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Education

Morehouse School of Medicine opens only medical center of its kind at an HBCU



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Cancer geneticist Dr. Melissa Davis is Morehouse School of Medicine's inaugural Institute of Translational Genomic Medicine director.

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By [Rachel Cohen Noebes](#) – Staff Reporter , Atlanta Business Chronicle

Feb 28, 2024

Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) announced today the opening of its Institute of Translational Genomic Medicine, which will be the “national hub for genetic information on people of African descent.”

This is the only genomic medicine center operating at a Historically Black College or University in the U.S., according to the announcement.

“Health disparities and the underrepresentation of minority scientists are two of the most compelling challenges facing the field of biomedicine,” MSM President and CEO Valerie Montgomery Rice said in a prepared statement.

“Through this institute, we are poised to provide increased access to cutting-edge research and treatments as MSM leads in the creation and advancement of health equity to achieve health justice,” she continued.

The institute will partner with and provide insight to HBCUs around the world, according to the announcement.

Cancer geneticist Dr. Melissa Davis will serve as the institute's director with Dr. Robert Meller serving as associate director. Davis joined MSM as its inaugural Georgia Research Alliance Distinguished Investigator in 2022 with plans of launching the institute.

Meller is a graduate of Oxford University and is a professor of neurobiology and pharmacology at MSM.

The institute's goals include increasing the “knowledge of genetic variation across the African diaspora and its impact on health and disease,” an area of health care which is vastly underrepresented in medical studies, according to the announcement. It also will aim to get genomic research into the hands of those who can make an impact.

MSM has been on a national stage this month.

First Lady Jill Biden spoke Feb. 8 at the 15th annual Morehouse School of Medicine Women with Health Luncheon. Biden's visit highlighted the White House's focus on expanding research that improves women's health.