Health Disparities, Diversity, and Inclusion
Context, Controversies, and Solutions

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I lovingly devote this book to my beloved family—my husband Jeffrey Rose and our two beautiful children, Courtney and Brandon. With these individuals in my life, I have given and received unconditional love, experienced the true meaning of family, and enjoyed amazing, intelligent conversation with them, regularly, which is a true gift.

I also dedicate this book to someone who departed this life, but whom I learned to forgive, for his shadow presence, and told him so years before his departure. Retrospectively, I value and appreciate my father, Max Yergan, Jr., for his service as a surgeon for the bulk of his life, in a community in the United States that truly needed him—Harlem, New York City. He endeavored to help close the health status gap throughout his professional life, through his commitment and his hands as a surgeon and then through his voice as he taught those who came after him at his alma mater, Columbia University, College of Physicians and Surgeons. Although I didn’t get to know him deeply, he made a great impression on me that helped to determine who I have become and that will last forever.

Also, I offer a special dedication to my mother, Effie, and my brother, Rande. These two, I know, offer their guidance to me in spirit daily, as they too are no longer physically with us. My love for them is everlasting and deep. My mother offered me guidance, love, and wisdom, and my brother was the sibling of siblings, a tremendously intelligent human being, and a great friend, whose laughter still resonates in my mind when I need a good chuckle. Lastly, I dedicate this work to my older sister, Faye, and her children, Vivian (and her beautiful daughter, Juliette), Frank, and Chris, and to my youngest sister, Latisha, and her children, Joshua and Aesha. It is my hope that my words will help them all understand, value, and remain in a state of optimal health now and for generations of our families and communities to come. I am grateful for our health and well-being and that my life’s work helps to keep my family informed about the importance of health literacy and optimal health.
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As a young graduate student at Yale University pursuing a master of public health degree in the mid-1980s, I stumbled upon a topic that I was unfamiliar with—namely, health disparities in terms of race and ethnicity. I was taking a number of core courses, and within most, there was mention of a gap between the health statuses of Black and White people in the United States. I reflected upon this issue and decided it would be a key area of interest for me, and indeed it has been to this day. I took pride in the fact that I was studying in a field, public health, in which I could make a real difference. I would be able to help close the health status gap. Not only did I take courses that emphasized health disparities, but I also attended “Closing the Gap” conferences, read books about it, and fiercely debated with classmates and ultimately colleagues about the causes.

Some argued that the primary reason for the gap was genetics, which I disagreed with, because I understood clearly that the illnesses that Black people were suffering from in the United States were not the same as those of Black people in Africa, for the most part. There were some genetic commonalities, such as disposition to sickle cell disease, but that served as a clear indicator that Black people in America were descendants of people in West Africa, primarily as a result of the slave trade.

Ultimately, after working in the field of public health for a couple of years, I decided to return to my studies to pursue a doctorate in community health education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Still, the health disparity existed, without much change, and I continued taking courses learning more about the proverbial gap and its impact on other emerging majorities, beyond Black people; further, I studied the importance of racial and ethnic diversity in the workforce, in terms of health, as it was touted as one of the many potential solutions to the problem. Many years later, in my role as an academic, I taught about health disparities and diversity, noting that the problems were the same as when I was a young student and that not only was the matter unresolved, in many ways it was worse.

The key aspects of this book are the discussion of health disparities, with an emphasis on solutions, and the ongoing need for diversity in the field of health. The issues of health disparities and diversity are framed by racial and ethnic considerations. This focus does not preclude the understanding that the term diversity is very broad, encompassing, beyond race and ethnicity, gender; the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community; the disabled; and religious groups. However, this book seeks to identify health disparities along racial and ethnic lines.

Throughout the book, use of the term minority is minimized in recognition of this term's obsolescence. The term is replaced by emerging majority, as it is clear that the United States has become more diverse than ever before. Emerging majority is used in this book to refer to the various racial groups and the Hispanic ethnic group.
Additionally, cultural competence is highlighted as one of many solutions to health disparities, as there is a need within the field of health to value and appreciate the diversity of all people as well as continued learning about other cultures to ensure optimal provision of services. The importance of science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) will also be discussed to explain why members of the emerging majority groups must venture into these areas of study and work in an effort to close the health status gap.

This book is aptly titled *Health Disparities, Diversity and Inclusion: Context, Controversies, and Solutions*, as all of these areas will be covered. The controversies are mainly those associated with topics such as social injustice, Obamacare, and immigration. Rather than simply reiterating and identifying problems related to health disparities and diversity, solutions are given great emphasis to continue the dialogue related to solving the myriad problems that are gravely affecting the lives of many.
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Opportunities to express gratitude are often missed as we embark on the complex day-to-day journey of life. Writing a book is an endeavor that involves many in the accomplishment of a goal that is worthy, as a book lasts in perpetuity with the potential to reach the hands of many. In this case, the book may impact lives, should words turn into deeds toward necessary and positive change. To that end, I do not take lightly this opportunity to express my gratitude to some key, significant people, in terms of my writing this book and beyond. I begin by thanking my husband, Jeffrey Rose, for his loving commitment to me, always, and to seeing this project through, by my side with never-ending support. He is my first and only reader/editor before my work is submitted to Jones & Bartlett Learning for further editing and publication. I appreciate his attention to detail so much and his love and willingness to share his time from his busy schedule to give me his intelligent, honest feedback.

I also thank my children, Courtney and Brandon Rose. I am profoundly moved by my children and the wonderful young adults they are. They both inspire me and provoke me to think based on new realities in the midst of social media, their generation, and their personal experiences as intelligent young adults learning to navigate this challenging world. Courtney is a doctoral student at Teachers College, Columbia University, one of my alma maters, where she has completed all of her course work, with only her dissertation remaining at the time of this writing. I am filled with pride to watch her walk in my footsteps, as she was 2 years old when I achieved the same endeavor at the same school. Brandon is an accomplished young attorney working in corporate litigation at an excellent firm in Miami, Florida. Watching him serve as a professional with such skill and adeptness, at such a young age, motivates me to move forward with enthusiasm and tremendous energy in all that I do. Their words of encouragement and support, as I take on the arduous task of writing, are thoroughly rewarding, as I know that my book will be in their hands upon completion. This gives me the energy and enthusiasm to complete the work with pride, knowing that the subject matter—health disparities, social justice, and solutions to inequities in the United States—represents meaningful, important work.

I also thank my colleagues, Dr. Annie Daniel, Dr. Anthony Munroe, Mr. Clarence Cryer, Jr., and Ms. Yolanda Richard, for their submissions as contributing authors. I am extremely pleased and honored that they would take the time from their work and very busy lives to offer their words, insight, and knowledge for this book. I am grateful and appreciate each of them, sincerely. Additionally, I offer gratitude to Dr. Robert Fullilove, Dr. Adrienne Chew, and Dr. Isiah Warner for my interviews with them that provided expertise from varying perspectives relating to the primary focal points of this book—namely, health disparities, diversity, and inclusion in terms of race and ethnicity. They offered insight into education, immigration, and
other key issues that are relevant to these topics. The time that they devoted to speak with me in depth definitely adds important voices to this book.

Finally and above all, I thank God. There is definitely a force in my life that is greater than my mind can imagine that leads, guides, and protects my beloved family and me and inspires my work through an intuitive voice that is forever present. For this blessing, mere words of gratitude are insufficient, but I express them humbly. I always lean on the strength and courage of God, and doing so has never failed me.
Dr. Patti Rose acquired her master’s degree from Yale University, followed by her doctorate (EdD) from Teachers College, Columbia University. As a faculty member, she has taught at the University of Miami, Florida International University, Springfield College, Worcester State College, Nova Southeastern University, and Barry University. In recent years, she has developed and taught courses, which include Black Women in Medicine and Healing; Psychosocial Health and Healing and Women (online course); Race and Healthcare in America; Culture, Race, and Diversity Issues in the United States; Mass Incarceration and the Impact on the Black Community; and Black Women in Medicine and Healing. She has taught Chinese college students as a visiting professor, first in the summer of 2013 at Jiaotong University in Shanghai, China, and then in the summers of 2014, 2015, and 2016 at Jinan University in Guangzhou, China.

Dr. Rose has given keynote addresses, conference presentations, and workshops for many national colleges and universities and other venues, including the Louisiana State University (LSU) School of Veterinary Medicine, Yale University, Teachers College, Columbia University, Le Moyne College, Ross University, Des Moines University Medical School, Miami Dade College, the American Public Health Association, and the National Association of Health Care Executives, to name a few. Her international presentations have included conferences in Nairobi, Kenya; Barcelona, Spain; Paris, France; and the islands of Aruba, St. Thomas, and Puerto Rico. Her current administrative role is Director and Founder of her own firm, Rose Consulting. Prior positions include President and CEO of Plainfield Health Center in Plainfield, New Jersey, and Vice President of Behavioral Health Services at the Jessie Trice Center for Community Health Center, one of the largest community health centers in the nation, in Miami, Florida.

Dr. Rose is the author of several books, including Cultural Competency for Health Administration and Public Health, published in 2011 by Jones & Bartlett Learning, and Cultural Competency for the Health Professions, published in 2013 by Jones & Bartlett Learning. She has published scholarly articles, including a piece in the Harvard Journal of Minority Public Health focused on teenage pregnancy in the Black community. Her work currently includes serving as the administrator and sole writer for her blog, Natural Is Cool Enough (N.I.C.E.), which has a national and international following. She is also a blogger for the Huffington Post. She developed a DVD titled Cultural Competency: A Public Health Imperative through her consultation for a project directed through the Alumni Office of the Yale University School of Public Health, where she also received the Public Health Service Award (2004) for her commitment to community health service.

Dr. Rose has language skills in both Spanish and Mandarin through her travels and intense study and speaking and writing practice in both languages.
passion is to travel the globe to understand the world and to share her knowledge of various cultures, history, health education and health promotion, health disparities, inclusion, globalism, and diversity through her writing, teaching, and speaking engagements. Her current research is focused on health disparities, particularly in the United States, from a social justice vantage point, using a cultural lens, and through comparative analysis, from a national and global perspective. Her cultural travel, work, and research have included journeys to Puerto Rico, Mexico, Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, Africa (South Africa, Egypt, Kenya, Senegal, and the Cape Verde Islands), Europe (Greece, Spain, Italy, France, Portugal, and the Netherlands), the Caribbean (Jamaica, Tortola, St. Thomas, St. Lucia, and Barbados), Latin and Central America (Belize, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic), and Asia, including, Dubai, India, Sri Lanka, Japan, China, Vietnam, Singapore, Bali, and Thailand.

Her professional affiliations have included the American College of Healthcare Executives, the American Public Health Association, the Black Executive Forum, and the National Association of Health Services Executives. She was appointed by the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology, to serve in the capacity of Examiner on the 2004 Board of Examiners of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. She currently serves as a member of the National Project Advisory Committee (NPAC), for the Office of Minority Health (OMH) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) newest e-learning program targeting behavioral health providers and stakeholders.

Dr. Rose has been married for 31 years and is the mother of two.