

It's Time to Build the Tubman Center for Health & Freedom

Washington lawmakers should break new ground by investing in a community-owned healthcare institution to offer integrative health care and train, support, place, and employ Black and Brown healthcare practitioners.

The Tubman Center for Health & Freedom is establishing a community-designed, patient-owned health services and workforce development center that will address community health needs and create new models for expanding access to quality jobs in the health professions. This work will be Black-led versus carried out on behalf of our communities.

In 2022, the Washington State Legislature invested in land acquisition and predevelopment for Tubman Health. **It's time to build on that investment with support for construction of the Tubman Center for Health & Freedom.**

The Need for Practitioners from Community Is Urgent

There is a dearth of Black and Brown health care practitioners. Black, Latine, and Native people are severely underrepresented across health professions (Salsberg, Richwine, & Westergaard et al, 2021), and only 2 percent of active physicians in Washington are Black, only 1 percent Native, and only 3 percent Latine (Washington Medical Commission). Nationally, the percent of Black physicians has increased only 4 percent over the past 120 years (Ly, 2022). Additionally, only 4 percent of psychologists are Black and only 6 percent Latine (Am. Psychology Assoc.).

This is a matter of life and death. Every seven minutes, a Black person dies prematurely in the U.S. Our communities receive care that is of lower quality, and many of us avoid care entirely not only due to cost but also because of the discrimination we experience. Racial concordance between healthcare providers and patients improves communication, patient satisfaction, and health outcomes (Jetty, Jabbarpour, & Pollack, et al., 2021).

This is a matter of economic justice. The healthcare system is the largest creator of jobs in U.S., but the benefits flow away from us rather than toward us. Without community shaping healthcare workforce investments, those dollars will continue to feed a segregated workforce with low-paying jobs for Black and Brown healthcare workers, rather than supporting community-owned, -led, and -serving institutions and generating good jobs for our people.

Community Solutions Will Save Lives & Build Community Health

“Students from traditionally marginalized groups, particularly communities of color and those who are economically disadvantaged, face particular barriers to entering, and advancing in the field. While efforts to increase both racial and socio-economic diversity within the health workforce are ongoing, students and workers of color remain underrepresented in the majority of provider populations, outside of entry-level roles. The gaps are even starker when it comes to those who teach healthcare education: practitioners of color are less likely to transition from practice into teaching, which means that most professional education is performed through a majority-culture lens.”

Current health care career pathways, pipelines, and institutions are not adequate to the task. They lack the community connections, expertise, and anti-racist commitments to build the diverse healthcare workforce that Washington state needs in the 21st Century.

This challenge won't be solved simply by attempting to channel future Black and Brown providers into existing institutions. Black and Brown practitioners-to-be deserve culturally-relevant information, access, material support, and - most important of all - community connection, which is best achieved through community-rooted training programs, networks, and employers. These solutions will improve health outcomes for patients and health workers alike and help our communities build power to determine our future and achieve health justice.

Solution: Invest in the Tubman Center for Health & Freedom, a Transformative Health Services and Workforce Development Center

The Tubman Center for Health & Freedom is establishing a flagship health services and workforce development center in a medically underserved zip code. This center will provide integrative primary health care for 8,000 patients and offer health programming to 16,000 people. It also will train, employ, and connect practitioners from community - who will also be members of the center's patient base. The Tubman Center for Health & Freedom offer:

- High-quality jobs for 60-100 practitioners from community, including integrative primary care, behavioral health, physical and manual therapy, acupuncture, social work, and community health worker support
- Healthcare workforce development models to cultivate practitioners offering a range of services, placed in quality jobs with career progression in antiracist workplaces.
- Healthcare career pathways supporting young scholars from community as they transition into health sciences and healthcare programs with antiracism/social justice focus
- Health Equity in Advanced Practice: supporting programs/tracks focused on health equity at technical, undergraduate, and graduate levels
- Residency & Preceptorship: offering onsite training opportunities at the Tubman Center for Health & Freedom flagship health center
- Tubman Guides: training and employing community health workers to offer care accompaniment, advocacy, and navigation for our community
- Technical assistance to training programs and educational institutions to improve retention and support for Black and Brown students

Time for a Ground-Breaking Investment from Washington Lawmakers

In 2022, the Washington State Legislature took historic action by investing \$5.6M in land acquisition, predevelopment, and operating support for the Tubman Center for Health & Freedom. Now it's time to build. With \$33 million, we can construct a premier, community-owned health institution that sets national standards for care and workforce development:

	State Investment	Matched by \$16 million from philanthropy and financing
2023	\$8.5 million	
2024	\$8.5 million	

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