

# New Work Group to Promote Cultural Competency and Awareness

The need for increased knowledge and awareness around minority groups has become apparent, and in April, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Work Group was created, aligning with the Society's new strategic goals. The work group is led by Mona Gohara, MD, Chair, and Omer Ibrahim, MD, Co-chair, and members include Dianne Davis, MD, Jeanine Downie, MD, Corey Hartman, MD, Sara Hogan, MD, Shilpi Khetarpal, MD, Karan Lal, MD, Klint Peebles, MD, Anthony Rossi, MD, and Caroline Robinson, MD.

## What was the inspiration for forming this work group?



Mona Gohara, MD  
Chair

**Dr. Gohara:** The population in the United States is changing rapidly from a racial / cultural, gender and sexuality standpoint. This means that underrepresented minorities (URM) will

soon become the majority. The ASDS DEI initiative helps to ensure that this change is being acknowledged, appreciated and embraced by our specialty.



Omer Ibrahim, MD  
Co-chair

**Dr. Ibrahim:** There was a need within the ASDS for active recognition of diversity and promotion of equity within the society. ASDS is known for its motivated members, informative

educational resources, and of course excellent meetings and networking opportunities. With any large organization, extra effort must be taken to ensure the inclusion of those that are underrepresented.

## Why do you feel this topic is important for ASDS / ASDSA?

**Dr. Gohara:** ASDS / ASDSA is among the most well regarded organizations in dermatology. By making a decision to prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion for our doctors and patients, a precedent is set, encouraging awareness amongst our broad constituency. More often than not, awareness translates into action and advocacy, which is our goal.

**Dr. Ibrahim:** This work group is important because it will hopefully give a voice and platform to those individuals who want to become more actively involved in ASDS, but may feel that they don't belong or may feel that there is no portal through which they can become more involved. Moreover, in the ASDS spirit of promoting education and awareness, underrepresented minorities still lack targeted educational efforts about dermatology and their skin in general. Our work group will help bridge that educational gap.

## What are the immediate goals you hope to accomplish?

**Dr. Gohara:** One of the first goals we hope to accomplish is to audit ASDS / ASDSA initiatives, committees, conferences, etc. to ensure that they are representative and inclusive. Broadening our base of who is on the podium, and who is a key opinion leader (KOL) for industry partners. Also and equally important is to create educational videos in a hip, social media savvy way to reach our patients in this demographic.

**Dr. Ibrahim:** We will also begin with networking efforts to bring awareness to the work group. Ensuring the diversity of the speaker panels and topics at meetings is critical, as is the need for informational content on ASDS social media that addresses dermatologic issues of URM.

## What can ASDS members do to help the work group's goals come to fruition?

**Dr. Gohara:** To make a formidable change, we need power, and power comes in numbers. To this end, we encourage all of our Society members to

support, tweet, join, share, volunteer-- you get the idea! We all have something different to offer through our unique experience and voice, so let's come together to listen!

**Dr. Ibrahim:** When it comes to a group trying to promote equity and inclusion, the allies of that group are just as important as the group founders and the underrepresented cohort they are trying to represent. When the work group is up and running, and a call-to-action or call-to-support certain endeavors is issued, we hope that ASDS members of all genders, races, religions and orientations will support this group's efforts. This may include attending committee-sponsored events / talks / seminars, promoting educational tools and resources and targeting those individuals that may benefit from them. In addition, ASDS meeting attendance will be important as the DEI Work Group will attempt to make the meeting more inclusive, including on speaker panels -- therefore, members that want to be represented can make it known. Finally, ASDS members will be needed to help create and share social media content to promote knowledge on general and procedural dermatology that may affect URM in distinct ways. ●

### DEI Charge:

- Promote cultural competency and awareness within dermatology
- Increase diversity within ASDS among members, leaders, volunteers and speakers
- Educate underrepresented minority (URM) about general and procedural dermatology