



Legacy Award

*Barbara J. Hatcher,
Ph.D., MPH, RN*

In Health

Dr. Barbara Hatcher has over 53 years in the nursing profession, instigating system-wide change, and providing leadership in health care policy and practice. She has achieved many breakthroughs as an African American, a woman, and a nurse. She is the first nurse and African American nurse to sit on the March of Dimes Medical Advisory Committee of the Metropolitan DC area. She is the first nurse selected for the *Hall of Fame* of her hometown of Waterbury, CT. She served as the first chief science officer for the American Public Health Association. She is the first woman, first African American, and first nurse to serve as secretary general of the World Federation of Public Health Associations, a health organization with World Health Organization observer status.

After completing the clinical component of her education, she joined the staff of the Visiting Nurse Association of Washington, DC, working primarily in low-income neighborhoods. The work she did with families, mothers, and children in these DC communities served as the foundation of her work in public health programming and shaping health policy. Dr. Hatcher's passionate focus on public health and policy change was put on the back burner temporarily in 1990, when her DC Army National Guard medical unit was called up to serve in Saudi Arabia as part of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. She served as the assistant chief nurse for clinical nursing services at a 300-bed combat support hospital that was the farthest forward hospital in the battlefield and at the Iraqi border.

Dr. Hatcher is the founding director of the DC Department of Health's multimillion-dollar Healthy Start project to reduce infant mortality and barriers to pre-natal care. She served as member and chair of the District of Columbia Board of Nursing, where she worked to establish rules and regulations for advanced nursing practice that were among the first in the nation. In 2001, she established a health program in Kenya to address the care needs of HIV/AIDS orphans. The program continues today under the auspices of the Alpha Chapter of Chi Eta Phi Sorority — a professional nursing organization of which she is a member. Dr. Hatcher has collaborated with a variety of local, national, and international organizations to address health inequities and expand the use of evidence-based practices. She served as an associate professor at George Mason University, teaching nursing administration and health policy. She is an advocate for social justice, health equity, and evidence-based practice.