

Marcella Nunez-Smith, MD, MHS

Doctor of Humane Letters

Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith, MD, MHS. is the C.N.H Long Professor of Internal Medicine, Public Health, and Management; Inaugural Associate Dean for Health Equity Research; Founding Director of the Equity Research and Innovation Center (ERIC); Director of the Center for Research Engagement (CRE); Associate Cancer Center Director for Community Outreach and Engagement at Yale Cancer Center; Chief Health Equity Officer at Smilow Cancer Hospital; Deputy Director for Health Equity Research and Workforce Development at the Yale Center for Clinical Investigation; Core Faculty in the National Clinician Scholars Program; Research Faculty in the Global Health Leadership Initiative; Director of the Pozen-Commonwealth Fund Fellowship in Health Equity Leadership; and Co-Director of the Doris Duke Clinical Research Fellowship.

Dr. Nunez-Smith's research focuses on promoting health and healthcare equity for structurally marginalized populations with an emphasis on centering community engagement, supporting healthcare workforce diversity and development, developing patient reported measurements of healthcare quality, and identifying regional strategies to reduce the global burden of non-communicable diseases. Dr. Nunez-Smith has extensive expertise in examining the effects of social and structural determinants of health, systemic influences contributing to health disparities, health equity improvement, and community-academic partnered scholarship. In addition to this extensive experience in primary data collection, management, and analysis, ERIC has institutional expertise in qualitative and mixed methods, population health, and medical informatics.

She is the principal investigator on many National Institute of Health (NIH) and foundation-funded research projects, including an NIH/NCI-funded project to develop a tool to assess patient reported experiences of discrimination in healthcare. She has conducted an investigation of the promotion and retention of diversity in academic medical school faculty and has published numerous articles on the experiences of minority students and faculty. Funded by NIH/NIMHD, she established the Eastern Caribbean Health Outcomes Research Network (ECHORN), a research collaborative across four Eastern Caribbean islands, supporting several chronic disease research projects and enhancing health outcomes research and leadership capacity in the region; the flagship ECHORN Cohort Study recruited and is following a community-dwelling adult cohort to examine novel chronic disease risk and protective factors. She recently received NIH/National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) funding to build upon this work by recruiting children into an expanded intergenerational ECHORN cohort, inclusive of a biorepository. She is also Principal Investigator on one of five NIH/NIMHD-funded Transdisciplinary Collaborative Centers on Health Disparities focused on Precision Medicine, which leverages the ECHORN infrastructure to conduct collaborative research on hypertension and diabetes.

Most recently, as the COVID-19 pandemic has shed national attention on the health and healthcare disparities of marginalized populations, she was called upon to serve on the Governor's ReOpen CT Advisory Group and to chair its Community Committee. She served as an Advisor to the Biden-Harris campaign, and subsequently named co-chair of the Biden-Harris Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board and will serve as chair of the COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force in the administration. She also received NIH funding to leverage ECHORN to improve the COVID-19 testing cascade in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

Dr. Nunez-Smith has mentored dozens of trainees since completing fellowship and has received numerous awards for teaching and mentoring. She is board certified in internal medicine, having completed residency training at Harvard University's Brigham and Women's Hospital and fellowship at the Yale Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars Program, where she also received a Masters in Health Sciences. Originally from the US Virgin Islands, she attended Jefferson Medical College, where she was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society, and she earned a BA in Biological Anthropology and Psychology at Swarthmore College.



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