

# Healthcare in Living Color: Understanding How the “Color-Effect” Impacts Patient Care

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## Introduction

Serena Williams and Beyoncé are on the long list of black women who have had near-death birthing experiences. This list even includes medical doctors who died because of childbirth. Socioeconomic factors alone do not account for the racial/ethnic inequities in healthcare.<sup>1</sup> So, why are even nonpoor individuals of color received inferior medical care? The research has found that it is strongly related to the cultural racism within American culture. Cultural racism is a concept that has been applied to prejudices and discrimination based on cultural differences between ethnic or racial groups.<sup>2</sup>

With this, cultural racism can lead to individual level unconscious bias that can lead to discrimination against members of the minority group. In the clinical setting, this puts people like me at an increased risk of receiving inadequate medical care compared to my white counterparts. Research studies summarized that across nearly every type of diagnostic and treatment interventions blacks and other minorities receive fewer procedures and poorer quality medical care than whites. It was found that implicit bias among medical providers were linked to biased treatment recommendations in the care of black patients and poorer quality of patient provider communication including provider nonverbal behavior.<sup>1</sup>

Cultural competency interventions for current clinicians can lead to improvements in provider knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding cultural competency and health care access and utilization.<sup>1</sup> Though is a great immediate option to minimize some of the disparities among racial/ethnic group, it will not eradicate this issue. There is a devastating need for diversity in the medical field. Diversity in medicine can help increase patient comfort and trust. It can help to address cultural differences which may impact healthcare delivery. Most importantly, it will help to address cultural differences which may be significantly impact the delivery of medicine. Diversity in medicine will also encourages BIPOC youth to pursue careers in medicine.<sup>1</sup>



## Women of Impact

### Beyoncé



- 28 Grammys
  - has most nomination for any women (46)
- 3rd most awarded artist in all of history (451 awards)
- Only female to win 2 Legend Awards at the World Music Awards
- 1st female to receive the International Artist Award of Excellence
- Successful businesswoman



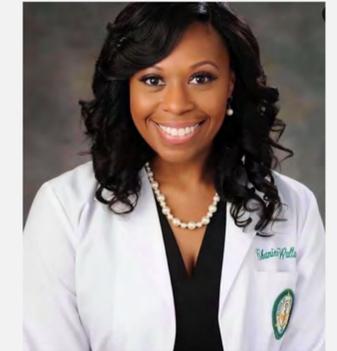
### Serena Williams



- 186 consecutive weeks ranked WTA No. 1 in the world
- 73 career single titles
- 23 career double titles
- 2 mixed double titles
- 2 “Serena Slams”
- 4x Olympic Gold Medalist
- Over \$94 million in career prize money
- Successful Businesswoman



### Meet the Doctors



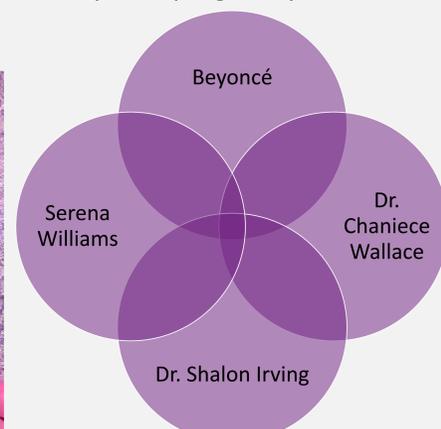
**Dr. Chaniece Wallace** was Pediatric Chief Resident at Indiana University School of Medicine.. She was 30 years old when she died on Oct. 22, 2020, just two days after she gave birth to her daughter, Charlotte



In January 2017, just three weeks after giving birth, **Dr. Shalon Irving** died of complications related to high blood pressure. Irving—an epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Public Health Service—had dedicated her career to investigating public health disparities.

## Shared Birthing Stories

- Black mothers
- Well-known in their respective fields
- Role models
- Non-poor→ have access to the best healthcare but still had life threatening birthing experiences
- All these women survived potentially fatal pregnancy complications→ two died



## Discussion

Why are women like Serena Williams, Beyoncé, Dr. Wallace, and Dr. Irving suffering from birthing complications? Research shows that black women are 3-4x more likely to die from childbirth than their white counterparts. These statistics are not related to be physical health factors like smoking, drug use, obesity, or hypertension; but instead related to the lack of diversity in medicine.<sup>3</sup> Only 3.3% of certified PAs are black. A wealth of research shows that patients respond better to providers who look like them and can relate to them culturally.<sup>7</sup> More providers of color would lead to increases in patient comfort and trust. It would also encourage BIPOC youth to pursue careers in medicine. I admire women like Beyonce, Serena, Dr. Wallace, and Dr. Irving for their numerous accomplishments. I would love to have even just a small impact compared to them I want to see a change in the disparities in health care. The best way for change to occur is to be the change you want to see in the world. This brings to where I am today.

## References

