

Mayo Clinic News Network Package

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Intro: Black History Month is commemorated every February. It's a month for all people to celebrate and learn about diverse and important contributions of African Americans to American society and culture, as well as to reflect on the ongoing fight against racism, inequity and discrimination.

Meet Mayo Clinic's Dr. Michele Halyard, a radiation oncologist and a pioneer in advancing health equity, inclusion and diversity.

Video

Audio

	(TRACK) Thirty-six years ago, Dr. Michele Halyard began her journey as a radiation oncologist at Mayo Clinic in Arizona.
Michele Halyard, M.D. Radiation Oncology Mayo Clinic	(SOT) "I loved Mayo and decided that I wanted to practice at Mayo in Arizona. So, I joined the staff here in 1989, and it really has been a tremendous journey."
	(TRACK) A journey, Dr. Halyard remembers, that began with concerns about a lack of diversity.
	(SOT) "I didn't see a lot of people of color at the clinic, either working or as patients. And I really thought, what a shame that was, because of the preeminence of health care that we deliver."
	(TRACK) That lack of diversity, Dr. Halyard feared, negatively impacted patient outcomes.
	(SOT) "People who perhaps feel shut out from the health care system, people who experience structural racism that prevents them from getting in for the best care, that really results in excess death, excess suffering amongst populations of people. And it's not just underrepresented people, it's people who are really not in that population that can take advantage of all that there is to offer. "
	(TRACK) So Dr. Halyard went on a mission to increase health equity, inclusion and diversity. In 2011, she founded the nonprofit organization, Coalition of Blacks against Breast Cancer, to raise awareness of the risks of breast cancer in

	Black women and men.
	(SOT) 10:04-10:10 "We also go out into the community to educate about the importance of breast cancer screening, diagnosis, treatment and survivorship."
	(TRACK) The organization also now raises awareness about prostate cancer. Dr. Halyard also serves as the Suzanne Hanson Poole Vice Dean of Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine and the dean of the Arizona campus. She also mentors physicians who can continue her work toward health equity.
Sarah James, M.D. Radiation Oncology Mayo Clinic	(SOT) "It's very hard to put into words the impact that she's had as a role model on myself and so many others as a Black female. She has served in such a leadership role for so many years."
	(TRACK) After nearly four decades at Mayo Clinic in Arizona, Dr. Halyard looks back with a feeling of progress, and forward to the future, with hope.
	(SOT) "The beginning, where people didn't even feel comfortable even talking about the word diversity, to now, having an 'Everybody IN' initiative where we've devoted \$100 million dollars to fighting racism, so I think we've come a long way.
	(TRACK) For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Marty Velasco Hames.