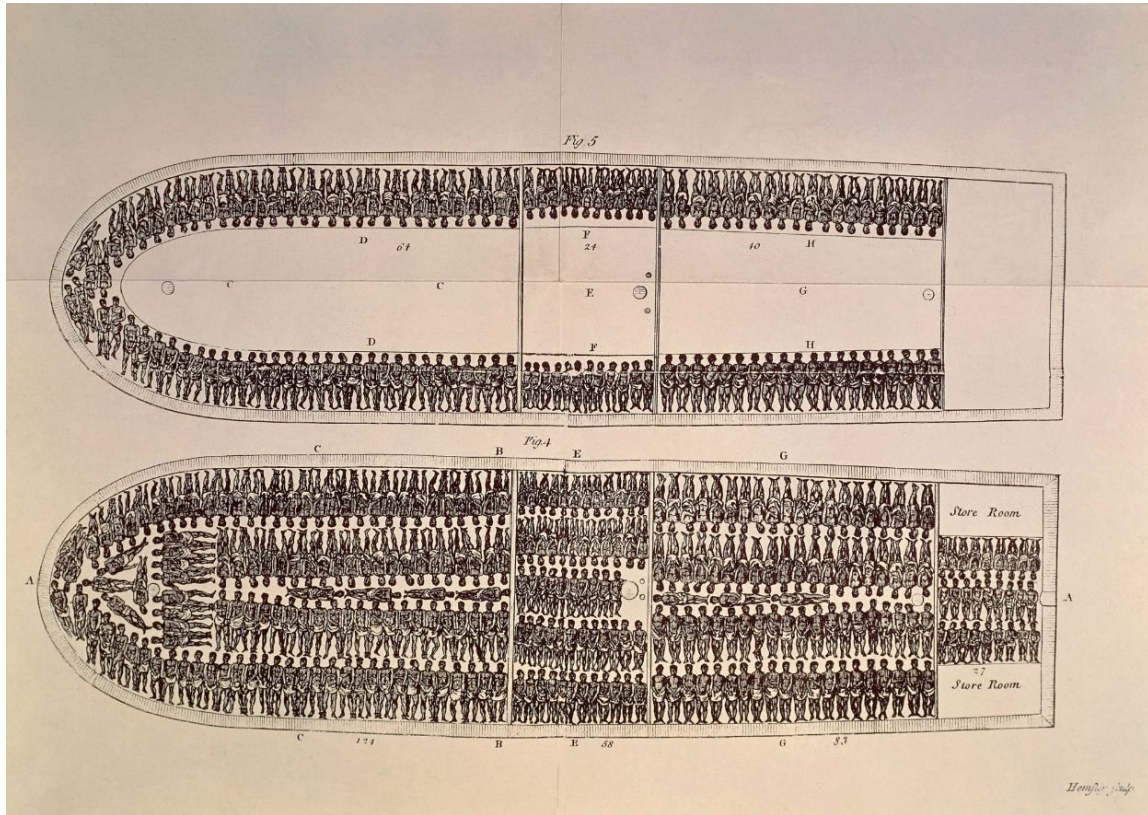


Birth of a people



# Enslavement

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# The White Lion





12.5 million  
enslaved Africans

1.8 million died during  
the Middle Passage

# North America and Slavery

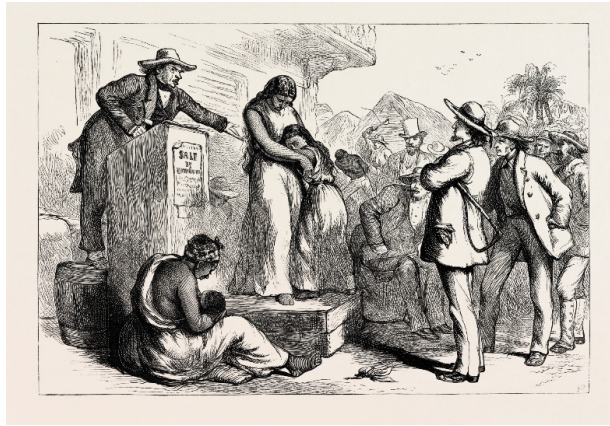
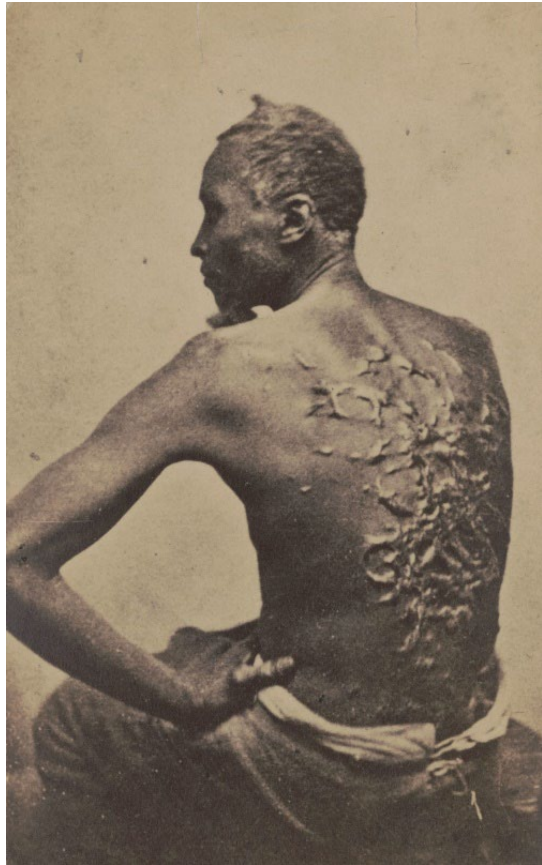
Approximately 5% of the total captured Africans made it to North America – the future United States of America – during the slave trade.

Most of the Black people who lived as slaves in the United States were born into slavery.





Made black by people who decided they were White and Black meant slave.



10 LIKELY and VALUABLE  
**SLAVES**  
AT AUCTION.

On THURSDAY the 24th inst.  
WE WILL SELL  
*In front of our Office, without any kind of limit or reserve for cash.*  
AT 11 O'CLOCK.

10 AS LIKELY NEGROES  
As any ever offered in this market; among them is a man who is a superior Cook and House Servant, and a girl about 17 years old, a first rate House Servant, and an excellent seamstress.

BROOKE & HUBBARD,  
Auctioneers.

Wednesday, July 23, 1823.

The power of dehumanizing

It is impossible to quantify the full impact of the violence of slavery on Black people

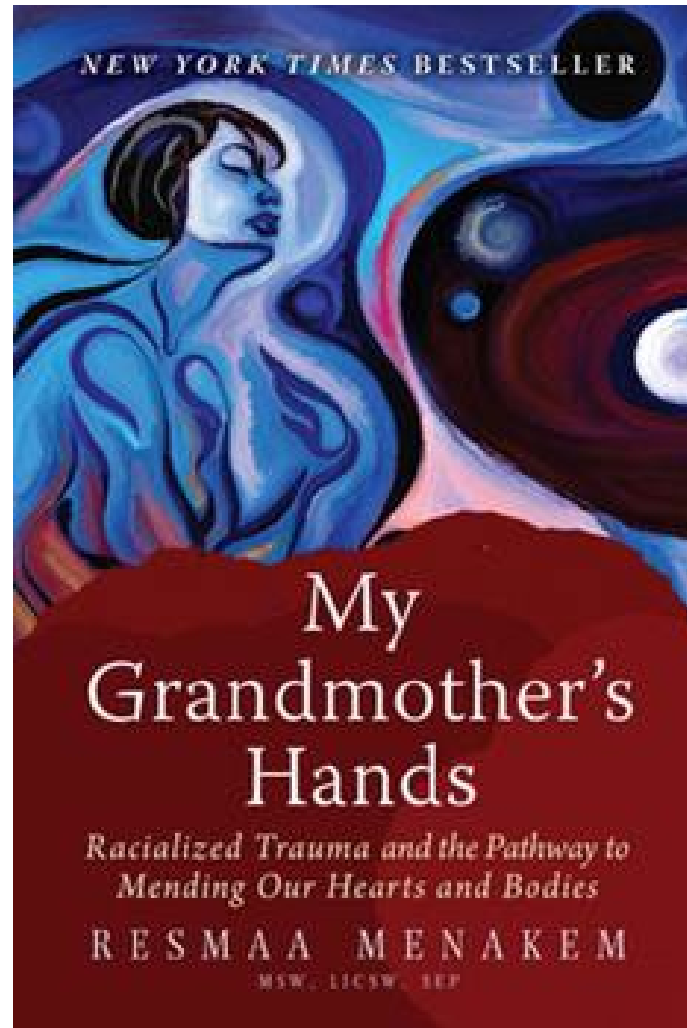
Shorter life expectancy due to violence, unsafe living conditions, etc

Estimated more than half of Black babies born to slaves died

Lack of medical support

# Living under White Body Supremacy

**Black Body Trauma**



**White Body Trauma**

# Facts

FACT: Childhood trauma affects DNA

[Dr. Stacy Drury on childhood trauma impact on DNA | Violence Prevention Institute \(tulane.edu\)](#)

FACT: Violence causes biological effects on the body, specifically impacting the brain, neuroendocrine system, and the immune response resulting in increase depression, anxiety, PTS, suicide, cardiovascular disease, and premature mortality

[The Effects Of Violence On Health - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)



Today

- Black people are the children of those who were and are continuously exposed to racial violence and racial trauma.
- White people are the children of those who were the oppressors and bystanders during the racial violence and racial traumas of the last 400 years.

This is where our work lives.





# Relationship to Medicine



# Trust:

Firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something



# Freedman's bureau medical division

- Hospitals for newly emancipated free persons were
- Severely under resourced
  - Not enough beds, sheets, linens, medicine, quarantine opportunities
- Poor conditions
  - Small pox outbreaks
  - Increase mortality
- Lack of enough Physicians
  - 100 doctors deployed to cover the thousands of freed persons



# Biological justification for slavery

Instead of addressing the lack of resources to help improve the conditions and outcomes of these Black people, a new theory emerged claiming high mortality rates were due to a **biological difference** between Blacks and Whites and the belief that **freedom was a terminal condition**.

- Investing in improving hospital conditions for Blacks was seen as “wasteful and foolish”
- Government officials used this theory of extinction to defund the Freedman’s hospitals.
- President Andrew Johnson was vehemently opposed and vetoed the bill to support the bureau twice.



Blacks were told they have  
to care for themselves.

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# Segregation within hospitals

- Blacks denied admission to white hospitals
- Blacks allowed in white hospitals were placed in the basement
- White nurses were not allowed to care for Black patients
  - Especially white women nurses were not allowed to be near Black men.
- Blacks only allowed to be treated at Black facilities
- White physicians engaged very rarely in addressing the needs of Black patients.

Trust requires  
a firm belief in  
the:

✓ Reliability

✓ Truth

✓ Ability

✓ Strength

- ✗ The hospitals that were for Black people were under-resourced and neglected
- ✗ Government officials, including the President of the United States, were making arguments that enslavement was a better condition than freedom.
- ✗ There were not enough physicians and resources to properly care for the newly freed Black people.
- ✗ There were people strong enough to fight for the rights but they were few

A BOOK

OF

MEDICAL DISCOURSES

IN TWO PARTS.

PART FIRST:

TREATING OF THE CAUSE, PREVENTION, AND CURE OF INFANTILE BOWEL COMPLAINTS, FROM BIRTH TO THE CLOSE OF THE TEETHING PERIOD, OR TILL AFTER THE FIFTH YEAR.

PART SECOND:

CONTAINING MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION CONCERNING THE LIFE AND GROWTH OF BEINGS; THE BEGINNING OF WOMANHOOD; ALSO, THE CAUSE, PREVENTION, AND CURE OF MANY OF THE MOST DISTRESSING COMPLAINTS OF WOMEN, AND ~~CHILDREN~~ OF BOTH SEXES.

✓ BY  
REBECCA CRUMPLER, M.D. ✓



BOSTON.

CASHMAN, KEATING & CO., PRINTERS.

FAYETTE COURT, 561 WASHINGTON ST.

1851.


# The Beginning

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Rebecca Lee Crumpler, MD

# Lobbying to maintain inequity

JAMA Network

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Review | June 8, 2021

Opinion | June 1, 2021

**This Issue** Citations [57](#)

**Special Communication**

July 16, 2008



## African American Physicians and Organized Medicine, 1846-1968

### Origins of a Racial Divide

Robert B. Baker, PhD; Harriet A. Washington, BA; Ololade Olakanmi, BA; [et al](#)


» [Author Affiliations](#)

JAMA. 2008;300(3):306-313. doi:10.1001/jama.300.3.306

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**Trending**

**Review**  

Review of Adult General Health Checks  
June 8, 2021

# Medicare - 1965

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- Greatly supported by Black physicians as the only way to help improve the hospital system for Black patients
- Created a financial “carrot and stick” for hospitals to comply with the new desegregation laws of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Billed as finally providing the opportunity for all to have the right to healthcare

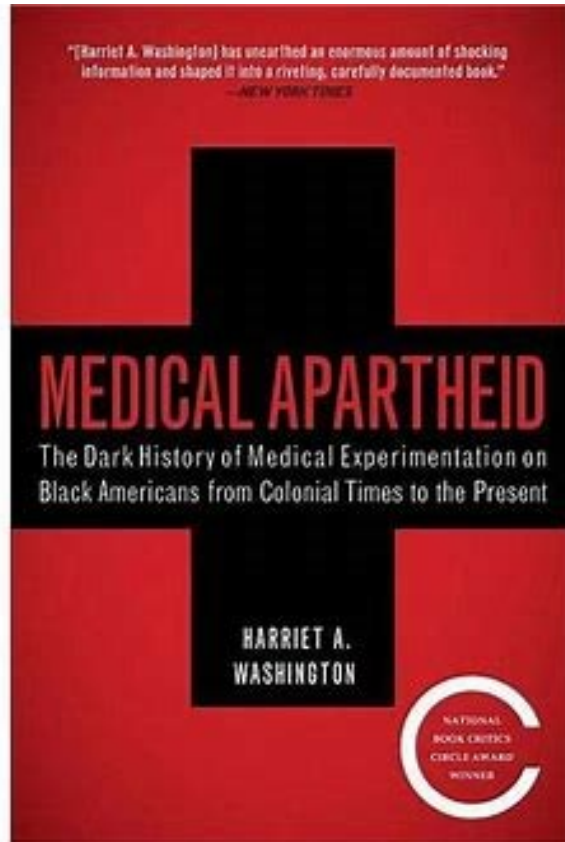
3000 hospitals desegregated within 4 months.



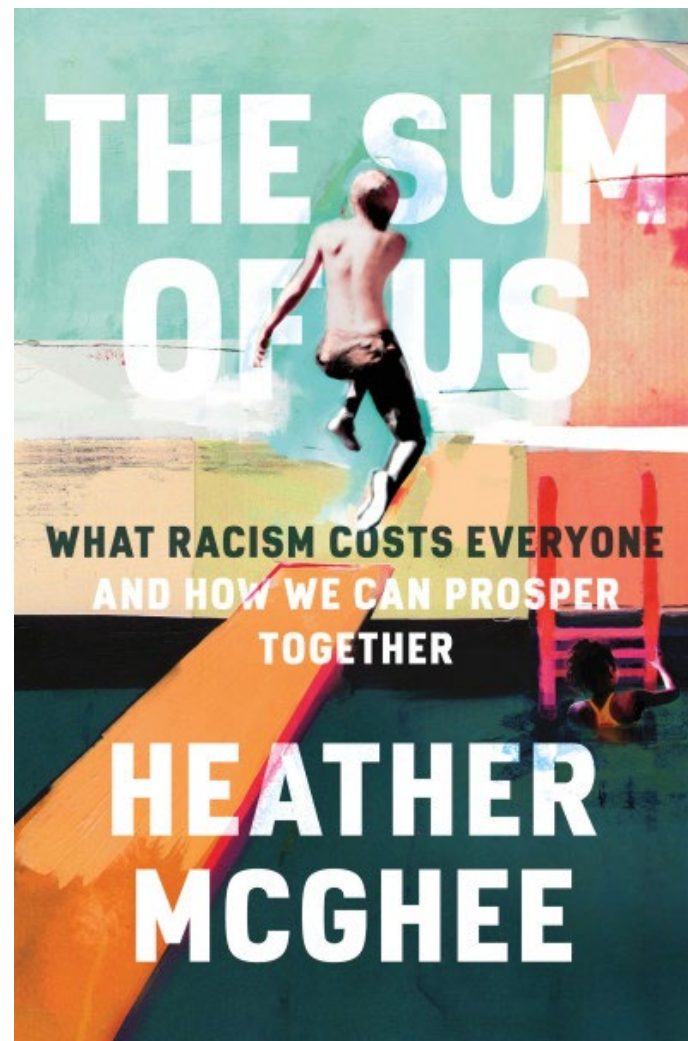


# Medical Apartheid

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The Sum of  
Us





**Where we are now**

**While the country has made some notable health improvements in recent years, deep and widespread health disparities persist — and, in some instances, have grown.**

# Health Disparities Report 2021

Data in the Health Disparities Report are based on the most recent publicly available data, which were collected prior to the pandemic.

# Health Disparities

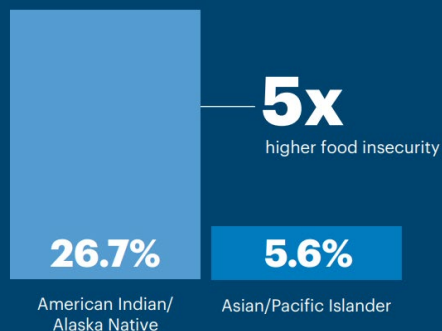


American Indian/Alaska Native households had the highest rate of food insecurity in 2015-2019 — a rate that increased 39% since 2003-2007.

**39%** ▲

increase in food insecurity among American Indian/Alaska Native households.

Source: Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement



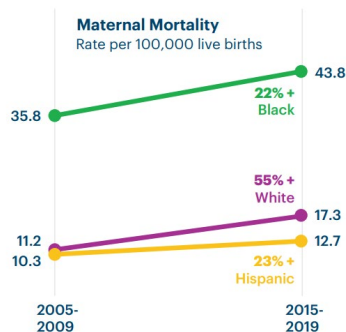
HEALTH DISPARITIES REPORT [www.AmericasHealthRankings.org](http://www.AmericasHealthRankings.org)

Though **Black infant mortality rates declined in 22 states** between 2003-2006 to 2015-2018, Black infants continued to have the highest infant mortality rate in the nation — almost 2.8x higher than Asian/Pacific Islander infants.

Rate calculated per 1,000 births



Source: National Vital Statistics System

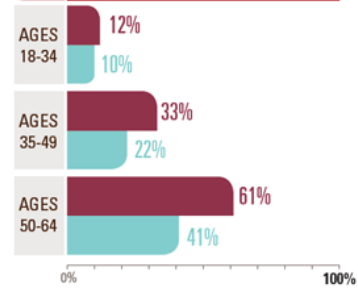


**Maternal mortality rates increased between 2005-2009 and 2015-2019.**

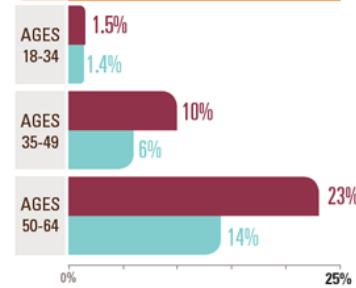
Gaps between subpopulation groups persist. While Black mothers experienced the highest rate of maternal mortality, white mothers faced the largest rate of increase (55%).

**Health disparities persist by gender, geography, race and ethnicity and other factors, driven by systemic inequities in social, economic and environmental conditions people face.**

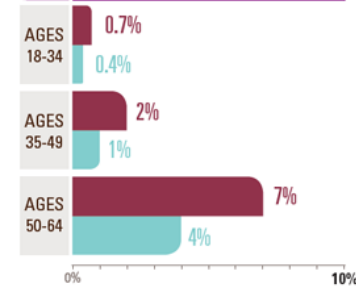
### High Blood Pressure



### Diabetes



### Stroke

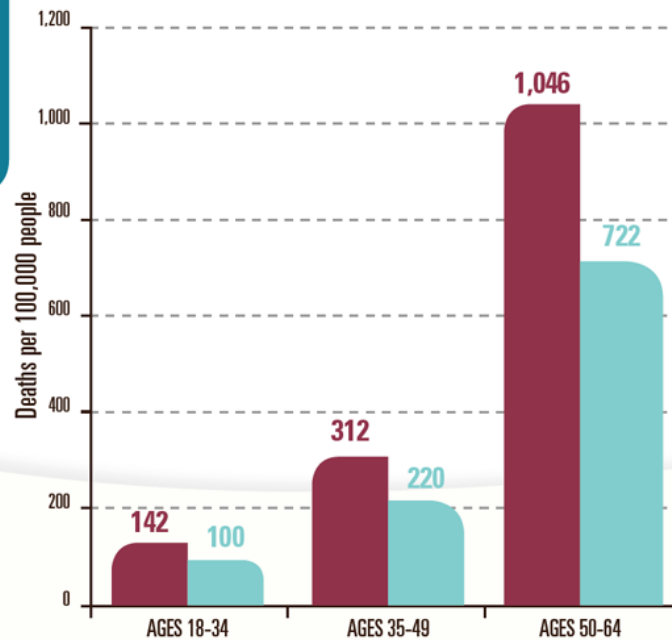


**African American** **White**

*African Americans and whites include Hispanic and non-Hispanic origin.*

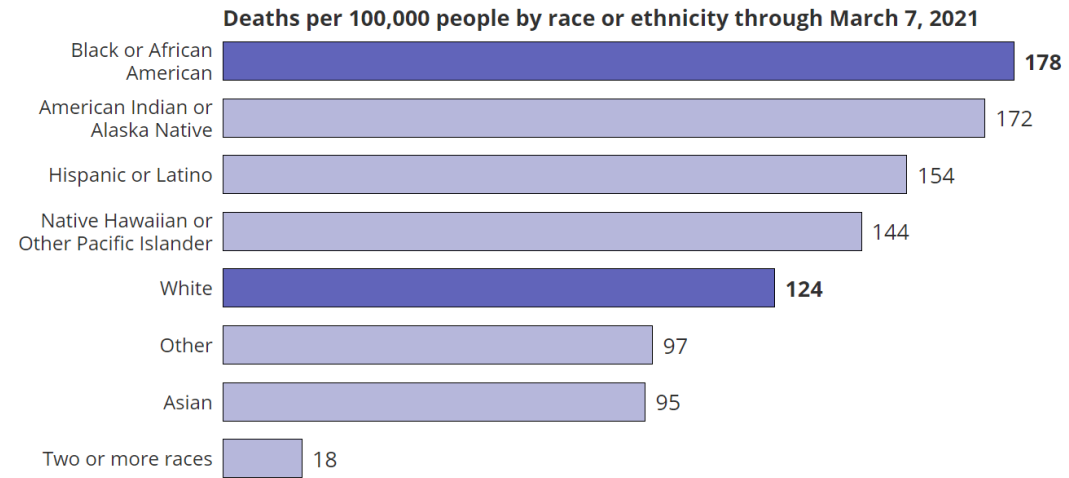
SOURCE: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2015.

**African Americans are more likely to die at early ages from all causes.**



SOURCE: US Vital Statistics, 2015.

## Nationwide, Black people have died at 1.4 times the rate of white people.



- <https://covidtracking.com/race>





# Burden of Blackness

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Dr. Susan Moore's Story



# A Culture of Inequity

Medicine has not truly reconciled with its racist past and present.

Training of clinicians still focuses on the normalization of white bodies.

Data highlight the expansive gaps in outcomes for the majority of diseases.

There is an emergent need to increase racially diverse medical practitioners.

Bias in care delivery must be highlighted, exposed, and not tolerated.



**Where we hope  
to go**

# Empathy

“the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past, or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner.”

~Miriam Webster Dictionary

# Research Shows

Empathy results in:

- Increased patient reporting of symptoms and concerns
- Improved patient participation in care
- Enhanced patient compliance and satisfaction

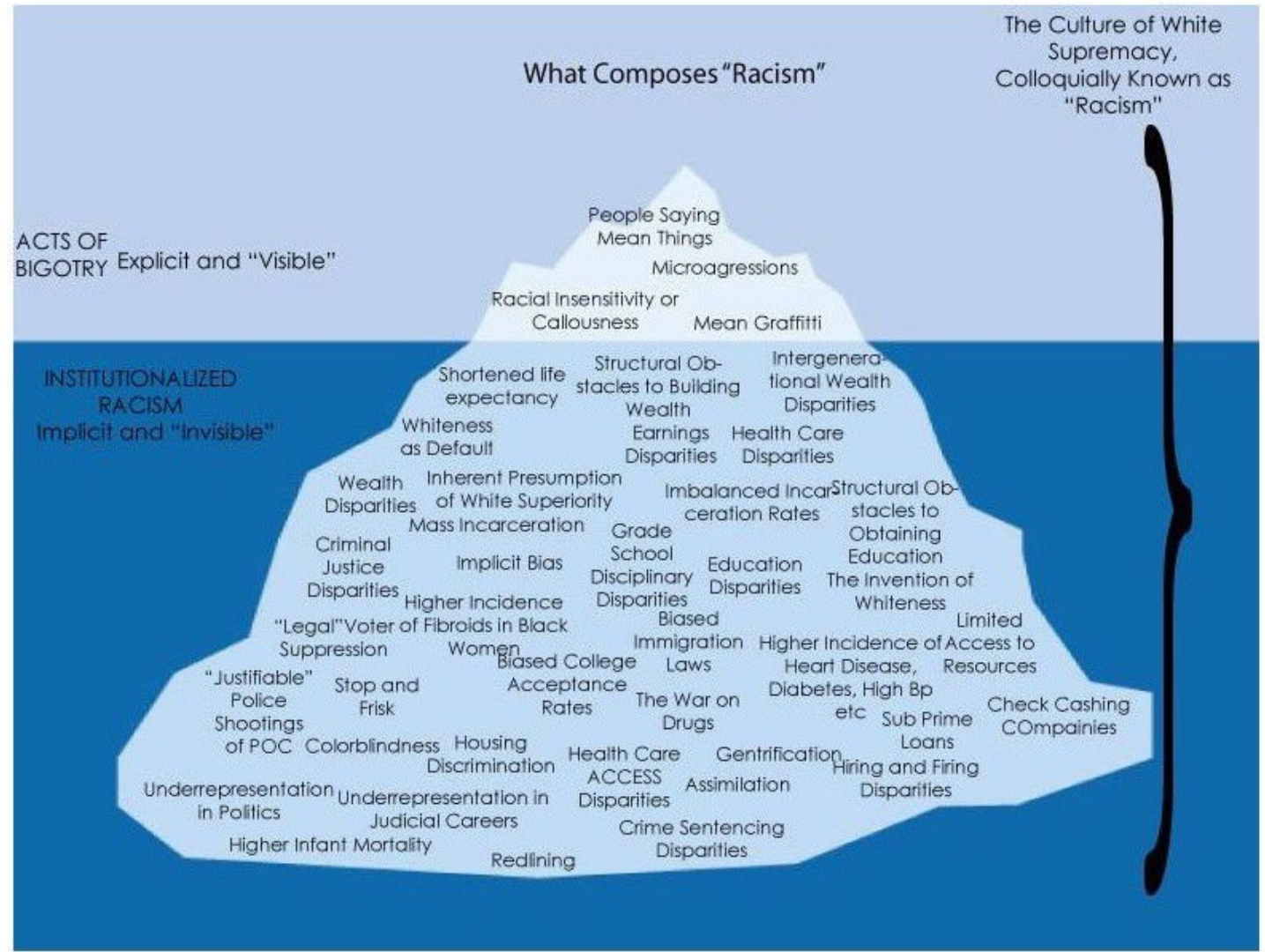


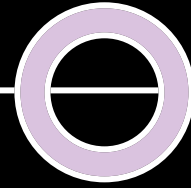
# How do we practice with empathy?

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It starts with owning who we are

# Understanding Racism





DECOLONIZE  
MEDICINE

DISMANTLE  
STRUCTURAL RACISM

DENOUNCE WHITE  
SUPREMACY







# Things to remember

We bring ourselves and our biases into the room with us

It is ok to have the biased/racist thought, it just can't be the last thought

It is your duty to understand the additional factors that affect the patient and their outcome

We have power in our spheres of influence

Know your own blinders, own them, and improve them

A black and white photograph of a person walking through a forest. The person is in the center, slightly out of focus, wearing a dark jacket and light-colored pants. The background is filled with trees and foliage, creating a textured, natural setting. Overlaid on the image is a quote in white, handwritten-style text.

Do the best you can  
until you know better.

Then when  
you know better,  
do better.

Maya Angelou

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Thank you

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