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Preface



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Editor

These articles on leadership, diversity, and inclusion are being written, reviewed, and published in undoubtedly turbulent times. We are forging forward despite the uncertainties inherent in a global pandemic while simultaneously confronting hard realities about our society and embedded systemic issues. For example, the stark racial disparities, and disproportionate burden borne by minority populations, in COVID-19 outcomes are headline news. Conversations about how health is not biologically predetermined, but a complex interplay of factors, including housing conditions, chronic stress, employment status, racial discrimination, access to healthy food, inequities in our health care systems, and other sociodemographic factors can no longer be avoided.^{1,2} Those of us in medicine are considered essential workers. Educating ourselves on these issues, amplifying the voices of our colleagues and communities for whom this is their lived experience, and learning how, despite our good intentions, we contribute to these issues is an equally critical part of our essential work.

As Maya Angelou said, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” We sincerely hope that the articles in this special issue provide the data and context to better understand where we are, where we hope to go, and how to do better.

Drs Cass and Smith provide a synthesis of the recent literature regarding the otolaryngology workforce and how this has evolved over the course of the past few decades in their timely article, “Current State of the Otolaryngology Workforce.” They also describe projections of the future, such as anticipated physician shortfalls, increasing numbers of midlevel providers, continued room for improvement with respect to workforce diversity, and the need to better engage underserved communities.

In “What is Diversity and Why Does it Matter,” Dr Francis and I discuss how health outcomes are impacted by diversity, challenges inherent in trying to define diversity,

how we all benefit when our teams are diverse, and the responsibility we all share in addressing disparities in diversity and inclusion.

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