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# Virgin Islander to Co-Chair Biden's Covid-19 Task Force, According to Reports

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**Marcella Nunez-Smith.** By. YALE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Virgin Islander and associate professor of internal medicine, public health and management and founding director of the Equity Research and Innovation Center at Yale, Marcella Nunez-Smith, has been appointed co-chair of President-Elect Joe Biden's yet to be announced 12-member Covid-19 task force, two sources [have told CNN](#). Multiple other U.S. media outlets have reported the story.

According to CNN, former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy and former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner David Kessler will also be part of the task force's leadership. Mr. Biden is expected to make the announcement Monday.

Originally from St. Thomas, Dr. Nunez-Smith attended Jefferson Medical College, where she was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society, and she earned a BA in biological anthropology and psychology at Swarthmore College, according to a biography on [Yale's website](#).

Yale said Dr. Nunez-Smith's research focuses on "promoting health and healthcare equity for structurally marginalized populations with an emphasis on supporting healthcare workforce diversity and development, developing patient reported measurements of healthcare quality, and identifying regional strategies to reduce the global burden of non-communicable diseases."

The biography added, "She is the principal investigator on several NIH and foundation-funded research projects, including an NIH/NCI-funded project to develop a tool to assess patient reported experiences of discrimination in healthcare. She has conducted an investigation of the promotion and retention of diversity in academic medical school faculty and has published numerous articles on the experiences of minority students and faculty.

"Funded by NIH/NIMHD, she established the Eastern Caribbean Health Outcomes Research Network (ECHORN), a research collaborative across four Eastern Caribbean islands, supporting several chronic disease research projects and enhancing health outcomes research and leadership capacity in the region; the flagship ECHORN Cohort Study recruited and is following a community-dwelling adult cohort (n=3000) to examine novel chronic disease risk and protective factors."

The announcement of the Covid-19 task force on the day he was declared president-elect signals Mr. Biden's plan to focus on combating the virus, say political observers. According to CNN, Mr. Biden is not expected to announce for weeks cabinet members and may wait until control of the Senate is clear.