



November 2020

CDU News

Community Forum
First Generation Day
...and more!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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

Greetings!

The year 2020 has undoubtedly been very trying, but there is still much to be thankful for at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science. First and foremost, we have all accomplished the extraordinary feat of making it to the end of the year in the midst of a pandemic. Secondly, despite the circumstances, it has been one of the most successful and newsiest years we've have had in a long time:

In January, we hosted Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas' Empowerment Congress for the second year in a row.

In February, we hosted a yet another thought-provoking discussion at the President's Breakfast tackling the issue of homelessness, highlighted by a prolific keynote speech by writer and journalist Steve Lopez. Later that month, we opened the CDU Student Center building, expanding our ability to better serve our students.

From April to August, we operated one of the first COVID-19 testing sites in South Los Angeles at our grand entrance on 120th Street, fulfilling a great need in our community during a time of crisis. We were able to test over 70,000 people during the testing site's operation, as well as collect key data that would inform the CDU COVID-19 Testing Site Data Report, one of the first of its kind.

Prior to the release of this report, while there had been geographic and zip code data available, no testing data had been

systematically collected and shared regarding race or ethnicity. Our CDU Health Policy Team, led by Dr. Roberto Vargas, took the charge on collecting this data from the 120th Street testing site, and there are now official testing and data collection protocols to refine future testing, treatment and public health measures.

It has been a landmark year for fundraising at CDU. In September, we received the largest individual gift in our 50-plus year history when Bloomberg Philanthropies gifted \$7.7 million dollars to the University in an effort to train more Black doctors in the United States.

Indeed, we have much to be grateful for at CDU, but I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the profound ways that this year has affected our community. We have had to pivot and adjust in ways that we previously thought impossible and, growing pains aside, we have managed to do so with grace. I attribute our continued success to the flexibility, commitment and understanding of our wonderful campus community, and on behalf of the CDU Executive Management Team (EMT), I sincerely thank you for your service.

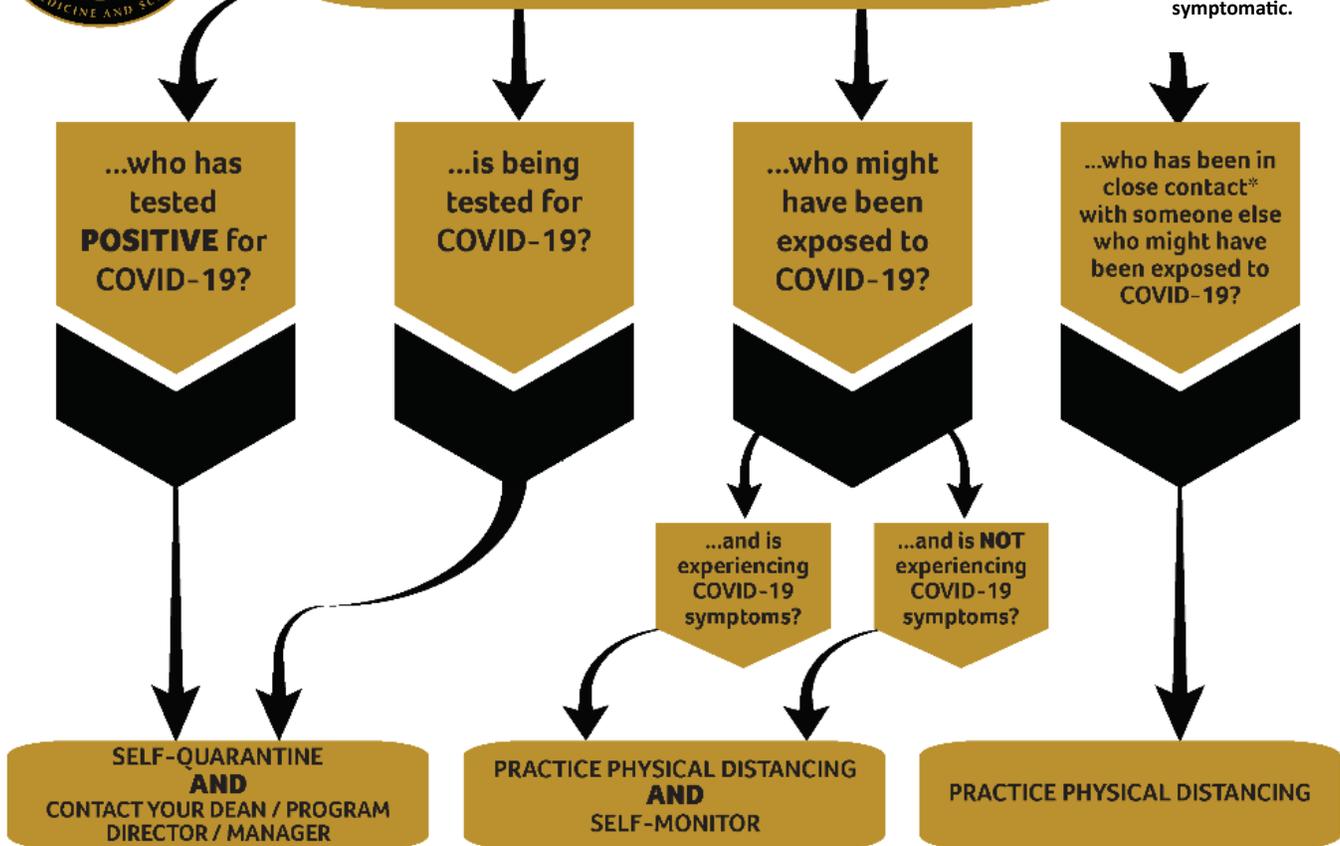
As we begin to wind down this year and prepare to bring in the next, I hope you'll consider attending our virtual Year-End Celebration on Friday, December 11.



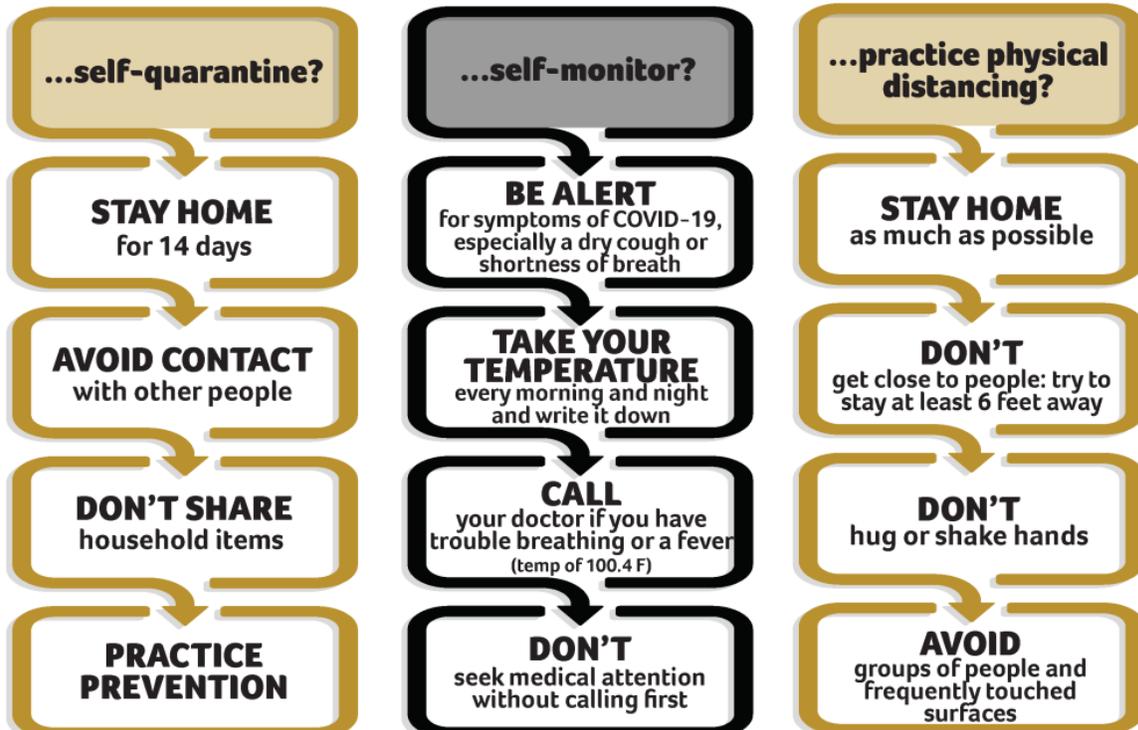
COVID-19: What to do if... I've been in close contact with someone...

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...



OSA and Student Affairs Host Second Annual First Generation Day

CDU celebrated its second annual First-Generation Day, hosted by Alumni Relations and Corporate Giving manager Brittney Miller and Interim Director of Student Services Kaitlin Jackson-Ferriot, EdD, on Monday, November 9, via Zoom. This year's event was keynoted by Jasmine Escalera, PhD of JE Coaching, which focuses on helping women of color attain career satisfaction.

Growing up in the projects in Brooklyn, New York, Dr. Escalera's early life mirrored that of many CDU students. She acknowledged that her life at times could be "[l]aced with challenges, but the most unique aspect [was] the deep sense of community [she] felt." As a young girl, she took her studies seriously and her community chose to uplift and support her aspirations instead of ostracizing them. "The only care they had was that someone was going to make it out, and that someone was me," she explained. "So, when I got into college it was a big win—not only for my family, but my entire community."

Dr. Escalera has since gone on to obtain her undergraduate degree in Biochemistry from Pace University and her doctorate degree in Pharmacology from Yale University. She had several experiences at those institutions which led her to her learning many lessons as a "serial first timer," which she outlined in her presentation, 'Life Lessons from a Former Self-Doubter.'

Lesson One: Self-doubt is fierce, but you can work through it

As is the case with many first-generation students, Dr. Escalera's excitement quickly faded when she first stepped foot on campus. She experienced many instances of impostor syndrome, or the psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their skills, talents or accomplishments. To combat this, she prioritized developing a community of like-minded students who were having similar experiences, citing her past growing up in the projects: "I never felt better than when I was around people who looked like me and who championed me."

Although Dr. Escalera was able to manage her self-doubt during her time at Pace, she found herself experiencing these feelings even more intensely when she began her postgraduate career at Yale. In addition to feeling like she was "starting all over again," she also fully acknowledged the heaviness that being a first-generation student can place on one's shoulders. "You feel like you can't stop because so many people are counting on you," she said. "The pressure to live up to someone else's idea of what my life should be was what was causing me so much anxiety."

This realization led her to her second lesson:

Lesson Two: This life is yours to live

Though her training is in biochemistry and pharmacology, Dr. Escalera found that her "passions extended beyond science and research," and began to strategize on how to connect her career to her passions of serving her community. To do this, Dr. Escalera implored attendees to engage in extended self-reflection and network to find mentors, even if they were outside of one's chosen profession.

By doing these things, Dr. Escalera explained, she was able to gain the experience she needed to have options and learn about opportunities that she otherwise would not have known about. "In the end, I did what my family wanted – I became successful. I did what my community had hoped for – I made it out. But I did it my way by connecting to what I was truly passionate about."

By intentionally aligning her career with her passions, Dr. Escalera was able to be more receptive to learning her final lesson:

Lesson Three: You can either have a job or a career; but a career requires strategy

"I wasn't taught the keys to success," Dr. Escalera, a daughter born to teenaged parents, said. With only a high school education, they "never taught [her] how to transfer [her best attributes] to a work setting because they never had to do it themselves."

Her most successful colleagues, she observed, *did* have that knowledge and "worked it to their advantage." Instead of becoming discouraged, Dr. Escalera was instead motivated to learn as much as she could to maximize her chances of success. "You have to learn how to 'play the game' just as well as your colleagues do," she said, noting that the way to accomplish that was to "adopt a mindset of continued learning" via professional development.

Perhaps most importantly, Dr. Escalera told the audience that the key to her success as a "serial first timer" was to let go of all judgements, especially the judgement of others. "Stop caring about the biases that people place on [you] because of who [you are, and where you come from]," she said. "Instead, show people what you are capable of."

CDU is proud to celebrate the accomplishments of its first-generation community and punctuated its celebration with giveaways to attendees, which included an individual counseling session with Dr. Escalera, new iPads (courtesy of Wells Fargo) and free MCAT Self-Prep Training courses.

CDU Experts Continue Conversation on Vaccines at Fourth Virtual Community Forum



CDU hosted its fourth virtual Community Forum via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, November 18, featuring CDU President/CEO Dr. David Carlisle; Dr. Jay Vadgama, CDU's Vice President for Research and Health Affairs; and the new Director for the Drew Center for AIDS Research Education (Drew C.A.R.E.S.), Dr. LaShonda Spencer. The interactive discussion, moderated by special assistant to the President Sylvia Drew Ivie, JD, continued last month's conversation of clearing up misconceptions in communities of color about vaccines as more information about the COVID-19 vaccine becomes available.



Dr. Carlisle stressed the importance of leadership, and how it factors into the containment of COVID-19, attributing its current spread in the United States "to a lack of unified, coherent policy on COVID-19 coming from the highest levels of government." He cited neighboring nation Canada as an example, noting that they had less than half the death rate than the United States from COVID-19 despite taking similar public health measures. "That is due to a coherent, unified government policy," he said. "I'm looking forward to a reprioritization of public health in our national agenda moving forward."

Following recent news from pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and Moderna showing that their vaccines were testing to be over 90% effective, Dr. Carlisle reiterated that no vaccine is 100% effective, but it "is an outstanding number among vaccines." Upon its availability, Dr. Carlisle believed that the most vulnerable populations – including frontline healthcare workers, older populations, and people of color – should get them first "because we know how the disease has manifested itself disproportionately among these populations."



Dr. Spencer spoke on the role of the physician in encouraging patients to get vaccinated. "With COVID-19, physicians will really have to step up and educate ourselves about this vaccine so that we can, in turn, educate our patients," she said. Further, she explained, it was important to recognize and acknowledge patients' fears about the vaccine, which are usually rooted in misinformation that can be corrected. "We have to understand where our patients are coming from, because if you brush off [their concerns], then you've lost their trust."



Dr. Vadgama spoke to the role of CDU in contributing to diversity in vaccine trials in light of recent news that the University was selected to participate in vaccine trials. "We began conversations with a [biotechnology company named] Novavax, but we've since moved on with a company named Sanofi," he clarified, going on to note that 300 individuals had already expressed interest in participating in trials once they began. He attributed this heightened interest to CDU's community-based participatory research (CBPR) model, an approach to research that involves community participation in each step of the research process. By utilizing this approach, Dr. Vadgama explained, "we engage our community partners [in a way that] ensures that we have their trust."



Safety Reminder!

Phishing emails can attempt to target your financial information, gain control of your computer and your local network resources. As the University continues to invest in resources to keep the CDU community safe online, we ask all staff, students and faculty to exercise caution when opening all emails, and to be especially wary of opening messages from unknown senders. Should you receive suspicious spam or phishing emails, be sure to **never** respond to the message; **never** click any links or attachments; and **never** provide any personal information about yourself, your family or your employer.

If you believe you may have inadvertently revealed sensitive information such as your University email and password, you should update your credentials immediately. If you have additional questions, comments or concerns, please contact the IT Help Desk at helpdesk@cdrewu.edu.



Charles R. Drew University
of Medicine and Science

Home for the Holidays!

The CDU President and CEO Dr. David Carlisle, Board of Trustees, the Executive Management Team, Staff Management Council and Academic Senate would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your commitment over the past year.

We wish you a safe and joyous holiday season and a Happy New Year filled with peace, happiness and prosperity. Please join us at our Virtual Year-End Holiday Celebration.

Friday, December 11, 2020

11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

via Zoom

Games! Raffles! Gifts!
..and more!





Recollections from Dr. Ezra Davidson

Ezra C. Davidson, MD, served as professor (and chairman, from 1971-1996) in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at CDU, and associate dean, Primary Care, at CDU, from 1997-2007. He also served as chief of staff, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, at King-Drew Medical Center in Los Angeles, which went on to become the tenth largest in the country. Dr. Davidson passed away on March 12, 2018 and was posthumously awarded the President's Medal at CDU's Commencement Ceremony later that year. Below is an excerpt from the 1985 Annual Report, where Dr. Davidson recalls his first impressions of the University:

"The first time I visited here was in the spring of 1970, and the shell of this hospital building was here. The school was housed in a trailer; hospital administration, in separate trailers. I was appointed chairman in November 1970, and moved to Los Angeles from New York, where I was teaching at Columbia University, in January 1971," says Dr. Ezra C. Davidson, Jr.

"There were several attractive things about developments here," says Dr. Davison, "including the public promise of developing and increasing services to underserved areas like this, and the opportunity to this under a newly-organized, regional structure for health services for the poor in Los Angeles County."

"And this was an institution primarily oriented towards minorities - towards increasing professional possibilities for minorities. It was a very appealing thing... Another attractive thing was the involvement of the community. I was very impressed with the energy coming from the community."

One of the most exciting days, says Dr. Davidson, was after the hospital opened. "It was March 29, 1972, about 8:30 in the morning [...] I still remember it very vividly."

"In the beginning," says Dr. Davidson, "we probably had enough to do in terms of service, continuing education, and postgraduate medical education [...] To maintain our identity and the full integrity of making a social contribution, we had to get into undergraduate medical education."

"Since we graduated our first class of OB/GYN residents in 1975, I have seen some of our residents become very important principals in the community... their contributions are very tangible... they also represent - in terms of quality and commitment - some of the best physicians in the community. I'm especially proud of that."

[Click here](#) to read the full excerpt.

Legacy of CDU

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



In The News

Nj.com

[More than just a basketball player: The many interests of Rutgers' Myles Johnson \(11/2/2020\)](#)

McAlester News

[MRHC welcomes Joseph Contreras \(11/11/2020\)](#)

Los Angeles Sentinel

[Celebration of Life: Donald R. Henderson \(11/12/2020\)](#)

Los Angeles Sentinel

[39th Annual ABWP Benefit Event Was A Smashing Success \(11/12/2020\)](#)

Foreign Affairs

[MIL-OSI USA: Barragán-Carter Bill to Fund Research of Minority Health Disparities Passes the House \(11/18/2020\)](#)

NBC News

[Black doctors endorse taking 'safe and effective' Covid-19 vaccine \(11/23/2020\)](#)

Yahoo News

[Leading doctors pen 'love letter' to Black Americans, imploring adoption of Covid-19 vaccine \(11/23/2020\)](#)

The Shade Room

[Black Coalition Against Covid Releases A Love Letter to Black America \(11/23/2020\)](#)

The Root

[Black Doctors Release Letter Encouraging Black Families to Take COVID-19 Vaccine When It's Safe, Avoid Gatherings During the Holidays \(11/23/2020\)](#)

BET

[Black Doctors Are Endorsing 'Safe And Effective' COVID-19 Vaccine \(11/25/2020\)](#)

Our Weekly

[Charles Drew University working to debunk vaccine myths \(11/25/2020\)](#)

Los Angeles Times

[South L.A. medical school receives \\$7.7-million grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies \(11/27/2020\)](#)

Philadelphia Tribune

[Marc H. Morial: National Urban League works with coalition Of Black medical professionals on vaccine safety, equit \(11/27/2020\)](#)

KTLA

[South L.A. medical school receives \\$7.7-million grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies \(11/27/2020\)](#)



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