

Celebrating 28 Days of Black History:

Contributions Made to Healthcare by Black Individuals



Mary Seacole
(1805-1881)

Mary Seacole: visited and cared for wounded soldiers on the battlefield and established the “British Hotel” which cared for sick and recovering soldiers during the Crimean War.



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**Eddie Bernice
Johnson**

Eddie Bernice Johnson: the first black woman to be the director for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare after being appointed by President Jimmy Carter, the first registered nurse to be elected to Congress, and the first Black female to serve as Ranking Member of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee.



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**Estelle Massey
Osborne
(1901-1981)**

Estelle Massey Osborne: first Black nurse in the U.S. to earn a master's degree in nursing and the first Black nurse faculty member at NYU.



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**Adah Belle
Thoms
(1870-1943)**

Adah Belle Thoms: cofounded the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NACGN) and lobbied for the integration of Black nurses into the military during WWI.



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**Dr. Kizzmekia
S. Corbett**

Dr. Kizzmekia S. Corbett: Worked to develop and produce the Moderna vaccine for COVID-19 as part of a team of scientists.



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**Mary Eliza
Mahoney
(1845- 1926)**

Mary Eliza Mahoney: first Black woman to earn a professional nursing license in the U.S. and the first to graduate from an American nursing school.



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**Dr. Bernadine
Lacey
(1932-2021)**

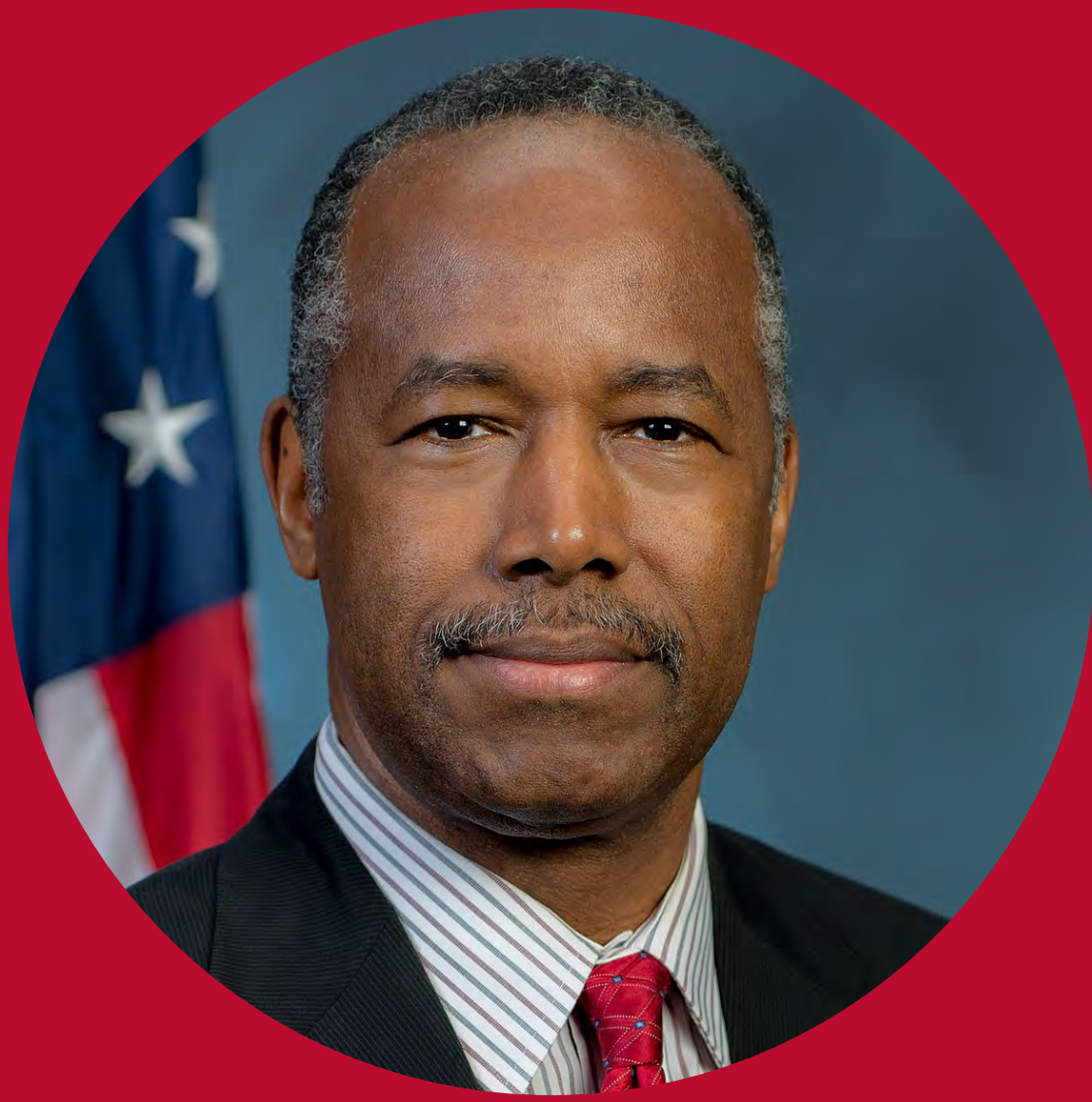
Dr. Bernadine Lacey: became one of the first Black nurses in history to be admitted to Georgetown University, when she enrolled in their RN to BSN program, and went on to become the founding director of the Western Michigan University Bronson School of Nursing. She received the American Academy of Nursing's highest honor in 2014, when she was inducted as a "Living Legend."



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Dr. Ben Carson

Dr. Ben Carson: successfully separated twins who were joined at the head. Carson developed groundbreaking techniques to treat brain-stem tumors and revitalizing methods for controlling seizures.



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Dr. Patricia Bath
(1942-2019)

Dr. Patricia Bath: was the first African American to complete a residency in ophthalmology in 1973. Two years later, she became the first female faculty member in the Department of Ophthalmology at UCLA's Jules Stein Eye Institute. In 1976, Bath co-founded the American Institute for the Prevention of Blindness, which established that "eyesight is a basic human right." In 1986, Bath invented the Laserphaco Probe, improving treatment for cataract patients. She patented the device in 1988, becoming the first African American female doctor to receive a medical patent.



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Dr. Jane Wright
(1919-2013)

Dr. Jane Wright: Became professor of surgery, head of the cancer chemotherapy department, associate dean at New York Medical College and the highest-ranked African American woman at a nationally recognized medical institution. Dr. Jane Wright was the first woman to be elected president of the New York Cancer Society.



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**Hazel W.
Johnson-Brown
(1927-2011)**

Hazel W. Johnson-Brown: became the first Black woman to achieve the ranking of brigadier general and lead the U.S. Army Nurse Corps.



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**Dr. Leonidas
Harris Berry
(1902-1995)**

Dr. Leonidas Harris Berry: directed his efforts at promoting racial equality in the hospital setting and increasing the number of facilities in underserved parts of the city. In 1970, Berry helped organize a group of practitioners – called the Flying Black Medics – who flew to the remote community of Cairo, Illinois to bring medical care and health education to the population.



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**Dr. Louis Wade
Sullivan**

Dr. Louis Wade Sullivan: The only Black student in his class at Boston University School of Medicine, he would later serve on the faculty from 1966 to 1975. In 1975, he became the founding dean of what became the Morehouse School of Medicine — the first predominantly Black medical school opened in the United States in the 20th century.



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**Dr. Beverly
Malone**

Dr. Beverly Malone: the first African-American general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, a two-time American Nurses Association president and served as deputy assistant secretary for health within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the highest position held by any nurse in the U.S. government to that date. In her current post as CEO of the National League of Nursing (NLN), she promotes excellence in nursing education to build a strong and diverse nursing workforce.



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**Dr. Ernest J.
Grant**

Dr. Ernest J. Grant: as the president of the American Nurses Association (ANA), Ernest Grant helps represent the interests of America's four million registered nurses and has worked to encourage diversity in nursing. He is the first male to hold this office. An internationally recognized burn-care and fire-safety expert, he was presented the Nurse of the Year Award in 2002 by President George W. Bush for his work treating burn victims from the World Trade Center.



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Henrietta Lacks
(1920-1951)

Henrietta Lacks: Henrietta Lacks was not a healthcare professional but a Black patient. She was diagnosed with terminal cervical cancer and treated at one of the few hospitals in the country that served Black people. Unknowingly, her cells were cultured and used for research as researchers found that her cells were unique in that they survived and reproduced. Her tissues and cells were taken for research all without her consent for all the time that she was being treated with radiation. Her cells, often referred to as HeLa, have been used to develop vaccines, gene mapping and in vitro fertilization.



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**Dr. Marcella
Nunez-Smith**

Marcella Nunez-Smith: selected by president-elect Joe Biden to be the co-chair of the Biden-Harris transition COVID-19 Advisory Board and now serves as the chair of the COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force in the current administration.



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**Dr. Donna
Christian-Christensen**

Dr. Donna Christian-Christensen: the first woman physician and Black woman physician to serve as an elected member of Congress by representing the U.S. Virgin Islands from 1997 to 2015.



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**Dr. Rebecca
Lee Crumpler
(1831-1895)**

Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler: worked as a nurse for ten years before going to school and becoming the first African American woman to earn a medical degree in the United States. Also believed to be the writer of the first medical text by a African American author.



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**Dr. Myra Adele
Logan
(1908-1977)**

Dr. Myra Adele Logan: In 1943, she became the first woman to perform open heart surgery in the ninth operation of its kind performed anywhere in the world. She was also the first African American woman elected a fellow of the American College of Surgeons. Dr. Logan's other achievements include development of antibiotics, including Aureomycin; work on early detection and treatment of breast cancer; and efforts to develop x-ray processes to more accurately detect differences in tissue density, allowing tumors to be discovered earlier.



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**Dr. Regina
Benjamin**

Dr. Regina Benjamin: was the first physician under the age of 40 and the first African American woman to be elected to the American Medical Association Board of Trustees. She is the 18th Surgeon General of the United States. As America's Doctor, she provided the public with the best scientific information available on how to improve their health and the health of the nation.



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**Dr. William
Augustus Hinton
(1883-1959)**

Dr. William Augustus Hinton: William Augustus Hinton was an American bacteriologist and the first Black professor at Harvard University. In 1921 Hinton became the first Black scientist to become a member of the American Society for Microbiology. Six years later in 1927 he created a flocculation test for syphilis. He also developed another syphilis test with a colleague known as the Davies-Hinton test that was considered a medical breakthrough at the time.



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**Dr. James
McCune Smith
(1813-1865)**

Dr. James McCune Smith: becomes the first Black American to practice in the United States with a medical degree. Because of segregated admission practices, Smith had to enroll at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. He was also the first Black physician to establish and operate a pharmacy, and the first Black physician to publish articles in U.S. medical journals.



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**Dr. Daniel Hale
Williams
(1858-1931)**

Dr. Daniel Hale Williams: opened the Provident Hospital and Training School for Nurses in Chicago, the first Black-owned and first interracial hospital in the United States. Two years later, Williams performed one of the world's first successful heart surgeries, saving the life of a man who had been stabbed in the chest.



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**Dr. Charles
Drew
(1904-1950)**

Dr. Charles Drew: a surgeon who discovered that blood plasma can be dried and reconstituted when needed, making it an effective substitute for whole blood transfusions. He developed ways to process and preserve plasma in “blood banks,” a procedure that saved the lives of countless American soldiers during World War II and in later conflicts.



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**Dr. Emmett
Chappelle
(1925-2019)**

Dr. Emmett Chappelle: a WWII veteran, NASA inventor and a biochemist. He held 14 patents in the United States. In 2007, he was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame for his bioluminescence work. His research makes it possible to detect bacteria more accurately in water.



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**Dr. Marilyn
Hughes Gaston**

Dr. Marilyn Hughes Gaston: became the deputy branch chief of the National Institutes of Health's Sickle Cell Disease Branch. Her research shows the effectiveness of the antibiotic penicillin to prevent sepsis infection (which can be fatal for children with sickle cell disease) and the benefits of screening newborns for the disease.



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**Dr. Alexa
Canady**

Dr. Alexa Canady: became the first female African American neurosurgeon in the U.S. in 1981. She specialized in pediatric neurosurgery and was chief of neurosurgery at the Children's Hospital in Michigan from 1987 until 2001 when she moved to Florida. Her specialties include congenital spinal abnormalities, hydrocephalus, trauma and brain tumors.



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