

HETSS DGSOM SPOTLIGHT

CHRISTINA HARRIS, MD



Dr. Christina Harris is a primary care physician at West Los Angeles VA, where she also serves as an associate program director for the UCLA Internal Medicine Residency Program. She has spent her career in residency leadership focused on advancing workforce diversity and advocating for a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for trainees. She also holds leadership positions for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion within the UCLA GME Office and the UCLA Department of Medicine. In July 2022, she will be transitioning to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in the role of vice president and chief health equity officer where she will lead institution-wide health equity strategies in clinical care, research, advocacy, and education.

INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHT

HEALTH EQUITY AS A LENS AT ALL INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS

"My time at UCLA has shown me how important it is for a focus on health equity to be something everybody has in their mission. EDI work is about having a health equity lens through which you see all of your work, because when we do have this lens, we realize that health equity relates to not just people of color, or other historically marginalized group, but to everyone. I've learned how vital it is to get people to understand the importance of the work and to empower them to use their power and influence to do something a little different the next time. There is a movement afoot of everybody trying to figure out how to create the meaningful change that will close the gaps that have existed for way too long. I feel like my job is to encourage people at all levels of the institution to use their voice and use their decisions to create a better tomorrow"

INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHT

COMMUNITY BUILDING IN HEALTH EQUITY WORK

"Community is everything. So much of what I do is to build a community for my residents to be able to thrive and succeed and overcome barriers to becoming the doctors they want to be. A lot of my job has been within the institution, helping to educate our trainees on health disparities and structural inequities. And at the end of my talks there's often a moment where I think to myself "So, now what? How do we actually get to where we need to be?" With this next transition to Cedars-Sinai, I get to be part of that "now what." Remembering that community is everything and that community is where health begins, I am incredibly excited to spend time with what I sometimes call the "real LA" — the LA I grew up with and the community that motivated me to even become a doctor to begin with."