(Original email from 5/2/25 "A New Chapter for the BCH Black Caucus")

Dear BCH Black Caucus Members and Allies,

As we approach the 5th anniversary of the BCH Black Caucus, I want to take a moment to reflect on how far we've come—and to share some exciting changes ahead. This is a moment of transition, renewal, and opportunity to further grow the impact of our community.

What's Changing

Leadership Transition

I'm thrilled to share that beginning in May, Shelley Stinson and Shaunda Smith will step in as Co-Directors of the BCH Black Caucus. They'll be supported by our dedicated advisor, Saun-Toy Trotter. Shelley, Shaunda, and Saun-Toy bring an incredible mix of passion, experience, and vision. You can read more about them here: [Shelley] | [Shaunda] | [Saun-Toy]

Communication Update

Starting in June, all BCH Black Caucus communications will be streamlined into the larger UCSF Black Caucus newsletter. This change will reduce inbox clutter while helping you stay connected to the broader UCSF Black Caucus network—events, initiatives, and opportunities to engage across campus.

Meeting Consolidation

We will also be combining our BCH Black Caucus monthly meetings with the UCSF Black Caucus general meetings. These integrated meetings will offer broader networking opportunities with colleagues across UCSF—whether at adult hospitals, medical, dental, or nursing schools—while still allowing space to discuss BCH-specific topics during breakout sessions. You'll also have access to fantastic guest speakers and chances to get involved in subcommittees like Social Justice and Scholarships.

Looking Back 5 Years

When my former colleague Stephanie Brown and I first formed this group nearly five years ago—in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder—the moment called for boldness, healing, and community. The world felt different then. Yet, through every season, our mission has remained clear: to uplift, connect, and empower.

Over the years, we've accomplished so much together. Some moments I'm most proud of include:

- **Facilitating Access to COVID Relief**

  Helped 112 staff apply for UCSF's $1,000 COVID relief fund, including providing laptops and translation support for Hospitality and Cafeteria teams.

- **Vaccine Hesitancy Campaign**

Launched a comprehensive vaccine hesitancy campaign—featuring town halls, educational materials, and marketing efforts aimed at our staff, patients, and the broader community.

- **See Us Portrait Project**

Installed portraits of BIPOC colleagues at BCH Oakland and San Francisco—now expanded to UCSF's Helen Diller Cancer Center and the Preterm Birth Initiative and Black Women's Health and Livelihood initiative

- **Unity Fest & Juneteenth Celebrations**

Launched what is now an annual UCSF-sponsored event celebrating Juneteenth, immigrant heritage, and LGBTQ+ pride—with over 500 staff participating.
(See recaps from 2023 and 2024)

- **Black Joy Parade Participation**

Organized UCSF/BCH's first-ever presence at Oakland's Black Joy Parade in 2023—now an annual UCSF tradition.

- **Sowing Seeds Speaker Series**

Hosted nine sessions over six months to expose youth and community to healthcare careers—reaching 427 participants.

- **Fundraising for Key BCH Initiatives**

Raised over $60,000 to support Social Services and commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Sickle Cell Program (see recap) and supported the launch of the BLOOM Clinic (see recap).

- **Dr. Vivien T. Thomas Scholarship**

Launched a scholarship for local high school students in Alameda and San Francisco counties to support their journey into healthcare careers.

I'm deeply grateful to each of you who has shown up—whether to a meeting, a celebration, or simply in support. This community is special, and I'm proud of what we've built together.

As I step back and pass the torch, I do so with full confidence in Shelley, Shaunda, and Saun-Toy. They are the right leaders for this next chapter—and I can't wait to see how they continue to elevate and expand the work of the BCH Black Caucus.

In Community,

Abdur Shemsu
Chair, BCH Black Caucus