



Patrice A. Harris, MD, MA

President

American Medical Association

Patrice A. Harris, MD, MA, a psychiatrist from Atlanta, became the 174th president of the American Medical Association in June 2019, and the organization's first African-American woman to hold this position. Dr. Harris has diverse experience as a private practicing physician, public health administrator, patient advocate and medical society lobbyist.

Dr. Harris currently spearheads the AMA's efforts to end the opioid epidemic and has been chair of the AMA Opioid Task Force since its inception in 2014. During her presidency, Dr. Harris will continue to lead the task force as it works across every state to eliminate barriers to treatment, provide patients with access to affordable, non-opioid pain care, and fight the stigma faced by those with substance use-disorders.

Having served on the AMA Board of Trustees since 2011, and as chair from 2016 to 2017, she has long been a mentor, a role model and an advocate. Prior to serving on the board, Dr. Harris honed her broad knowledge and deep understanding of health care issues through various leadership roles. At the AMA these included having served for many years on the AMA Council on Legislation, including a term as chair, and on multiple AMA task forces on topics such as health information technology, payment and delivery reform, and private contracting. Beyond the AMA she has held positions of leadership with the American Psychiatric Association, the Georgia Psychiatric Physicians Association, the Medical Association of Georgia, and The Big Cities Health Coalition, where she chaired this forum composed of leaders from America's largest metropolitan health departments.

Growing up in Bluefield, West Virginia, Dr. Harris dreamt of entering medicine at a time when few women of color were encouraged to become physicians. Dr. Harris spent her formative years at West Virginia University, earning a BA in psychology, an MA in counseling psychology and,

ultimately, a medical degree in 1992.

It was during this time that her passion for helping children emerged, and she completed her psychiatry residency and fellowships in child and adolescent psychiatry and forensic psychiatry at the Emory University School of Medicine.

Two themes that govern Dr. Harris's professional life are a passion to improve the lives of children and service to others. A recognized expert in children's mental health and childhood trauma, Dr. Harris has led efforts on both local and national levels to integrate public health, behavioral health and primary care services with supports for employment, housing and education.

A distinguished fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, Dr. Harris continues in private practice and currently consults with both public and private organizations on health service delivery and emerging trends in practice and health policy. She is an adjunct assistant professor in the Emory Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and an adjunct clinical assistant professor in psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Morehouse School of Medicine.

2019–2020

