

Meet Iris C. Gibbs, MD . . .

Dr. Gibbs grew up in one of the poorest neighborhoods of Dover, Delaware, was among the first in her extended family to attend college, and the first in her family to become an academic physician. After performing well at the University of Delaware, Dr. Gibbs welcomed the accomplishment of matriculating to Stanford Medical School with some anxiety. She discovered a program supported by the Stanford Center of Excellence (COE) in Diversity that alleviated her anxiety by providing a smooth transition into medical school. Through the research opportunities available to her, Dr. Gibbs found her niche in the Department of Radiology Oncology, where, after completing her residency, she accepted a position on the faculty. The COE was there to support her once again, this time as a junior faculty member. Today, Dr. Gibbs is an assistant professor of radiation oncology at the Stanford Cancer Center, co-director of the Cyberknife Radiosurgery Program, and a renowned and recognized authority for Cyberknife Radiosurgery in the treatment of brain and spinal tumors. She recently received the prestigious Best Doctors of America Award for 2006. And she attributes her success in part to her involvement in the COE program.



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About the Program

- The Centers of Excellence (COE) are authorized under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act. Together with the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP), COEs function to increase the representation of minority and disadvantaged students in the health professions.
- The Center of Excellence supports Stanford University School of Medicine’s efforts to meet these challenges, ensuring that the school’s 25-year commitment to minority education is not only continued, but is expanded to meet the needs of the 21st century.
- More information on the Stanford COE program activities is available on the program website:

<http://coe.stanford.edu/>

According to Dr. Gibbs . . .

The program allowed students to acclimate to medical school and provided the chance to explore research opportunities. Accordingly, I participated in research in the Department of Radiation Oncology during my pre-clinical and clinical years, culminating in oral presentations, peer-reviewed publications, and a research award upon graduation. After residency training at Stanford, I accepted a position on the faculty. The COE continued to support my success by providing research support as I launched my sub-specialty career. My success as an academic physician is directly attributable to the efforts of the COE staff and program.

The HCOP & COE programs are vital to maintaining the pipeline of qualified medical physicians and physician educators. Though strides have been made in balancing diversity in medical school, underrepresented minorities make up less than 5 percent of medical school faculty nationwide. It would be a mistake to withdraw support of HCOP & COE programs when they continue to be successful. Because medical training is very long, it may take several decades to quantitate the true success of the program. I hope my experience helps show these programs meet their long-term goals.



For more information, contact: **Erica Froyd** (efroyd@aamc.org) or **Tannaz Rasouli** (trasouli@aamc.org)

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