

Dr. Kisha Davis Interview on Health Equity and the Importance of Preventive Care

What are social drivers of health and what are some of the biggest barriers impacting patients' access to care?

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Social drivers of health are those things that impact our health outside of the direct patient care. We can really think of them as the things that are where we live, work and play. Things like transportation, education, access to care.

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All of those things that we may not think of ourselves as physicians being able to have a direct impact, but surprisingly we may have more impact than we actually think. :41

How can family physicians address social drivers of health and improve access to care/ promote health equity?

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The first thing is to recognize that they exist and be curious to ask our patients about them to go the next step when we are prescribing a medication to ask about if that patient might have difficulty obtaining the medicines or maybe when we are prescribing or recommending a diet change or an increase in activity. Are our patients able to actually access that?

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Do they understand how to read nutrition labels so that when we're telling them that they need less salt or fewer carbs or less fat, that they know where to look for that in the in the nutrition label to be able to do it?

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When we're telling them that maybe we want them to get more exercise, do they actually have access to the tools and resources in their community to be able to do that?

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Are their neighborhoods walkable?
Do they have access to a facility to work out?

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So I think the first thing that we can do is just to be curious and when we are asking our patients to do something or maybe when they're not doing the thing that we've recommended them to do, rather than just saying we'll try harder to be a little bit more curious and ask what are the things that might be getting in the way and what does your life look like so that we can try and promote those activities.
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Why is preventive care an important part of achieving health equity and what are some preventive services that patients should be aware of?

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Preventive services are so important as with as family physicians, those are the things that we are

thinking about with our patients really everyday, whether it be vaccines, whether it be checking for cholesterol, getting the screenings for cancer 2:28 such as Pap smears and breast cancer screening and prostate cancer screening and lung cancer screening and colorectal cancer screening, all of those things.

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We know that when we find those things early, when we're able to identify and diagnose and treat, that makes a difference for our patients lives and longevity.

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One of the things that that how that comes into play in health equity is making sure that our patients have access to that preventive treatment so that we can then impact those outcomes that we see later on. 3:01

Why should patients prioritize getting regular checkups and how can that prevent health challenges and promote health equity?

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Well, we all know it's easier to treat the high blood pressure than it is to treat the heart attack or stroke at the end of the day, right?

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So when our patients are coming in to get those things treated and addressed before they've progressed, it's so much easier.

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They have better not just life expectancy because yes, we want to live long, but we also want those years to be full of life.

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And so when we treat things earlier, we're able to prevent those later stages of disease. 3:37

What is the benefit of having a usual source of care like a family physician, and how does developing a trusting relationship lead to better health outcomes?

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When the patients keep coming back 3:45 one, you're able to check. You've got the benefit of seeing that person over time to make sure that you're having the conversation and checking in with patients about their health.

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But it also opens the door for patients when they may be experiencing adverse social drivers of health to be willing to share that information.

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A patient who may be struggling to afford a medication or maybe doesn't really have a safe place to

walk to get that exercise, they might not be willing to share that information with a doc that they don't know.

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But in our primary care longitudinal relationships, as we build those relationships with our patients, it gives them the time and space and opportunity to trust us to share that information and for us to be just a little bit more curious about their lives. 4:34