

JOHN RUFFIN, Ph.D.
Director, National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities

Dr. John Ruffin is the Director of the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities. He is a well-respected leader and visionary in the field of health disparities. He has devoted his professional life to improving the health status of minority populations in the United States and to developing and supporting educational programs for minority researchers and health care practitioners. His success has been due in large part to his ability to motivate others and gain the support of key individuals and organizations, as well as to his expertise in strategic planning, administration, and the development of numerous collaborative partnerships. For over 15 years, he has led the transformation of the NIH minority health and health disparities research agenda from a programmatic concept to an institutional reality. He has served as the Associate Director for Minority Programs, Office of Minority Programs; and the Associate Director for Research on Minority Health, Office of Research on Minority Health. As the NIH federal official for minority health disparities research, through multi-faceted collaborations, he has planned and brought to fruition the largest biomedical research program in the nation to promote minority health and other health disparities research and training. He has spearheaded the development of the first comprehensive Health Disparities Strategic Plan at NIH. His efforts have impacted local, regional, national and even international communities and have resulted in a growing portfolio of:

- Research, training, and capacity building programs
- Health professionals and scientists of racial/ethnic minority populations
- Centers of Excellence conducting cutting-edge health disparities research
- Endowment awards to academic institutions, and
- Community-based participatory research initiatives

Dr. Ruffin has been committed to conceptualizing, developing and implementing innovative programs that create new learning opportunities and exposure for minority and health disparity students and faculty, as well as minority-serving institutions. In his quest to eliminate health disparities, the hallmark of his approach is to foster and expand strategic partnerships in alliance with the NIH Institutes and Centers, various Federal and state agencies, community organizations, academic institutions, private sector leaders, and international governments and non-governmental organizations.

Dr. Ruffin received a B.S. in Biology from Dillard University, a M.S. in Biology from Atlanta University, a Ph.D. in Systematic and Developmental Biology from Kansas State University, and completed post-doctoral studies in biology at Harvard University. His life-long commitment to academic excellence, improving minority health and promoting training and health disparities research, has earned him distinguished national awards. Dr. Ruffin has received an honorary doctor of science degree from Spelman College, Tuskegee University, the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and North Carolina State University. He has been recognized by: the National Medical Association, the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science; the Association of American Indian Physicians, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; the Society of Black Academic Surgeons; and the National Science Foundation. The John Ruffin Scholarship Program is an honor symbolic of his legacy for academic excellence bestowed by the Duke University Talent Identification Program. He has also received the Martin Luther King Jr. Legacy Award for National Service for distinguished leadership impacting the global community, the Samuel L. Kountz Award for his significant contribution to increasing minority access to organ and tissue transplantation; the NIH Director's Award; the National Hispanic Leadership Award; Beta Beta Beta Biological Honor Society Award; the Department of Health and Human Services' Special Recognition Award; and the U.S. Presidential Merit Award.