



February 8, is National Black Women Physicians' Day

Press Release

"I early conceived a liking for, and sought every opportunity to relieve the sufferings of others." ~Rebecca Lee Crumpler, M. D.

February 8, 2021, has been proclaimed National Black Women Physicians' Day in honor of Rebecca Lee Crumpler, M. D., the first black female physician in the United States. Dr. Crumpler was born on February 8, 1831, in Delaware. Rebecca was exposed to medicine at an early age by a close relative who would make house calls to members of the black community who were not allowed to receive care at local hospitals.

In 1860, she was accepted into the New England Female Medical College and graduated in 1864. At that time, approximately 300 women were physicians, and none were black except for Dr. Crumpler. After leaving an indelible mark on the country through her publications and her efforts as a physician during the Civil War, Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler died on March 9, 1895, in Hyde Park.

On February 3, 2021, three black women physicians - Dr. Kanisha Hall (Howard University Medical School Alumna), Dr. Ciri Press (Northwestern University Alumna), and Dr. Sonya Sloan (the first black woman General Surgery intern and Orthopedic Surgery resident at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, TX) started a petition to make National Black Women Physicians' Day an official holiday. On February 5, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, U.S. Representative for Texas's 18th Congressional District recognized February 8 as National Black Women Physicians' Day by formal Congressional Proclamation.

This initiative was born out of a demeaning experience in which Dr. Press was asked to show proof of her credentials before she was allowed to leave the hospital cafeteria with her food. Unfortunately, Dr. Press's experience is not unique, and having your credentials questioned is a near-daily occurrence for black female physicians in the U.S.

While black Americans comprise 13% of the U.S. population, they make up only 4% of the 877,000+ active physician workforce. Black female doctors represent only 2% of physicians. These statistics are staggering and speak to the systemic biases in this country. Dr. Crumpler paved the way for black female physicians; thus, she - and the women who look like her - deserve proper recognition. "Dr. Crumpler was the first, but she made sure she wasn't the last," says Dr. Hall.

This new national holiday will bring awareness that black women physicians exist. "This day will inspire more black women to become physicians, reducing disparities and uplifting black American communities," says Dr. Sloan.

"Black women are no strangers to effecting change in this country, and we are no exception!" said Dr. Hall, Dr. Press, and Dr. Sloan.

*There are NO surviving photos of Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler per her family and research

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/dr-rebecca-lee-crumpler>
<https://collections.countway.harvard.edu/onview/items/show/18269>

A Book of Medical Discourses, published in 1883, is available digitally:

<https://archive.org/details/67521160R.nlm.nih.gov/page/n3>

#NBWPD
#NBWPD2023
#WeAreCrumpler
#IamRebeccaLeeCrumpler
#BlackWomenPhysicians
#NationalBlackWomenPhysiciansDay

Contact Information:

Sonya Sloan, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon

Email: admin@sonyasloanmd.com

Phone: 855.234-6393

IG: @NBWPD2023

www.NBWPD.net



National Black Women
PHYSICIANS DAY