

ANESTHESIOLOGY & PAIN MEDICINE

EDI BRIEF

February 2025

Black History Month

Everyone loves the view from the 14th floor at Montlake but very few of us would love to walk up 14 flights of stairs to see it. Alexander Miles, African American inventor, created the automatic elevator doors, an innovation that dramatically decreased injuries.

This year's theme for Black History Month is **African Americans and labor**. It is important to celebrate the contributions of an African American innovator that keeps us warm. Did you know that Alice Parker was an inventor honored in 2019 by the National Society of Black Physicists for patenting the system for central heating using natural gas?

We also honor the labor of enslaved Africans that made possible the existence of many US institutions including universities across the U.S. Some of these universities have acknowledged this history by providing scholarships to descendants of enslaved people as well as research grants in support of similar reparations.

The contributions of African American anesthesiologists are also numerous. This month we remember an exceptional clinician, [Dr. Evelyn E. Henley](#) who was the first African American board-certified female in the United States known for patient-centered care.

Although we have come a long way, according to the [AAMC](#) 2021 report, of the 38,648 anesthesiologists in the U.S., only 2,062 identify as Black or African American, comprising just 5.3% of all anesthesiologists, despite Black people making up 14% of the US population.

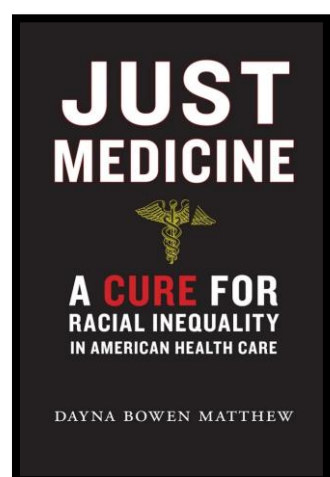
Please review our resources for this month: [BHM in Seattle](#), [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#), [Black Medical Pioneers in the US](#) and [The Library of Congress](#)

Department Highlights

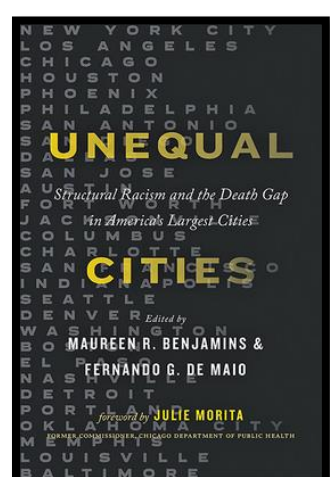
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Resources

Recommended Reading:



[Just Medicine: A Cure for Racial Inequality in American Health Care](#), by Dayna Bowen Matthew, highlights the health disparities that loom within the American healthcare system. She includes medical, neuroscience, psychology, and sociology research on implicit bias and health disparities in the scope of civil rights and constitutional law to frame the need for reshaping access in health care.



[Unequal Cities: Structural Racism and the Death Gap in America's Largest Cities](#), by Maureen R. Benjamins and Fernando G. De Maio, discusses the grim reality that nationally, Black children have a life expectancy that is four years fewer than white children but in cities like Washington D.C. that disparity grows to twelve years fewer. They pose the question that if health equity can be achieved in some cities, why not all?