

American Cancer Society Receives NBA Foundation Grant to Increase Underrepresented Students Entering Cancer Research Careers

ATLANTA, March 1, 2024 – The American Cancer Society [Center for Diversity in Cancer Research Training](#) received an NBA Foundation grant to support programming for 300 underrepresented high school, college, and post-Baccalaureate students interested in oncology and cancer research in 21 NBA markets. The Center was created in 2023 to increase diversity and inclusion in the cancer workforce by providing training and support to students that are underrepresented in science and health professions. The collective percentage of Black, Hispanic, and American Indian and Alaska Native people in biomedical careers is the lowest among racial and ethnic groups, and less than 2% of National Institute of Health cancer research grants come from African American or Black researchers. An inclusive research community more effectively addresses cancer disparities, invigorates problem-solving, drives innovation, and accelerates the American Cancer Society's mission to improve the lives of people with cancer and their families.

The NBA Foundation's mission is to drive economic opportunity in the Black community through employment and career development by funding programs that generate successful transitions from school to meaningful employment for Black youth. With a focus on 18 to 24 year old Black youth at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), the Foundation's funding will support building a pipeline of talented, diverse scientists through the Center's three key initiatives: the Summer Health Experience (SHE), a program that exposes female high school juniors and seniors to careers in oncology research, clinical care and patient support; the Diversity in Cancer Research (DICR) Internship Program, a ten week summer internship that provides undergraduate students with hands-on lab experience, mentorship, and career development; and the Post-Baccalaureate (Post-Bac) Fellows Program, a two-year paid certificate program that provides mentored research projects, advanced science coursework, and comprehensive advisory services for Bachelor-level students aiming to pursue doctoral or medical degrees.

"For decades the American Cancer Society has been at the forefront of advocacy and research while supporting families through what is one of the most difficult diagnoses one could face," said Greg Taylor Executive Director of the NBA Foundation. "The NBA Foundation is honored to join them in this work through providing resources to enhance programming at the Center for Diversity in Cancer Research Training. Cancer impacts each of us making it even more imperative that we prepare all of our young people who step up to take on this challenge with the best available tools."


Racial and ethnic communities that bear a disproportionate burden of cancer continue to be underrepresented in the cancer research workforce. This is largely attributed to low rates of representation in scientific education and training. People of color represent 20 percent of first-year college students pursuing degrees in science and engineering. The numbers decrease as these students move through their education with 17 percent receiving a bachelor's degree and only 10 percent completing advanced degrees in these disciplines.

"The NBA Foundation's support in our common goal of providing pathways to expand opportunities in historically excluded communities and ultimately, achieve more diversity in fields that need new voices is important in our work to end cancer as we know it for everyone," said [Dr. William Dahut](#), chief scientific officer at the American Cancer Society. "Our center is focused on empowering these young voices and equipping them with the support they need to significantly contribute to improving inequities in cancer prevention, treatment and care."

As the largest nonprofit funder of cancer research in the U.S. outside of the federal government, the American Cancer Society has a history of investing in new researchers and has funded 50 [Nobel Prize](#)-winning scientists. With a new center focused on broadening the pool of diverse researchers, the organization is acting on its long-standing commitment to support the best minds in cancer research, ensure scientific excellence and make the greatest impact possible. To learn more, visit cancer.org/diversityinresearch.

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. For more than 100 years, we have been improving the lives of people with cancer and their families as the only organization combating cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We are committed to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. To learn more, visit cancer.org or call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-227-2345. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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