



New Fellow Spotlight: Dr. Deborah Parham Hopson

President

Parham Hopson & Associates, LLC

Deborah Parham Hopson is the Senior Public Health Scientist and Director, Center for Public Health Systems Innovation at The MayaTech Corporation. MayaTech is a small business consulting and technical services firm with a focus on supporting the improvement of public health delivery systems to local, national, and international populations in high need. Prior to joining MayaTech in 2018, Dr. Hopson served as the Senior Health Advisor for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). As Senior Health Advisor, she provided expert guidance on national and global public health issues, programs, policies and initiatives with a particular emphasis on HIV/AIDS in the U.S., Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. She also served as the director of HRSA's HIV/AIDS Bureau for many years during which she was responsible for managing the \$2.4 billion Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program which provided funds for medical care, treatment and support services for over 1/2 million uninsured and underinsured people living with HIV (PLWH) disease in the United States and U.S. Territories. In addition, as part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief or PEPFAR, she directed global HIV/AIDS programs in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Deborah serves on the board of directors for Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties (Maryland) Hospice and is the immediate past president of the board of directors for the Patient Advocate Foundation. She is a fellow in the American Academy of Nursing and Rear Admiral (retired) from the U.S. Public Health Service.

Dr. Parham Hopson earned her undergraduate degree in nursing and health from the University of Cincinnati and her masters and doctoral degrees in health policy and management from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health.

Looking forward to her next career, Dr. Hopson recently formed Parham Hopson & Associates, LLC with the goal of providing public health consulting services.

What are you most looking forward to as a NAPA Fellow?

I am thrilled to meet, interact, and work with Academy fellows who bring different perspectives, backgrounds and life experiences to address grand and other challenges. The opportunity to learn from and share ideas and strategies with successful public servants who have accomplished so much while working at local, state, federal levels of government as well as internationally is exciting. I am also looking forward to working on Academy projects that focus on the public's health.

What inspires you during these challenging times?

When I worked in the federal government, I was always inspired by my fellow U.S. Public Health Service commissioned officers and civil servants who were dedicated to improving the nation's health. Today, in this period of the COVID-19 pandemic, the willingness of these same people to serve in hot zones providing direct patient care to people with COVID, conduct research in pursuit of effective therapeutics and vaccines, provide public health messages based on the latest science, and distribute funds quickly to health care providers, health centers and hospitals to assure that people are able to access health care, is truly heroic and inspirational. I am also inspired by the teachers who have figured out how to teach everyone and everything from pre-schoolers to pre-calculus (and all other students and subjects) online!

What do you enjoy most about the work you do?

I enjoy working as a consultant helping former colleagues and new clients find ways to work as effectively and efficiently as possible, often with constrained resources, to accomplish organizational goals. I am also energized by serving as a volunteer on the boards of directors of a local hospice, a local service organization, and the Patient Advocate Foundation where I can use my program, management and organizational skills to help the community.

Who or what inspired you to work in public service?

My parents were my role models and inspired me to work in public service. My father was a veterinarian who worked for many years for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. My mother was a registered nurse and one of my earliest memories was of her working as a public health nurse in our rural community helping to vaccinate children against polio during the early 1960s. So, is it any surprise that I ended up as a registered nurse in the U.S. Public Health Service?

Which of the Academy's Grand Challenges resonate most with you?

As a public health practitioner, I believe that effectively addressing the COVID-19 pandemic is crucial to realizing the goals of all of the Grand Challenges. However, the two Challenges that most intrigue me are building resilient communities and modernizing and reinvigorating the public service.

What advice can you give to folks beginning careers in public service

Respect yourself and respect others. Treat all people with respect whether that person empties your trash or is your boss.

Be tolerant of those who are different from you, who make decisions and life choices that are different from those you make of think you would have made in their situation.

Be willing to take risks – calculated, thoughtful risks. Stretch yourself. Try new things.

Learn to laugh at yourself; don't take yourself so seriously all the time.

Think strategically and plan accordingly.

Find a job you like. Even better, find a job you are passionate about. It's this passion for one's work that can make or break you.

Balance your personal and professional life.

Do something for others - volunteer, tutor, sponsor a child for summer camp

Smile and enjoy life's journey.