BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2022

BLACK HEALTH & WELLNESS



Quinn *and* **Shelton**

she/her he/him



BLACK HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN PCA ARE MAKING HISTORY

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2022



Quinn from CHEER NEW YORK

Role on Team:

Performing Volunteer & Board Member

Real-life Job:

Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine/ Attending Physician at Mount Sinai Morningside & Mount Sinai West, New York, NY. I take care of patients in the emergency department, supervise/teach medical students & resident physicians, run the resident and faculty wellness initiatives for my program.

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Shelton from CHEER SAN FRANCISCO

Role on Team:

Alumni (Former Performing Volunteer)

Real-life Job:

Credentialed Trainer at Stanford Healthcare (Palo Alto, CA). I provide training to Doctors, Nurses, and Clinical Research Coordinators on how to use an Electronic Health Record and other technologies. Documenting an office visit, ordering labs and medications, and updating vaccine history are some of the topics I train on.

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The theme:

BLACK HEALTH & WELLNESS

Each year, a different Black History Month theme is chosen by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH).

In this article, the ASALH discusses the theme of "Black Health & Wellness" and its relevance to our lives in 2022.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2022

About the theme

Quinn

There are many persistent barriers to healthcare in the Black community, especially preventative care. For so long, Black patients were treated as “less than” as compared to their white counterparts, causing them to delay seeking care, often leading to worse outcomes as their disease processes were caught later in their clinical course. By lifting of Black providers (physicians, nurses, exercise/nutritional specialists, PT/OT, etc), my hope is that the Black community feels more comfortable seeking out care from providers who look like them and understand the stereotypes/stigma that surround Black healthcare. Increased focus on emotional and mental health is also critical. I strongly believe that physical health cannot exist in a vacuum without mental/emotional health and, for too long, the stigma of mental health in the Black community (that seeking out care is a sign of weakness, that addressing one’s mental health is for people with privilege) has prevented Black people from living full lives, mind body and soul.

Shelton

We made great strides in improving health and wellness within the Black community. I still feel like there is more work to be done. An area I would like to see improvement is in access to healthcare.



BLACK HEALTH & WELLNESS

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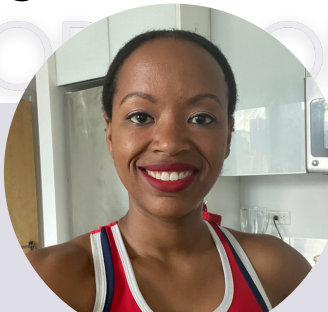
What moments or people in Black History inspire and motivate you?

I am very inspired by my grandmother. She died when I was 5 years old so I didn't know her personally but her spirit and story have always lifted me up during hard times, especially while working in healthcare. She worked as a nursing assistant in a predominately Black hospital in northern New Jersey. I suspect she would have loved to have the opportunity to attend nursing school if it had been feasible but in the 1920s, the racial and economic limitations of achieving this type of professional degree were rampant. When I think of the dedication and time I put into college, medical school and post-graduate medical training in order to become a practicing physician, I hope she is proud of me and I am fulfilling a dream which she could have only imagined.



Quinn



BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2022

What moments or people in Black History inspire and motivate you?

A moment in Black History that inspired me was witnessing Barack Obama become the first Black President of the United States of America. Barack Obama was the first Black male public figure who did not represent a negative stereotype of Black men seen on television. He was intelligent, successful and accomplished. I saw him as an example of what I wanted to be when I grew up.



Shelton



BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2022

How are YOU making history?

I hope that I am contributing to Black history by increasing representation in my field. In 2018, Black Americans represented 13% of the US population but only 5.4% of all physicians were Black. Even more striking, only 2.8% of all physicians are Black women. It is difficult on a daily basis to look around and not see people who look like you where you're working and I know from personal experience as a patient that it can be difficult to relate to a doctor who may not understand your experience as a Black American. Some of the most meaningful days I have at work are when I care for a patient who comments that she feels fortunate to see somebody who looks like her standing at the other end of the stretcher.

Quinn



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How are YOU making history?

I had the opportunity to give presentations on implicit bias, microaggressions, and code-switching to my department.

These presentations have created an environment that has become comfortable having discussion on how to create a diverse and inclusive work environment.



Shelton

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What are some challenges Black healthcare workers face?

Not infrequently, my educational/training background are questioned/challenged by (mostly) patients but occasionally other colleagues, frequently asking where I went to school after I initially introduce myself. Being a Black female doctor also comes with its unique set of challenges as I am often referred to as the nurse, technician or housekeeper by patients and their families; I often overhear that the patient "hasn't seen the doctor" even when I have spoken with them several times. It is frustrating to have my value undermined by patients who I am trying to care for but it is part of the job that I have learned to work through (though it does require some special coping mechanisms)!



Quinn

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What are some challenges Black healthcare workers face?

The biggest challenge Black healthcare workers face is employment opportunity. Black people are less likely to be employed in management roles compared to other ethnicities. Black people also are given fewer opportunities for promotions and pay raises.



Shelton

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How could orgs like PCA Teams help people like your patients?

All of the PCA teams seem to do a great job of supporting beneficiaries that intersect the LGBTQ+ communities and healthcare. We know that positive health outcomes are associated with more than just medicine–housing security, childcare and employment support, and visibility within a community all play a role. There is still a significant stigma around race and accessing mental/emotional health resources so I would love to see PCA lend some support in that realm.

How could orgs like PCA Teams help people like YOU?

PCA and Cheer New York provide one of the best outlets I could ask for as a physician. The physical, emotional and mental rigors of cheerleading, performing, fundraising and advocacy are cathartic and definitely help re-invigorate me for my professional life. Every practice/event with CNY requires proactive teamwork as does every shift at work. Verbal & non-verbal communication, conflict resolution and trust are essential in emergency medicine in order to properly care for patients and I am lucky to have the opportunity to perfect these skills both during and outside of work.

PRIDE cheerleading association

Quinn

CHEER NEW YORK

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How could orgs like PCA Teams help people like your patients?

I would like to see PCA return to the fight against HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS is still relevant and heavily impacts the Black community, especially the Black Gay community. It would be amazing for PCA update its language about HIV/AIDS. It is no longer considered a life-threatening illness, instead a chronic illness. PCA can also work with organizations whose mission is to battle HIV/AIDS stigma.

How could orgs like PCA Teams help people like YOU?

PCA has done an incredible job with creating diverse teams. I want PCA to help create more inclusive environments within each team. Remember, diversity is being invited to the party, inclusivity is being welcomed.

PRIDE cheerleading association

Shelton

CHEER SAN FRANCISCO

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2022

What brings you joy?



Quinn & Shelton

Spending time with people who I love in any capacity. Though I do have to say that looking forward to Wednesday night CNY practices definitely help get me through the 1st half of every week!

I love doing good deeds and seeing my actions positively impact someone.



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