

Department of Medicine Inclusion Council Celebrates Black History Month Honoring Black Physicians

Isabella Garnett, MD

The Department of Medicine Inclusion Council honors and celebrates the life of Dr. Isabella Garnett M.D. (August 22, 1872-August 23, 1948). In 1894, Dr. Garnett started working on the Chicago's South Side Provident Hospital (known today as Provident Hospital of Cook County), the first black-owned hospital in the United States and received her nursing degree in 1895. She went on to Harvey Medical College to obtain a premedical certificate then obtained her MD in 1901 from the Chicago's College of Physicians and Surgeons (known today as UIC College of Medicine).



Evanston Sanitarium opened in 1914. Photo by Evanston Photographic Studio.

Dr. Garnett was one of the first African-American women MDs in Illinois. While practicing medicine in Evanston, Dr. Barnett witnessed area hospitals being closed to the increasing number of African-Americans for non-emergency care during the Great Migration. Evanston and Chicago area hospitals had a longstanding pattern of racially biased practices and refusing care to African-Americans. In response, she and her husband, Dr. Arthur Butler founded the Evanston Sanitarium and Training School, the first African-American medical center north of the Chicago loop and one of only four local hospitals to accept African-American patients. The Evanston Sanitarium and Training School started in a three-room, two story facility and was the sole source of medical treatment for approximately 5000 underserved African-American patients at that time.



Our Isabella
Garnett
COM-Unity
Physician
House
is named in
her honor.

