



February 2021

CDU News

Drew PA Pioneers

Newsom visits CDU Students

...and more!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

David M. Carlisle, MD, PhD | President & CEO



Greetings!

As we transition from Black History Month to Women's History Month, I am reminded of the wise axiom, **"those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it."**

History, no matter how positive or negative it may appear to be, will always serve us well because it informs us of where we've been and where we have the potential to go. History never dies and it is never too distant; it is only when we make it a point to ignore history's successes and failures that we make our biggest, and perhaps most avoidable, mistakes.

The University's history, which has been documented through the *Legacy of CDU* newsletter feature, our website and our namesake's daughter Sylvia Drew Ivie, JD, informs all of our pursuits: our institution was established in direct response to the McCone Commission's recommendations to improve access to healthcare and education in South Los Angeles in 1966, and today we continue to serve as the only academic health sciences center for the 1.35 million residents of Service Planning Area (SPA) 6. We persist in our quest to train the health workforce of the future – one that resembles the increasingly diverse population they aim to serve – because we understand that the widespread availability of high quality and culturally appropriate care is essential to the health, survival and vitality of communities across the globe.

We understand that as fact because history makes us understand what it means to go *without* that level of care; it makes us understand how demoralizing it is to be told that we *don't* deserve the same amount of care and understanding as our counterparts with different skin tones and zip codes; and it makes us understand that we *cannot* perpetuate the systemic failures that caused the 1965 Watts Revolt to begin in the first place.

The moment we lose sight of our history, we lose sight of our vision—to borrow another axiom from the late, great poet Maya Angelou: **"you can't really know where you are going until you know where you have been."**

I am looking forward to this month's conversation with prolific activist, author and civil rights **Angela Davis** at the sixth annual President's Breakfast on Monday, March 22, 2021. We will sit down via Zoom to discuss how both individuals and corporations can better leverage philanthropy as we move forward in this era focused on racial equality and social justice.

I hope you'll be able to join us for this most special conversation. For tickets and sponsorship information, please click [here](#), click the flyer on the next page or visit <https://www.cdrewu.edu/pb-leadershipseries>.



Virtual

President's Breakfast & CDU Leadership Summit on Health Equity and Social Justice

Presented by **blue** 
california
Promise Health Plan

THE PRESIDENT'S BREAKFAST

*The Intersection of Accountability and Social Justice:
Leveraging Philanthropy in an Era Focused on Racial Equity*

DATE:

MARCH 22, 2021

TIME:

9 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

Join us...

for a one to one conversation with **Dr. David Carlisle**, President & CEO, CDU and **Angela Davis**, Author, Educator and Activist.



DR. ANGELA DAVIS



DR. DAVID M. CARLISLE

**THE PRESIDENT'S BREAKFAST
IS PART OF THE VIRTUAL 2021 CDU LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
ON HEALTH EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

UHI Explores Cancer Effects on Younger Populations at Inaugural Fleming Lecture



The Urban Health Institute (UHI) partnered with the Office of the President to present the first Annual Dr. Erik Fleming Lecture on February 3, via Zoom. The lecture series is named in honor of the late Erik Fleming, PhD, a former Assistant Professor in the College of Medicine's Department of Preventative and Social Medicine, who passed away from cancer in January 2020.

"It's an honor to memorialize [Dr. Fleming's] name at the University, because he was such a central part of CDU," said CDU President and CEO Dr. David Carlisle in his opening remarks, going on to explain that the last phrase in the University's Vision statement originated from Dr. Fleming. "We were trying to figure out how to [conclude our] vision statement – '*excellent health and wellness for all*' – succinctly and effectively. Dr. Fleming raised his hand and suggested, '*in a world without health disparities.*' He is forever memorialized in the spirit of Charles R. Drew of Medicine and Science."

The topic of this year's inaugural lecture was *Young Onset Colorectal Cancer*, presented by Robin Mendelsohn, MD, a Gastroenterology Specialist based in New York City. Dr. Mendelsohn's research, which comes "highly recommended by the Fleming family," has suggested that the number of young people being diagnosed with colon cancer has increased and her goal is to find out why that number is increasing.

Overall, instances of colon and rectal cancer (CRC) in the United States have decreased since the 1990s, but have either stagnated or increased in other parts of the world. Dr. Mendelsohn attributed the decrease of colon and rectal cancer in the U.S. to the "increase in routine CRC screenings—most notably colonoscopies—which include the identification and removal of precancerous polyps."

Per traditional cancer screening guidelines, the groups routinely screened for colorectal cancer in the U.S. have been traditionally over 50 years old (*average-onset*). However, that has come at the expense of individuals under 50 (*early-onset*). "We have seen an increase of CRC instances in those under 50 since the 1990s by over sixty percent," said Dr. Mendelsohn. Although this was a widely known trend in the medical community, she explained, it was not until the untimely death of actor Chadwick Boseman at 42 that young onset colorectal cancer became a point of concern for the general public.

Dr. Mendelsohn noted that, because younger people do not screen as often, they often present with symptoms in the later stages of cancer, and with more severe symptoms than individuals over 50. She also observed that a majority of young patients who present with symptoms and seek treatment have to seek the opinions of multiple doctors, are commonly misdiagnosed with hemorrhoids and assumed to be too young to be afflicted with cancer.

Over 60% of young individuals with CRC do not have a family history with the disease, and it is unclear if there are additional genetic, environmental, or social factors that increase the disease's likelihood of occurring in younger populations. The majority of CRCs are on the left side of the colon, and most commonly present with rectal bleeding, along with bloating and change in bowel habits. "So, it's very important that if an individual under 50 has these symptoms, they get in contact with a provider immediately," she advised. "Most bleeding is *not* cancer, but it's important to get it checked."

Ultimately, she concluded, although CRC incidence rates in young adults continue to increase at a steady rate, it is "a potentially curable" cancer if caught in the early stages. "If we're able to have a prompt evaluation of symptoms, we can decrease the amount of incidences and mortality from this disease."

Governor Gavin Newsom Visits CDU Volunteers at Kedren Health Center Vaccination Site

California Governor Gavin Newsom (*pictured far right, standing*) visited the Kedren Health Center in South Los Angeles on February 16, as part of his tour of testing and vaccination sites in Southern California.

Gov. Newsom was very complementary of the vaccination site, which CDU students have been helping to staff and support, saying in an interview with the [Los Angeles Sentinel](#): “[This model] needs to be replicated hundreds of times [across the state].”



PA Alums Detail Program’s History During BHM Panel



To kick off its 50-year anniversary celebration, the Physician Assistant (PA) Program hosted a PA Pioneers Celebration on February 23, via Zoom. Various PA alums, ranging from inaugural MEDEX students from recent PA graduates, participated in an hour-long conversation recalling their experiences at CDU and the rich legacy of the PA program.

The event was hosted by the CDU Alumni Relations Unit and moderated by Sylvia Drew Ivie, JD, who spoke of her admiration for the program. “[The PA Program] carried the very philosophy of the University – of connectivity with the community, and belief in the guidance and insight that the community can offer in training providers,” she said.

Panelists spoke highly of their time at the University, noting that the training they received at CDU made them much better prepared, more robust health professionals.

“Wherever I go, I let people know that I am a [CDU] graduate and that I trained at the original [King-Drew Medical Center],” said Sonya Early, PA-C ’93. “I wouldn’t be who I am without [my training at CDU]. The excellence that is displayed there every day and [sense of] commitment to the community runs through my veins to this day.”

“I’ve been to many institutions in the state, and [CDU] is the only place where I felt I belonged the most,” said Alabi Akinloye, PA-C ’95. “In my other programs, I was the only person of color in my class, which can be alienating. [At CDU], I felt as if I was at home.”

A full recap of the event can be viewed on Vimeo, or by clicking [here](#). Individuals who are interested in upcoming activities may sign up for the PA Celebration Mailing List by [clicking here](#).

A Conversation with Sylvia Drew Ivie, JD

Sylvia Drew Ivie's pursuit for social justice and equality began as a child, when she would attend services at the All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C., alongside her mother. Under the ministry and leadership of A. Powell Davies, Drew Ivie would listen as members of the church would "always [talk] about working to support whatever the community was advocating for at the time."

At 13, her mother sent her to a Quaker boarding school, eager to shield her youngest daughter from the harsh realities of the time: "She did not want me to be involved the heartache that my older sisters experienced integrating schools in Washington, D.C.," Drew Ivie said, going on to explain that her family had been the first Black family to move into the neighborhood. "In 1954, they were not ready to receive Black children."

Although the Drew family did not have the support of their neighbors, they did have the support of influential individuals who were familiar with the work of her father, Dr. Charles R. Drew. "Eleanor Roosevelt, who had once been a Red Cross volunteer, helped to pay for my Quaker education in high school," she said. "She helped many young people in that way."

"Quakers are very progressive. I was deeply impressed by them," she recalled. "Overall, I was exposed to people who were forward-minded, and the idea that you were supposed to use your energy and time to be a part of the change. You didn't have to be Dr. King, but you had to be a part of what would move the ball forward on attaining equality."

Although she had no expressed desire to "be Dr. King," she was still profoundly and directly affected by his determination. While serving as an assistant for family friend Dr. William Montague Cobb during the summer of 1963, Drew Ivie actually met Dr. King and heard the "I Have A Dream" speech live during the March on Washington. Dr. Cobb was a friend of Dr. King's and served on the planning committee for the march.

Drew Ivie recalled the scene that day: "They expected a few thousand people, and it turned out to be 300,000 – a very multicultural group of people, not just Black people. It was an absolutely electric event, and it was the moment where I said to myself, *'This has to be my work. I have to be part of this group of people of goodwill who want to see change.'*"

Her relationship with what was then known as the Charles R. Drew Postgraduate Medical School began not long after that. "I was involved with the University from the very beginning because one of my father's residents, Mitchell Spellman, was the Dean," she explained. "Dr. Spellman called me and invited me to be on the Board of the Visitors. He knew lots of luminaries, so the Board of Visitors had a group of unique and influential people who were interested in supporting the vision of the school, which was to train minority physicians to serve in under-resourced communities."

After holding a variety of positions with organizations such as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the T.H.E. Clinic and the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, Drew Ivie joined CDU as the Special Assistant to the President for Community Relations in 2016. In her role, she acts as a link between the University and the community. "I report what's happening on the ground and what's happening at the University so that we both know about each other and can help each other in our shared dreams," she explained. "Today [under the leadership of Dr. Carlisle], the University is more powerful, structurally sound and in a better position financially than I can remember, and I'm delighted that this institution and the new MLK Community Hospital are able to serve this community again with excellence."

Legacy of CDU

"Legacy of CDU" offers readers an intimate look into the rich history of Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science.

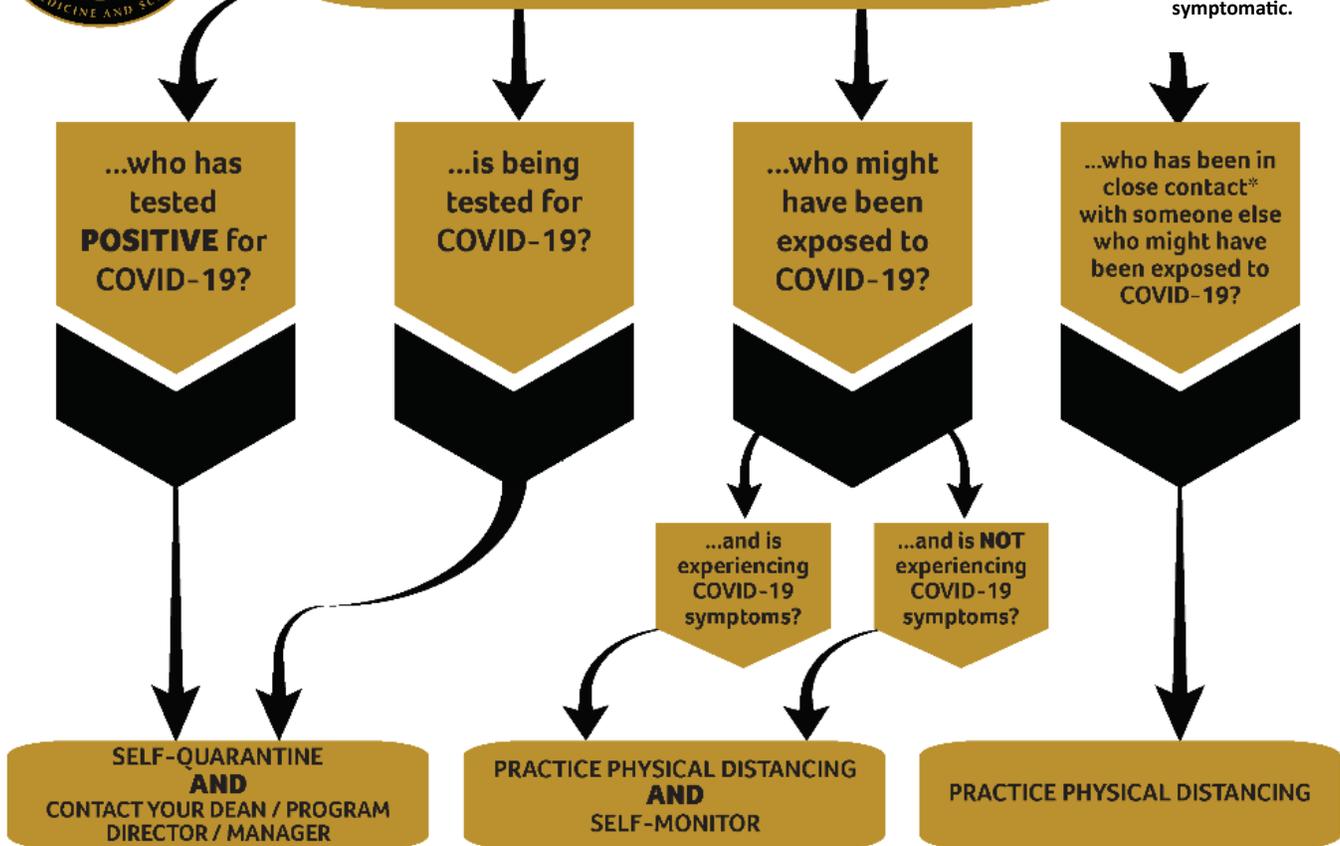
Special thanks to Robin Schiff



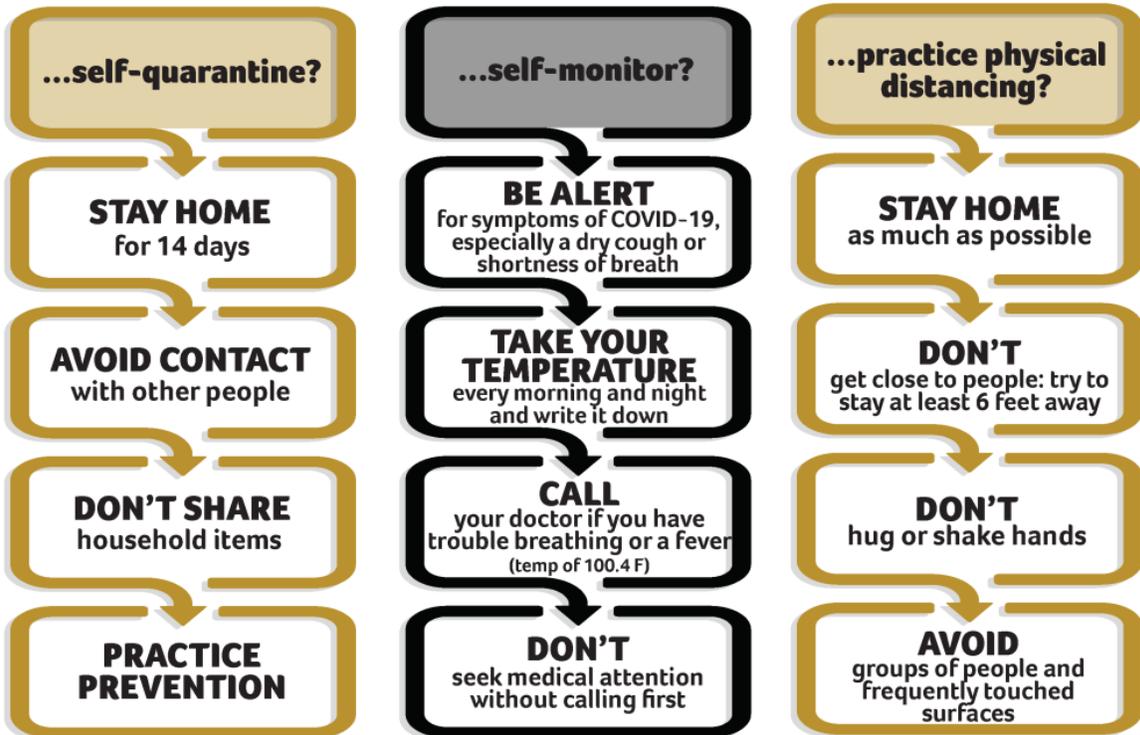
COVID-19: What to do if... I've been in close contact with someone...

What is Close Contact?

People who have been within six (6) feet of for at least 15 minutes within the 48 hours before symptom onset and while symptomatic.



COVID-19: HOW DO I...





In The News

Washington Post

[Essential workers get lost in the vaccine scrum as states prioritize the elderly \(2/1/2021\)](#)

Inside Higher Education

[Fighting Vaccine Hesitancy and Misinformation \(2/2/2021\)](#)

Los Angeles Times

[Column: We owe it to essential workers to demand racial equity for COVID-19 vaccines \(2/3/2021\)](#)

PR Newswire

[National Kidney Foundation Launches First-ever Health Equity Advisory Committee \(2/5/2021\)](#)

Washington Post

[Howard University, other HBCUs open clinics to help distribute coronavirus vaccines \(2/12/2021\)](#)

Fox 11

[The importance of being vaccinated. Hear one doctor's goal to help the community \(2/14/2021\)](#)

Psychiatric Times

[If We Had a Hammer \(2/15/2021\)](#)

Tennessee Tribune

[In TN, Blacks Got 15% of Cases, 18% of Deaths, Only 7% of Vaccines \(2/15/2021\)](#)

USC

[COVID town hall takes on vaccine concerns in the Black community \(2/17/2021\)](#)

Our Weekly

[Pandemic calls for more funding public health and education \(2/18/2021\)](#)

CBS2

[LA County Details New COVID-19 Vaccination Plan As Eligibility Expands \(2/24/2021\)](#)

HealthAffairs

[To Support Health Equity, Let's Rethink How Foundations Evaluate Grantees \(2/25/2021\)](#)

Bloomberg

[The Greenwood Initiative: Investing in Black America \(2/25/2021\)](#)

Santa Monica Daily Press

[Community health centers are key to solving striking vaccines inequities \(2/26/2021\)](#)



CDU News is published
monthly by the
Office of Strategic Advancement (OSA).

For more information, email
advancement@cdrewu.edu

To submit a story, email
chantelcarter@cdrewu.edu