

Chair's Message



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“The most difficult social problem in the matter of Black health...was to understand why so few White Americans were bothered by it. The poor Black lives were spent in the most unhealthy parts of the city and in the worst houses, with minimal medical attention.” This excerpt is not from a current newspaper, but rather it’s an 1899 quote from sociologist, W.E.B. DuBois. Unfortunately, it remains relevant today, as renewed attention to health disparities in our nation, in our minority populations, and especially the Black population, have again, been brought into sharp relief by the COVID-19 pandemic.

While voicing this concern makes news headlines, local actions speak much louder than newspaper articles in addressing our own community health disparities. UCLA Radiology has and continues to take real world actions by bringing its high level of expertise in diagnostic imaging, in interventional radiology and in management of clinical operations to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Hospital (MLKCH) in South Los Angeles. UCLA Radiology entirely staffs the department with faculty, technologists, nurses, nurse practitioners and administrators. Lessening health disparities requires a safe, trusted environment for which MLKCH was designed, and we take responsibility for our MLK Radiology Department to meet and maintain those high standards.

UCLA Radiology provides diagnostic imaging and interventional radiology services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. We do this because it was the “right thing to do”

many years before the current heightened attention. This pioneering engagement in the UC system has significantly bettered the care of MLKCH patients providing tangible, medical benefits to its predominately Black population. That care is now expanding to include a major new lung cancer screening (LCS) initiative to reduce the tragic toll lung cancer inflicts on the Black population. This comprehensive LCS program, led by Dr. Ashley Prosper, requires trust, shared decision-making and radiological expertise.

In order for academic medicine, UCLA Health, and UCLA Radiology to remain true to its social compact, we must assume leadership in solving this pressing societal problem. This requires a long-term, action-oriented commitment and UCLA Radiology takes great pride in having applied the talents and skills under its control to work on alleviating this painful aspect of social injustice. 

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