

Nakela L. Cook, M.D., MPH

Executive Director

Nakela L. Cook, M.D., MPH, is the executive director at the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). She is a cardiologist and health services researcher with a distinguished career leading key scientific initiatives engaging patients, clinicians and other health care stakeholders at some of the nation's largest health research funders.

Cook leads PCORI's research, engagement, dissemination and implementation, and research infrastructure development work. She also provides oversight to a growing number of programs and initiatives designed to create a more efficient, effective, and patient-centered system of health. Under her leadership, and with extensive engagement of stakeholders, PCORI established a bold strategic vision to address the challenges, including social determinants of health, facing patients and communities in our nation's complex, fast-changing health system.

Prior to her current role, Cook served as senior scientific officer and chief of staff at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), the third largest institute of the National Institutes of Health. At NHLBI, she spearheaded the development and implementation of its strategic plan as well as initiatives in cardiovascular outcomes, precision medicine, data science, sickle cell disease and women's health.

Throughout her career, Cook has been a leader in efforts to reduce disparities in health access and outcomes. She has received numerous awards for her excellence in clinical teaching and mentorship as well as her leadership of complex scientific initiatives and programs.

Cook earned her medical degree from Harvard Medical School and a Master of Public Health in health care policy and management from Harvard School of Public Health. She completed her clinical training at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.