



Mass General Brigham

Improving Racial/Ethnic Minority Access to High Quality Head and Neck Cancer Care at MGB:

*An Inter-Institutional Collaboration
by the Department of Otolaryngology-
Head and Neck Surgery*

Project Leads: *Regan Bergmark, MD; Ciersten
Burks, MD; Gezzer Ortega, MD, MPH; Eleni
Rettig, MD; Rosh Sethi, MD MPH; Mark Varvares,
MD*

Month, year

United against racism



Mass General Brigham

Problem:
Under-representation of head and neck cancer patients self-identifying as Black and Latinx at MGB/DFCI



Disparities in Timely Presentation and Stage-Specific Survival (Quality)






Compared to White patients:

- Black patients
 - Advanced stage at diagnosis: OC, laryngeal SCC
 - Increased hazard of death: OC, OP, laryngeal SCC
- Hispanic (Latinx) patients
 - Advanced stage at diagnosis: OC, OP, laryngeal SCC
 - Increased hazard of death: OC and OP SCC

> [Head Neck](#). 2021 Feb;43(2):438-448. doi: 10.1002/hed.26495. Epub 2020 Oct 4.

Role of physician density in predicting stage and survival for head and neck squamous cell carcinoma

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Baseline Data

Epic query 2015-2020

MEE: Mark Varvares MD, Derrick Lin MD, Daniel Deschler MD, Kevin Emerick MD, Jeremy Richmon MD, Daniel Faden MD

MGH: Lori Wirth MD, Jong Park MD, John Clark MD, Paul Busse MD, Annie Chan MD

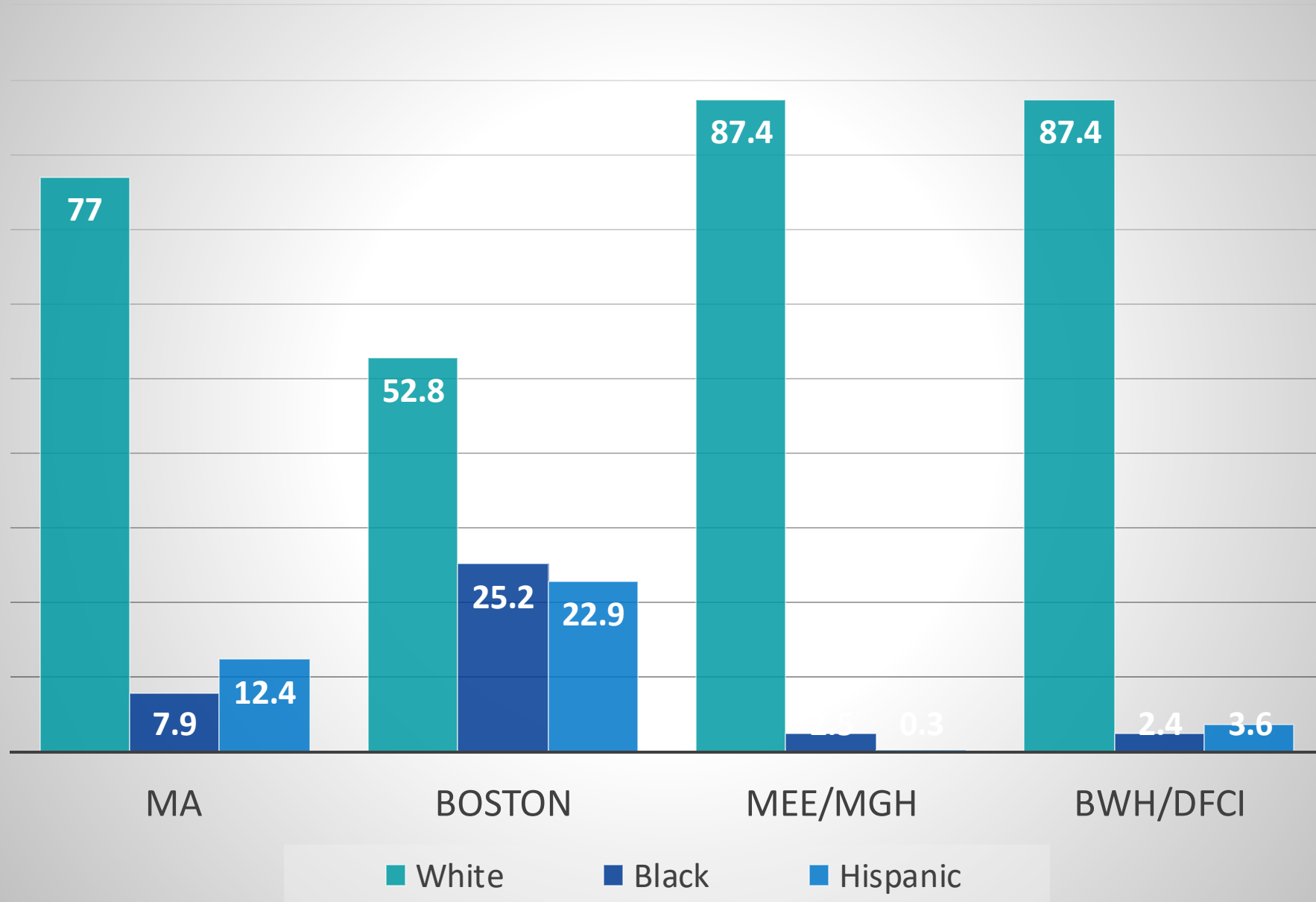
BWH: Ravi Uppaluri MD PhD, Donald Annino MD, Laura Goguen MD, Eleni Rettig MD, Rosh Sethi MD MPH

DFCI: Robert Haddad MD, Glenn Hanna MD, Jochen Lorch MD, Danielle Margalit MD MPH, Jonathan Schoenfeld MD MPhil MPH, Roy Tishler MD PhD

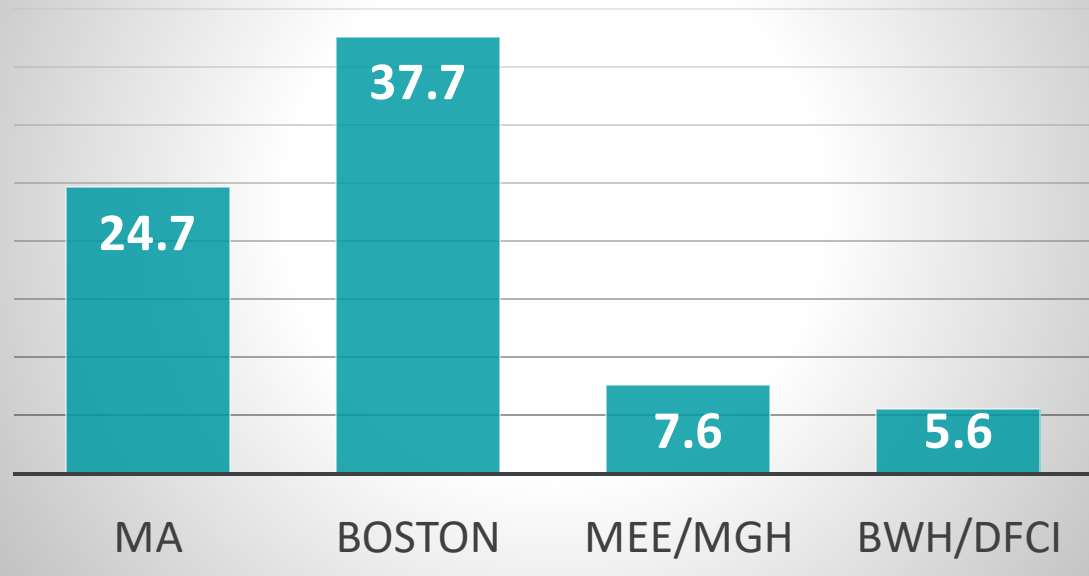
C00 – malignant neoplasm of lip: C00.0, C00.1, C00.2, C00.3
C01 – malignant neoplasm of base of tongue
C04 – malignant neoplasm of floor of mouth: C04.0, C04.1, C04.8
C05 – malignant neoplasm of palate: C05.0, C05.1, C05.2
C07 – malignant neoplasm of parotid gland
C10 – malignant neoplasm of oropharynx: C10.0, C10.1, C10.2
C11 – malignant neoplasm of nasopharynx: C11.0, C11.1, C11.2,
C13 – malignant neoplasm of hypopharynx: C13.0, C13.1, C13.2
C32.0 - malignant neoplasm of glottis
C32.1 - malignant neoplasm of supraglottis
C32.2 - malignant neoplasm of subglottis



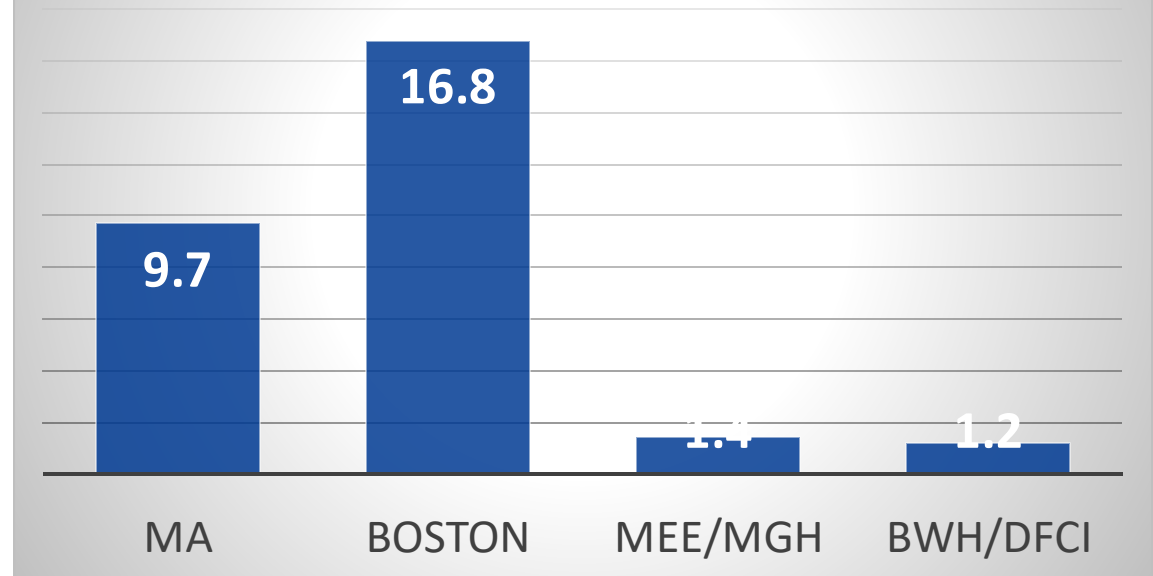
Population vs MGB HNC patients by race/ethnicity 2015-2020



Population vs MGB HNC patients by other preferred language 2015-2020



Population vs MGB HNC patients by Spanish language 2015-2020





Race-based disparity in access to HNC care at MGB

Process of
Access

Outreach

Language &
Cultural
Competence

Workforce



Race-based disparity in access to HNC care at MGB

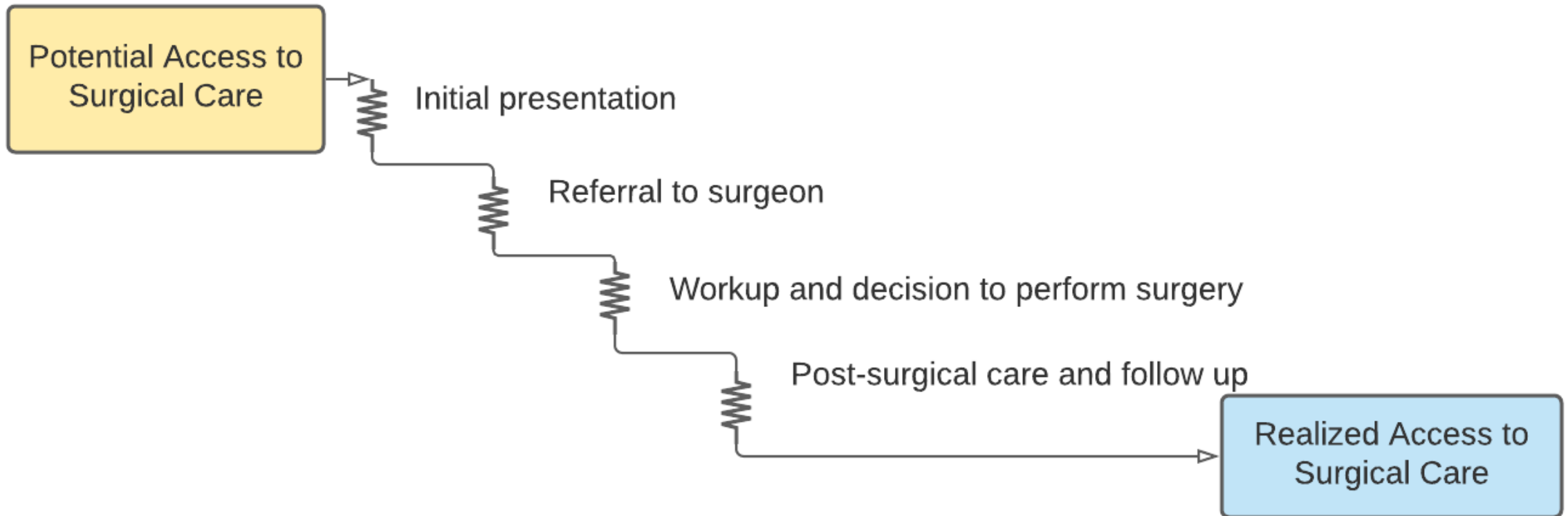
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Process of Access: Voltage Drops



Process of Access

Mapped the access pathway

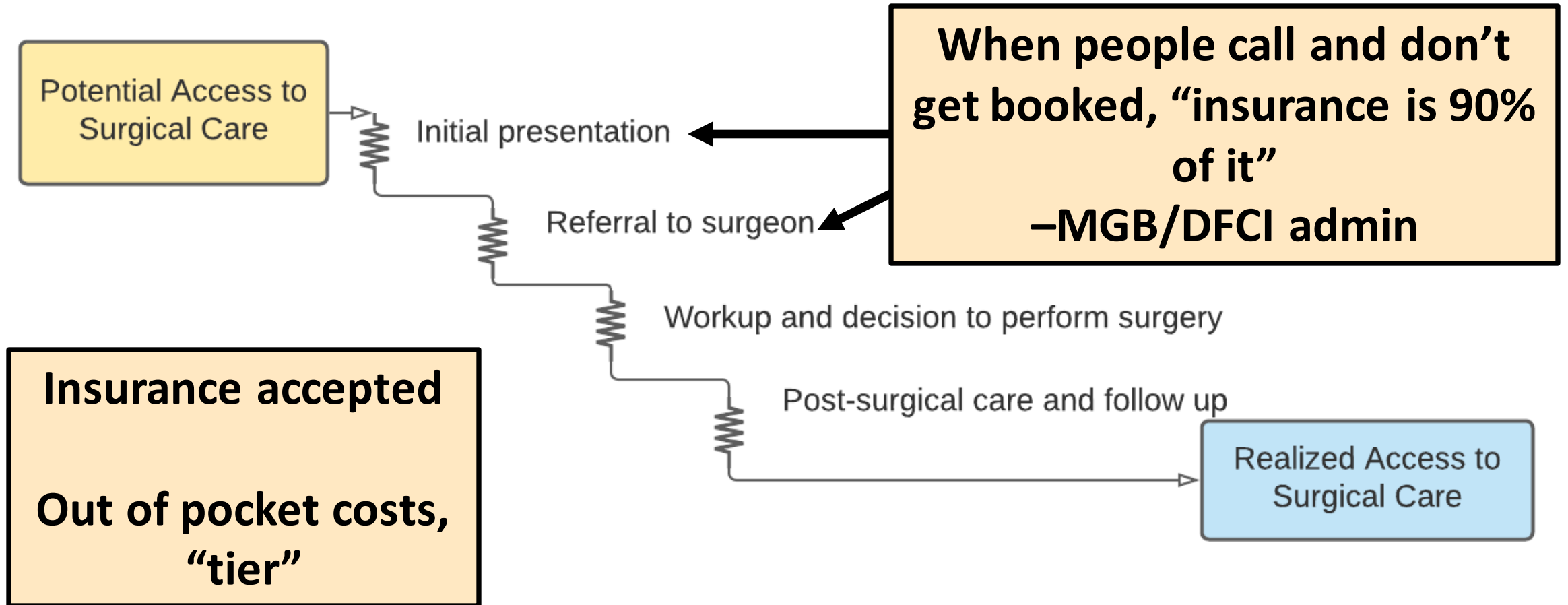
- Spoke with people across MGB/DFCI and in community
- Referrals, ambulatory self-referrals, transfers, ED
- Are patients calling us and not getting in? Or not calling us?

Potential barriers:

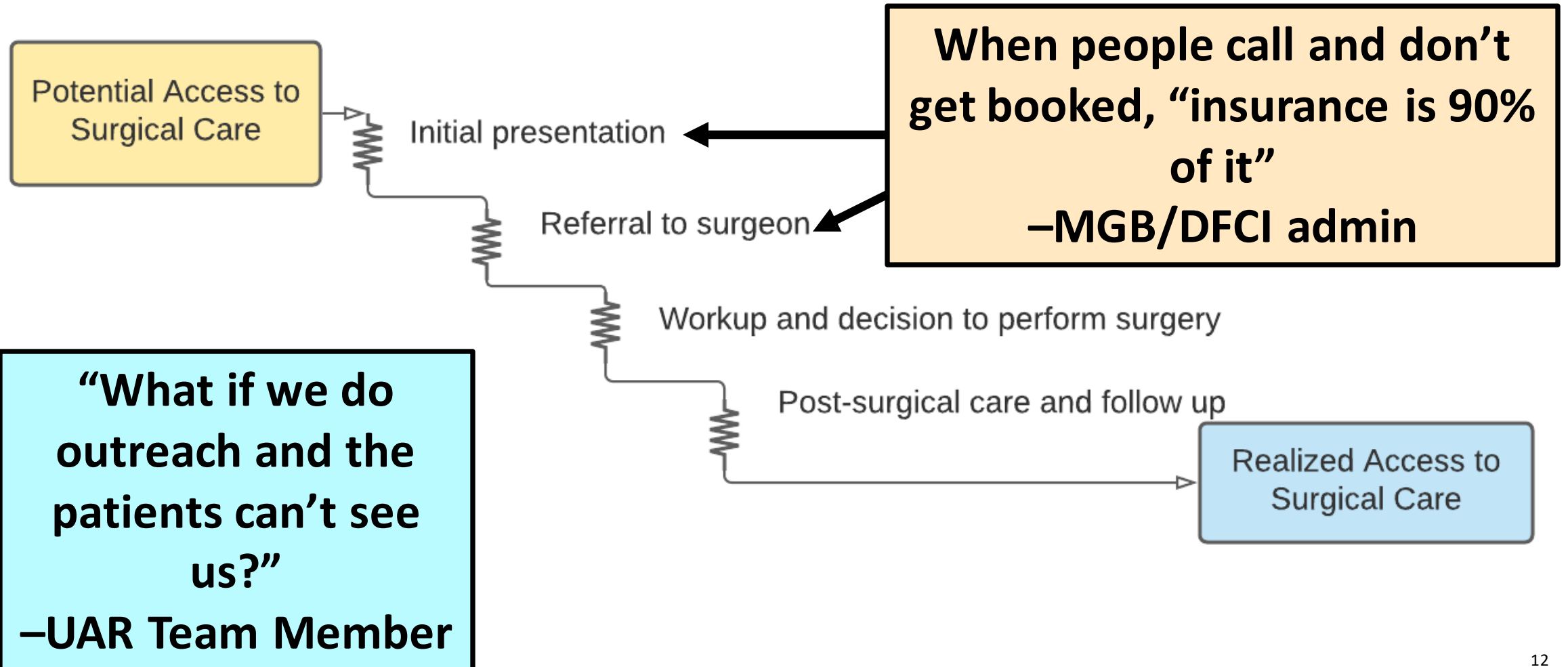
- Insurance
- Language
- Cultural competency, racism
- Referral patterns
- Usual place of care
- Ability to travel



Process of Access: Insurance as Barrier



Process of Access: Insurance as Barrier





Race-based disparity in access to HNC care at MGB

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Outreach

Partnerships with Referring Providers and Community

- Local federally qualified health centers, safety net groups
- MGB primary care (thank you Dr. Juan Jaime de Zengotita!)
- Community cancer screening
- Collaboration with nonprofit cancer early detection group – video outreach
- ?Multilingual marketing/social media strategy (MGB)

COVID-19 Challenges:

- High COVID-19-exposure field
- Dental/oral surgery, community ORL, PCPs as referring MDs
 - In-person outreach challenging
 - HNC symptoms overlap with COVID-19
- Time more than \$





Race-based disparity in access to HNC care at MGB

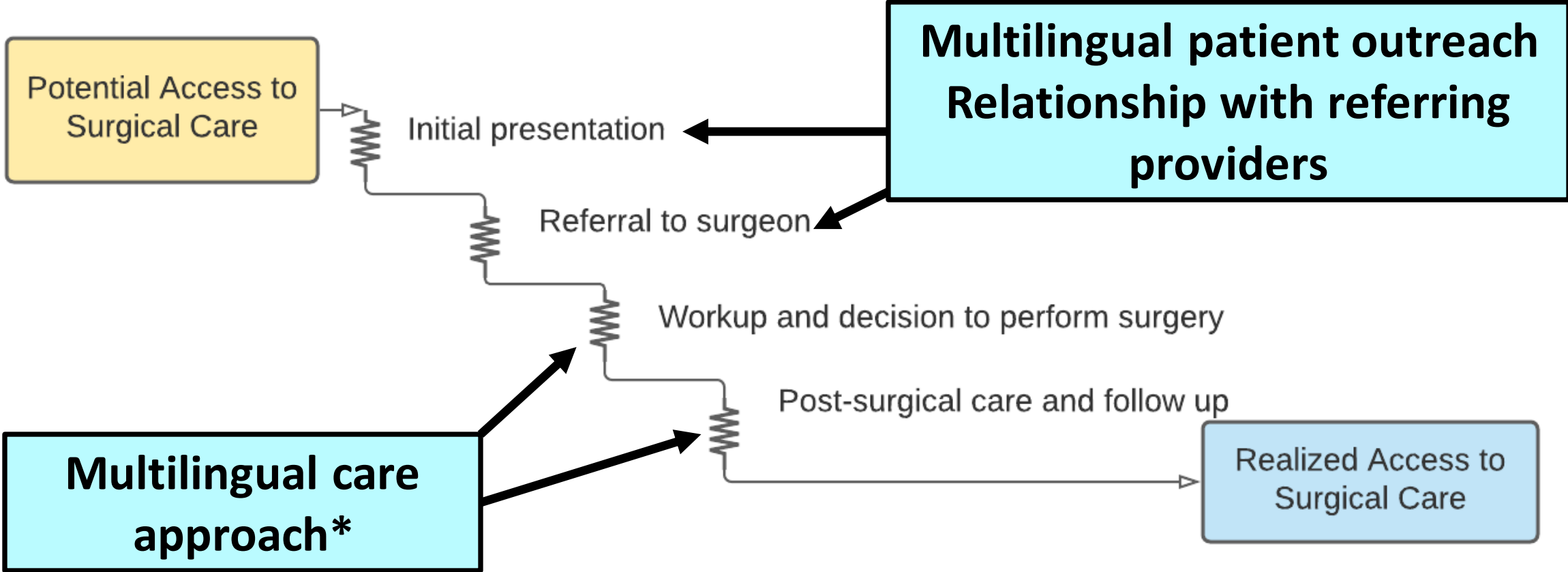
Process of
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Language & Cultural Competency



*Languages: Spanish, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, Russian

Language & Cultural Competency

Universal safe surgical discharge

- Translation of surgeon-specific discharge instructions for major head and neck surgical procedures

Universal safe ED discharge

- Translation of discharge instructions for ED visits (ie peritonsillar abscess, epistaxis, ear drops, etc.)

In process: Multilingual educational videos and materials

- Identification of head and neck cancer – we want to see you! (Thank you DetecTogether)
- How multi-D cancer care works

In process: MGB website for UAR materials

- Resource for us, patients, other institutions
- Contribution we can make as an institution – can we push the field?

Languages:

Spanish
Haitian Creole
Chinese
Arabic
Brazilian
Portuguese
Russian



Next for 2022-23:
Equitable Use of Interpreter
Services and Resources for
Patients and Healthcare
Professionals – Otolaryngology
(EQUIP-O)



Gezzer Ortega, MD, MPH



Patient and Provider Cell Phone App: Video Interpreter ASAP

- **Provide mobile application to ORL-HNS patients**
 - Complement UAR DOS Project- NESTS Pathway
 - Identify patients based on interpreter flag
 - Ambulatory and inpatient
 - Goal November 2022 start
- **Provide mobile application to surgical team**
 - Surgeons, surgical residents, SLP, audiology, NP team





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Diversity in our Workforce



State of the Art Review—Workforce

Strategies to Increase Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Surgical Workforce: A State of the Art Review

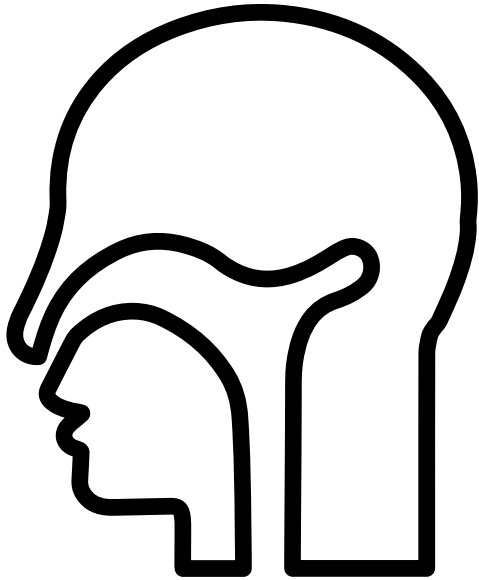
Ciersten A. Burks, MD^{1,2} , Trinity I. Russell, BA², Deborah Goss, MLS¹, Gezzer Ortega, MD, MPH³, Gregory W. Randolph, MD¹, Mark A. Varvares, MD¹, David J. Brown, MD⁴, Stacey T. Gray, MD¹, and Regan W. Bergmark, MD^{1,2}

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Diversity in our Workforce

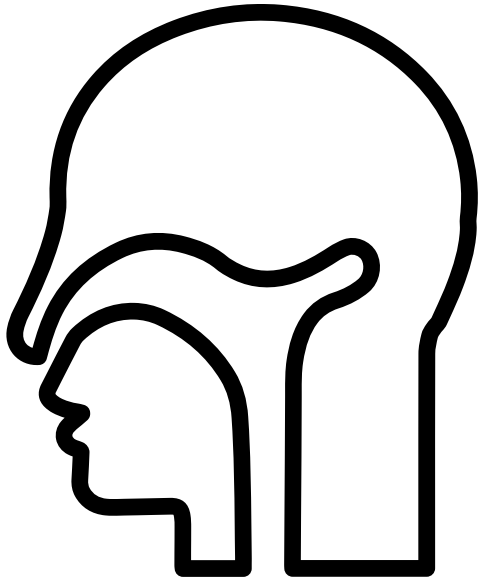
Increase early exposure to surgery



Diversify the recruitment and selection process

Increase representation among trainees, faculty, and leadership

Diversity in our Workforce: HMS ORL



Increase early exposure to surgery

Formal partnerships with HBCU

Outreach at conferences, within community

Mentorship

Diversify the recruitment and selection process

Residency match outreach/support

Increase representation among trainees, faculty, and leadership

HMS DEI Committee, hospital—specific DEI efforts

Departmental commitment, new fund for support



Summary

Process of Access:

- Insurance
- Language
- Feeling
welcome

Outreach:

- Referring
providers
- Community
- Nonprofits
- Videos

Language & Cultural Competence:

- Translations
- Video
interpreters
on demand

Workforce:

- Partnerships
w HBCUs
- Medical
student,
resident
outreach
- Research



Thank you to our team:

Aalok Agarwala

Sana Batool

Regan Bergmark, MD

Ciersten Burks, MD

Chuma Eruchalu, MD

Shekhar Gadkaree, MD

Stacey Gray, MD

Robert Haddad, MD

Derrick Lin, MD

Ashley Miller MD

Gezzer Ortega, MD, MPH

Eleni Rettig, MD

Robert Semco

Rosh Sethi, MD MPH

Mark Varvares, MD

Lucy Xu MD

HMS ORL-HNS DEI Committee, MEEI DEI Committee



Thank you to the MGB
UAR Program for your
support

