



## **Morehouse School of Medicine Researchers Seek To Increase COVID-19 Testing For People Affected By Diabetes With Aid of NIH Grant**

October 29, 2020 - Morehouse School of Medicine researchers, in collaboration with Emory University and Georgia Institute of Technology, have received a \$5 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to increase COVID-19 testing for people affected by diabetes in Georgia. The grant was specifically awarded to The Georgia Center for Diabetes Translation Research (GCDTR), which is a joint collaboration among the three institutions.

A part of the [Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics \(RADx\)](#) initiative, the [RADx Underserved Populations \(RADx-UP\)](#) program will support research that aims to better understand COVID-19 testing patterns among underserved and vulnerable populations; strengthen the data on disparities in infection rates, disease progression and outcomes; and develop strategies to reduce disparities in COVID-19 testing.

Serving as the lead investigator on the project at Morehouse School of Medicine is Tabia Henry Akintobi, PhD, MPH, Professor of Community Health and Preventive Medicine and Director, Prevention Research Center along with Rakale Quarells, PhD, Associate Professor of Community Health and Preventive Medicine and member of the Cardiovascular Research Institute.

In conjunction with the grant, Morehouse School of Medicine will lead the Community Partners Program, which will leverage strong existing relationships with community groups, local government and the strength of strategically identified federally qualified health centers in rural and urban Georgia. "A Community and Scientific Advisory Board will ensure that research processes and findings are translated with, co-created by, and relevant to communities to improve uptake, outcomes, and sustainability" says Dr. Henry Akintobi. "Community health workers will also be central liaisons between community and academic partners to ensure that testing is complemented by education, ongoing communication and support to overcome historical barriers to research translation when research, community, and agency experts do not work together as equal partners with established rules guiding roles and functions."

K.M. Venkat Narayan, M.D., M.Sc., MBA, Ruth and O.C. Hubert Professor of Global Health at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health, and Elizabeth Mynatt, PhD, MS, Regents' Professor of Computing and Executive Director of Georgia Tech's Institute of People and Technology, will serve as lead investigators at their respective institutions.

The study will optimize testing for minority populations affected by diabetes and associated comorbidities, including pre-diabetes and obesity. An iterative testing strategy will be implemented at federally qualified health centers that provide care for uninsured and at-risk individuals and offer community engagement techniques.

### **About Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM)**

Founded in 1975, MSM is among the nation's leading educators of primary care physicians and was recognized by Annals of Internal Medicine in 2011 as the top institution in the first study of U.S. medical schools for our social mission based on our production of primary care physicians, training of

underrepresented minority doctors and placement of doctors practicing in underserved communities. Our faculty and alumni are noted for excellence in teaching, research and public policy, as well as exceptional patient care. For more information, visit [msm.edu](http://msm.edu).

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