

UW Medicine

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
HEALTHCARE EQUITY



# DOCTOR FOR A DAY REPORT

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# A WELCOME FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The 2024–2025 academic year brought exciting opportunities for growth, innovation, and deeper engagement with our student communities. The Center for Workforce Inclusion and Healthcare System Equity (WIHSE) has worked hard to commit to our mission of liberating all our communities’ brilliant potential to be future healthcare leaders.

Doctor for a Day (DFAD) is a monthly themed academy that exposes K-12 youth to health careers through hands-on activities. DFAD partners with clinical departments, school districts and non-profits to hold workshops led by medical students as near peer mentors bringing healthcare professionals to K-12 youth to serve as mentors and role models. Thus far, DFAD has reached over 3,000 students and serves over 560 students per academic year.

**We are excited to share our 2019-2024 DFAD Report with you, spotlighting our achievements and impact over the past 5 years.**

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM DFAD 2019-2024:

- Held **11 events** out in community with stakeholder partners ranging from [Neuroscience Day](#), [UW MAPS Pre-Health Conference](#), [Association of Surgical Education \(ASE\) 2025 Annual Meeting](#).
- Expanded relationships with key stakeholders to reach more than **17 partnerships** across the region including schools and organizations such as SpinGirls, GEARUp, College Success Foundation, etc.
- Onboarded **6-8 UW Medical Student Leaders** each academic year for a **total of 48 medical students** who have guided event coordination, research activities, volunteer engagement and social media management.



This year, **Bridget Garland**, Program Manager, joined the DFAD program team to support program planning and day to day operations. Bridget provided oversight for the DFAD budget and event coordination.

As we enter the 2025–2026 academic year, our focus is on advancing innovative curriculum and offering tailored, impactful opportunities that inspire students to pursue careers in healthcare. Through strong mentorship, networking, and academic support, we hope to empower our student communities to thrive. We remain committed to shaping the next generation of healthcare leaders while strengthening our connections and impact within the communities we serve. We also recognize the current climate targeting the communities our students come from and affirm our commitment to ensuring voices from the most marginalized communities are the future leaders in healthcare. We are enhancing our efforts for more sustainable funding to ensure the longevity of our programs so please follow us on social media, engage with our listserv and be on the lookout to support our fundraising efforts.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Estell Williams".

Estell Williams, MD

Associate Professor of Surgery

Vice Chair, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Department of Surgery

Executive Director, Center for Workforce Inclusion and Healthcare System Equity (WIHSE)

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# ABOUT DFAD



**Doctor For a Day (DFAD)** began as a response to the lack of representation of students of color in health careers. The program was **founded by Dr. Joy Thurman-Nguyen**, a proud Filipina and African-American born and raised in the south end of Seattle. She founded DFAD during her first year of medical school at the University of Washington. Now a family medicine physician with Kaiser Permanente in Seattle, Dr. Thurman Nguyen grew up in the city and rarely saw health professionals who looked like her.



“I was not the kid who dreamed of being a doctor. Growing up in Seattle and only seeing white medical providers, it was not a role I could imagine for myself,” she shares.

Her experience fueled her commitment to create early exposure for K through 12 students of color. In 2014 she launched DFAD with the vision of offering a hands on day of learning led by volunteer doctors, nurses, dentists, physical therapists, and medical students who reflected the communities they served.

“This is the age when kids start thinking about what they can become. We want them to see that people who look like them belong in these careers,” says Dr. Thurman Nguyen.

Her foundation continues to shape a program that reaches hundreds of students, expands pathways into health professions, and inspires the next generation of diverse healthcare leaders.



## OUR MISSION

To increase representation of communities traditionally underrepresented in health careers across UW health systems.

## OUR VISION

Pushing institutions to decrease barriers to access careers in healthcare by developing innovative programming to improve diversity, equity and inclusion through multipronged ecosystem development, community outreach and advocacy thereby improving healthcare workforce diversification.



## 2019-20 DFAD

The 2019-2020 academic year offered many opportunities and was a year of growth and change for DFAD. The program was able to double its event offerings from previously only offering about 3-4 events per year and revamp its curriculum. With the global shutdown caused by COVID in March 2020 the program was impacted and promptly halted however by May 2020 we were able to hold a virtual session targeting key information about the COVID-19 Pandemic and the health impacts being seen and felt in the medical community.

### KEY EFFORTS:

DFAD 2019-20 entered a new phase of growth and innovation, expanding both its programming and community reach..



Held 10 events, doubling annual event output of previous years



Student leaders collaborated with residents and faculty to reimagine curriculum, so each session was designed around a medical specialty, disease, or organ



Expanded partnerships to work with collaborators and communities in such areas as Edmonds, Tukwila, and Federal Way



Built out online resources such as links to other programs, blogs, and vlogs for participants to stay connected to DFAD leadership



Piloted first online session with partner College Success Foundation in May

### TESTIMONIALS:



*The people who work in healthcare seem so kind, and I love helping people. Maybe working as a doctor would not only be great but maybe also make me happy."*



*The hands on activities allowed me to have personal interaction and I enjoyed the scenarios that we needed to solve; it gave me the experience of the problem solving that a doctor must do."*





## 2025+ DFAD

As an in-person, educational health event series, Doctor for a Day has been uniquely positioned to face a complex set of challenges, from the pandemic to ongoing changes in healthcare and education. That DFAD has not only been able to survive but thrive through this landscape is a testament to the strength of the leadership, volunteers, and community. The 24-25 year offered a glimpse into DFAD's exciting future and continued growth. The team put on 11 events through the academic year, led by an expanded team that welcomed multiple new staff members and student interns to the WIHSE team, along with a sure-handed student leadership team.

### LOOKING AHEAD...



Secure sustainable and long-lasting funding for WIHSE programming, including DFAD



Continue to strengthen community partnerships



Offer greater communication regarding resources for students



Continue to improve curriculum and offer relevant, engaging sessions

**The DFAD team is excited about meeting these goals in the future and continuing to support the young people in our communities who dream of careers in healthcare.**



# DFAD DURING THE COVID YEARS

## 2020-21 DFAD

### KEY EFFORTS:

In May 2021, DFAD wrapped up a successful 2020-2021 year.



**Hosted 5 total events (1 in-person, 4 virtual)**

- Nervous System on Jan 30th with College Success Foundation (in-person)
- Heart & Lungs on Feb 27th with Africatown Center for Education & Innovation (virtual)
- Infectious Disease, Microbiology, and Global Health (virtual)
- Genetics, Race-Based Medicine, and Social Determinants of Health on April 24th (virtual)
- Trauma on May 15th (virtual)



**Community Partners:** College Success Foundation, Africatown Center for Education & Innovation



**UW Departments:** Neurology, Pathology, Cardiac Surgery, Thoracic Surgery, Cardiology, Infectious Disease, Pulmonology, Public Health, Bioethics and Humanities, Medical Genetics, Trauma Critical Care, Respiratory Therapy, and Emergency Medicine.

## 2021-22 DFAD

The 2021 to 2022 school year brought many challenges as the community returned to classrooms and grieved after the Ingraham High School tragedy. DFAD continued with care, offering virtual and hybrid events and helping launch the Center for Workforce Inclusion and Healthcare System Equity to expand support for students.

### KEY EFFORTS:



Successfully offered 4 virtual sessions, and transitioned to also hold two hybrid sessions in the spring



Expanded DFAD to a regional site in Idaho led by Sarah Garrish, MD



Received anonymous donation that helped WIHSE reimplement our extension of DFAD as a 3-week summer residential program that launched summer 2022.



Fostered relationships with Stem Paths Innovation Network (SPIN), Seattle Urban League, College Success Foundation, Africatown Center for Excellence and Innovation and Seattle Public School African American Male Achievement Program



Secured additional support from Cambia Health Foundation to expand the number of DFAD sessions we offer through the school year to expand DFAD programming.



**Cambia Health Foundation** awarded a grant of 20,000 dollars to the University of Washington for the 2021 to 2022 academic year in support of Doctor For a Day. The grant was awarded through the Foundation's Healthy People, Healthy Communities funding track. This support helped expand opportunities for youth from underrepresented communities to explore and pursue careers in health care and strengthened DFAD's efforts to address health disparities.



## 2022-23 DFAD

After the uncertainty of the pandemic and a year of virtual programming, the 2022–2023 academic year marked an exciting return to in-person events. Thanks to the support of the Cambia Health Foundation, we expanded our outreach through 8 community sessions and a major collaboration with the Washington State Alliance for Better Schools (WABS) and the Health Industry Leadership Table (HILT), bringing over 500 high school students to UW for a day of career exploration.

With grant support, we also welcomed student intern Lily Zavala, a former SHPEP participant, whose insight and enthusiasm have strengthened our programming and peer connections. As we continue to grow to meet community needs, we're grateful for our funders and excited to build even stronger curriculum in 2023–2024.

### KEY EFFORTS:

Change sentence to "We partnered with Dr. Joshua Villareal PharmD, UW School of Pharmacy and Kumhee Ro, DNP Associate Professor at Seattle University School of Nursing who received grant funding to develop a validated survey tool to measure the effectiveness and impact of ecosystem programs. DFAD served as the primary pilot program to validate the survey during the 2023-2024 academic year of programming.



Partnerships are vital to the success of Doctor for a Day. We began collaborating with African American Male Achievement to increase the number of African American males in health professions and continued our long-standing relationship with the College Success Foundation. During spring break, we partnered with their Northwest Coastal team as one of 4 featured organizations.



We partnered with Washington Alliance for Better Schools (WABS) and the Health Industry Leadership Table (HILT) for a major event that welcomed over 500 students from 13 schools to the UW HUB to explore healthcare career opportunities. [A video of the event is available here: Sound Careers in Healthcare 2023: Charting Options in Healthcare!](#)



Our neuroscience day attracted more than 250 RSVPs, highlighting strong student interest. We continue to build and strengthen relationships with community partners, including CTCs (College and Technical Centers for students), while developing new collaborations that inspire students to engage with DFAD and related programs.

### TESTIMONIALS:



*As a resident, I decided to come to the University of Washington because I learned about Doctor for a Day and wanted to help out. I participate any chance I get."*





## 2023-24 DFAD

DFAD continued to advance its mission through a series of educational events, community partnerships, conference presentations, and scholarly work. These efforts strengthened outreach to diverse student populations and contributed to broader conversations on pathways into the health professions. During 2023-24, the DFAD team made strides in our research development initiatives to strengthen the program's foundation. Several manuscripts, presentations, and data analyses were completed to highlight the impact of early medical education and its role in diversifying the health professions.

### KEY EFFORTS:

We recently partnered with a faculty member in the UW School of Pharmacy and a nursing faculty member at Seattle University to develop a survey that can be used across a variety of health care enrichment programs for youth. A small pilot was conducted last summer and we will put this evaluation into play during the 2023-2024 years for DFAD.



Hosted 11 events across the academic year including oncology, diabetes, form and function, neuroscience, hearts and lunch and pediatrics.



Community partners event included Spin Girls, Africatown Center for Education & Innovation, and College Success Foundation.



DFAD student leaders presented at the 2024 AI/AN Healthcare Workforce Development Summit in May 2025 on DFAD program outreach and outcomes American Indigenous/Alaska Native students.



Dr. Estell Williams presented at the 2024 Society of Black Academic Surgeons Conference on program components and strategies for engaging disadvantaged students in pursuing careers in surgery.



Developed the manuscript "[Doctor for a Day: The Impact of a Health Professions Enrichment Program on Self-Efficacy](#)" in collaboration with the UW School of Medicine, College of Nursing, School of Pharmacy, and Department of Surgery. This was later published in *Frontiers* in 2025.

### TESTIMONIALS:



*My favorite thing about DFAD was observing the real-life brain and getting to know the specialties of other doctors and medical students."*





# 2025 DFAD

In May 2025, the Doctor for a Day (DFAD) student leadership and program teams concluded a successful series of community events and research contributions. We are proud to highlight the impressive accomplishments made by our dedicated students and faculty researchers.

## KEY EFFORTS:

In **May 2025**, DFAD wrapped up a successful 2024-2025 year, celebrating student and faculty accomplishments in community events and research.



Onboarded a team of 8 UW medical students to support program, social media, research, and volunteer coordination. Thank you to **Nicole Martinez, Yurong Shao, Abdullah Bhurgri, Manreet Bhuller, Dorsa Toghani, Debora Ferede, Caroline Toombs, Pittra Jaengprajak!**



Participated in eleven community partner events ranging from [Neuroscience Day](#), [UW MAPS Pre-Health Conference](#), [Association of Surgical Education \(ASE\) 2025 Annual Meeting](#).



Successfully completed eight research projects ([see research tab on the DFAD website](#)), including publications, posters, and presentations.

These achievements reflect the hard work and collaboration of our student-led research teams and the WIHSE faculty and staff mentors. **We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to these efforts.** As we look ahead to the 2025-2026 academic year, DFAD remains committed to expanding our reach and inspiring even more students to explore careers in medicine and healthcare.

## TESTIMONIALS:



*Hearing about the real experiences of people who are doctors and medical students allowed me to have a better understanding of a healthcare career and was very helpful."*



*Having POC individuals, especially women, talking about what they do inspires me a lot"*



*I became more comfortable and confident that I would like to pursue a career in the medical field"*





# THANK YOU!

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:

Thank you to **Cambia Health Foundation**, **Dr. Paul Ramsey** and an **Anonymous Donation**, all of whom contributed to DFAD during the 2019-2024 time period. Their contributions have helped inspire the **next generation of healthcare leaders** by making it possible to provide hands-on activities and educational events that introduce youth to careers in medicine. Their investment has **allowed thousands of emerging healthcare professionals** find their **passions in medicine** and get access to early education to jump start their careers.

## WHY YOU SHOULD MAKE AN INVESTMENT?

Support the Doctor for a Day Program at the UW School of Medicine and **help spark the future of healthcare**. Your donation provides hands-on learning and engaging events that open doors for youth to explore careers in medicine.

## DFAD AND WIHSE: LOOKING AHEAD

Given DFAD's success and the need to further support students pursuing health careers, the program is now part of the Center for **Workforce Inclusion and Healthcare System Equity (WIHSE)**. Learn more about WIHSE and its programs, including DFAD, in our [annual report linked here](#). All future DFAD updates will be included in WIHSE annual reports.

## HOW TO SPONSOR/GET INVOLVED:



**DFAD DONATION**  
[Link here](#)



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