

Humans of CDI

Winfred (Win) W. Williams, MD

Founding Director, Center for Diversity and Inclusion

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion at Mass General Hospital. Learn more about the Center's origins from CDI founding director, Win Williams, MD, below.



CDI is celebrating 30 years this year thanks to your original vision. What was this vision 30 years ago?

The vision for CDI was borne out of the simple realization that when I began my career here, those who are underrepresented in medicine (UiM) at Mass General were few at the trainee level and virtually non-existent at the faculty level. There was no other African American faculty member in the Department of Medicine when I was invited to join the department in 1990. Dr. John Potts (then, Chief of Medicine), Dr. Tony Coles (who went on to become one of the most successful pharmaceutical executives in the country) and I, realized we had a huge challenge. Such underrepresentation was absolutely unacceptable at the largest Harvard teaching hospital in Boston. The vision for CDI was straightforward: to create a centralized office that would support the career development of students and physicians-of-color by inviting them to build a critical mass and their careers at MGH where they might thrive.

What is your proudest accomplishment of CDI?

My proudest CDI accomplishment is the exponential growth of the office over 3 decades. We were the first office its kind in a Harvard hospital and one of the first in any academic medical center in the country. From a one-room, one-director, one-administrative assistant operation located solely in the Department of

Medicine, now to a fully staffed Center of Excellence with support staff expertise, physician staff, and an executive director, we manage a full complement of activities encompassing recruitment and retention initiatives for UiM trainees and faculty across 26 different divisions, community outreach and medical education, and initiatives to promote Social Justice in Medicine. I couldn't be prouder of the footprint we've established at Mass General Brigham and the model we've created for our Harvard Teaching Hospital affiliates and medical centers across the country.

What does CDI mean to you today after 30 years?

In my career at Mass General, I consider the CDI one of the more enduring and transformative of my contributions to the civic life of MGH and HMS. It has been a deeply rewarding journey: CDI has advanced the careers of hundreds of UiM students and faculty and improved the culture of medicine and institutional priorities at MGH and HMS.