

Ground-breaking former HHS Secretary Louis Sullivan joins Dean LaVeist in a fireside chat

|
Dee Boling dboling@tulane.edu

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Thomas LaVeist (left) will host Dr. Louis W. Sullivan for a talk at Diboll Auditorium.

Dr. Louis W. Sullivan will appear in person in the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine's Diboll Auditorium in a fireside-chat-style conversation with Dean Thomas LaVeist on Friday, February 24.

The discussion, which is open to the entire Tulane community, will begin at 12noon CST and will be followed by a book signing in the Auditorium for Sullivan's newest

book, “We’ll Fight it Out Here: A History of the Ongoing Struggle for Health Equity.”

“Dr. Louis Sullivan has been a role model to me as both an academic and a leader,” said LaVeist. “He has demonstrated tireless energy to improving the health of all Americans and has paved the way for countless Black men and women to follow in his footsteps. I’m honored that our school will be hosting Dr. Sullivan and introducing him to a next generation of public health, health care, and medical professionals.”

Sullivan was the founding dean and director of the Medical Education Program at Morehouse College in 1975. The program became the School of Medicine at Morehouse College in 1978, admitting its first 24 students to a two-year program in the basic medical sciences. Three years later, the school received provisional accreditation of its four-year curriculum leading to the M.D. degree and became independent of Morehouse College. It was renamed the Morehouse School of Medicine with Sullivan as dean and president and was fully accredited in April 1985.

Sullivan left the Morehouse School of Medicine in 1989 to accept an appointment by President George H.W. Bush to serve as secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). In this cabinet position, Sullivan managed the federal agency responsible for the major health, welfare, food and drug safety, medical research, and income security programs serving the American people.

As secretary, Sullivan led the effort to increase the National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget from \$8 billion in 1989 to \$13.1 billion in 1993. He also established the office that would become the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities and inaugurated the Women’s Health Research Program at NIH. His leadership at HHS included improved nutrition labeling, tobacco use prevention, and significant gender and ethnic diversity in senior positions at HHS.

A native of Atlanta, Sullivan graduated magna cum laude from Morehouse College in 1954, and earned his medical degree, cum laude, from Boston University School of Medicine in 1958. His postgraduate training included internship and residency in internal medicine at New York Hospital – Cornell Medical Center, a clinical fellowship in pathology at Massachusetts General Hospital, and a research fellowship in hematology at the Thorndike Memorial Laboratory of Harvard Medical School, Boston City Hospital. He is certified in internal medicine and hematology, holds a mastership from the American College of Physicians, and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Alpha Omega Alpha academic honor societies.

In addition to Morehouse School of Medicine, Sullivan has held faculty and leadership roles at Harvard Medical School, Seton Hall College of Medicine, and Boston University. He has also authored three books, served on numerous boards and associations, and is the recipient of more than 70 honorary degrees.

He currently serves as the chairman of the Washington, D.C.-based [Sullivan Alliance to Transform the Health Professions](#). In January 2020, in order to further increase diversity and transform health professions' education and health delivery systems, the Board of the Sullivan Alliance voted to become a central program of the Association of Academic Health Centers (AAHC). In 2022, the AAHC merged into the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

Copies of "We'll Fight It Out Here" will be available for sale in the Gallery following the fireside chat. SPHTM students, faculty, and students with school identification will be eligible for one complimentary copy of the book. Books will be available first come, first serve. All are welcome to attend, and light refreshments will be served in the Diboll Gallery. For more information on this event, please visit the [event page](#).