



State of Wisconsin
2021 - 2022 LEGISLATURE

LRB-6116/1
CMH:amn

2021 ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 31

March 7, 2022 - Introduced by Representatives ALLEN, HORLACHER and ARMSTRONG.
Referred to Committee on Rules.

1 **Relating to:** recognizing, and expressing gratitude for, the significant contributions
2 of Black Americans to the history of medicine of this country.

3 Whereas, Americans have recognized Black History Month annually since
4 February 1976; and

5 Whereas, we use the month to remember the contributions and achievements
6 of Black Americans throughout our state's and nation's history; and

7 Whereas, medical practitioners play a pivotal role in the life of every American;
8 and

9 Whereas, the Black History Month 2022 theme is "Black Health and Wellness,"
10 which acknowledges the legacy of Black medical practitioners; and

11 Whereas, James Durham, though born into slavery in 1762, learned how to
12 read, write, and work with patients from several physicians who owned him
13 throughout his childhood, and came to New Orleans in 1783, and whereas, he bought
14 his freedom and opened a medical practice in the city, where he cared for patients of
15 all racial backgrounds, and whereas, Durham was successful in treating patients

1 with diphtheria, and saved a high number of patients who experienced yellow fever
2 during an outbreak in 1789; and

3 Whereas, James McCune Smith, MD, became the first Black American to
4 practice in the United States with a medical degree in 1837, though due to segregated
5 admission practices, he had to enroll at the University of Glasgow in Scotland, and
6 whereas, he was also the first Black physician to establish and operate a pharmacy,
7 and the first Black physician to publish articles in U.S. medical journals; and

8 Whereas, Rebecca Lee Crumpler, MD, became the first Black woman physician
9 in the United States in 1864 after earning her degree from the New England Female
10 Medical College in Boston, and whereas, she later published *Book of Medical*
11 *Disclosures*, a volume of medical advice for women and children; and

12 Whereas, Howard University School of Medicine in Washington, D.C., began its
13 first series of classes on Nov. 9, 1868, becoming the first program in the United States
14 to open its doors to medical students of all races, genders, and social classes; and

15 Whereas, Daniel Hale Williams, MD, opened the first Black-owned and first
16 interracial hospital in the United States (Provident Hospital and Training School for
17 Nurses in Chicago) in 1891, and whereas, two years later, Williams performed one
18 of the world's first successful heart surgeries, saving the life of a man who had been
19 stabbed in the chest; and

20 Whereas, Louis T. Wright, MD, developed a technique for vaccinating soldiers
21 against smallpox in 1917 while working in Camp Upton, N.Y., and whereas, he
22 became the first clinician to investigate the treatment of humans with aureomycin,
23 a tetracycline antibiotic; and

24 Whereas, William Augustus Hinton, MD, developed a test in 1927 for
25 diagnosing syphilis in infected patients, and in 1936 authored *Syphilis and Its*

1 *Treatment*, the first clinical medical textbook written by a Black physician, and
2 whereas, he became the first Black person promoted to the title of professor at
3 Harvard Medical School in 1949; and

4 Whereas, Charles Drew, MD, discovered in 1939 that blood plasma can be dried
5 and reconstituted when needed, making it an effective substitute for whole blood
6 transfusions, and whereas he developed ways to process and preserve plasma in
7 “blood banks,” a procedure that saved the lives of countless American soldiers during
8 World War II and in later conflicts; and

9 Whereas, Vivien Thomas began working with Dr. Alfred Blalock as a laboratory
10 assistant at Vanderbilt University in 1930 without any formal training, and
11 whereas, he joined Dr. Blalock in 1940 to run the Johns Hopkins Hospital lab in the
12 1940s through the 1970s, and whereas, he devised an operation in 1944 to save “Blue
13 Babies” – infants born with a heart defect that sends blood past their lungs – and
14 whereas, this operation helped save the lives of over 1,000 children at Johns Hopkins
15 alone; and

16 Whereas, Alfred Day Hershey, PhD, a geneticist, became the first Black
17 American to earn a Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1969 for his research
18 on the replication and genetic structure of viruses; and

19 Whereas, Ben Carson, MD, led a 70-member team in 1987 to successfully
20 complete the first surgical separation of conjoined twins attached at the back of the
21 head; and

22 Whereas, Patricia Bath, MD, was the first Black person to complete a residency
23 in ophthalmology, and became the first Black female physician to receive a medical
24 invention patent in 1988 after inventing the Laserphaco Probe, a surgical tool that
25 results in less painful and more precise treatment of cataracts; now, therefore, be it

