



Alice T. Chen, M.D.

Founder and Former Executive Director, Doctors
for America

Physician, advocate and public health leader

Biography

Alice T. Chen, MD is a board-certified internal medicine physician and a national leader in physician advocacy, community organizing, and public health. Dr. Chen grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area as the younger daughter of Chinese-American immigrants. She received her undergraduate degree from Yale University and went on to attend medical school at Weill Cornell Medical College. During medical school, she volunteered for the Red Cross as a case worker for low-income families in Lower Manhattan who lost their livelihoods in the aftermath of 9/11. There, she witnessed the shame felt by people who suddenly could no longer provide for their families, and also experienced how one-on-one interactions and real assistance can restore hope and dignity. She then completed her residency in internal medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, where rotations through county hospitals and a world-class tertiary care center displayed every day the inequities of the healthcare system and their profound impact on patient lives.

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Topics

Healthcare

Social Determinants of Health

Stress / Burnout / Wellness

Women and the Workplace / Work-Life Balance

Loneliness and Social Connection

Public health

COVID-19 Pandemic

Dr. Chen became an internal medicine hospitalist and faculty member first at UCLA and then at George Washington University in Washington, DC, training hundreds of residents and medical students as they cared for thousands of patients. In 2009, she helped found and ultimately became the Executive Director of Doctors for America, a grassroots organization of thousands of physicians and medical students in all 50 states who advocate for policies to improve the lives of their patients. Under her leadership, the organization played an important role in the passage and implementation of the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid expansion, federal funding for gun violence research, and other issues – all while training and mentoring hundreds of physicians and medical students in advocacy and leadership.

After stepping down from Doctors for America, Dr. Chen focused attention on caring for her young family and also served as a Hauser Visiting Leader at the Harvard Kennedy School Center for Public Leadership. She has spoken and written extensively on topics including health care reform, physician advocacy, climate change, our national COVID-19 response, and the importance of social connection.

In 2021, Dr. Chen became Senior Advisor to Made to Save, providing strategic and public health leadership to a national COVID-19 vaccine public outreach and equity campaign. Over 18 months, the campaign built a coalition of 1600 partner organizations across diverse sectors, provided nearly \$7 million in funding and wraparound to 110 community-based organizations serving hardest hit communities of color, trained thousands of vaccine ambassadors, and helped shrink equity gaps in vaccine uptake. Dr. Chen's series of pandemic updates garnered 1.5 million views on YouTube.

Dr. Chen currently serves on boards and advisory groups for several organizations focused on climate change, health equity, and grassroots organizing. She lives with her husband, Dr. Vivek Murthy, and their two children in Washington DC.

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