Dr. Marilyn Hughes Gaston, MD

Dr. Marilyn Hughes Gaston, MD has dedicated her career to advancing the health of poor and minority families and communities. As a physician, a mentor to younger health professionals, and an administrator of local and national programs for the underserved, Dr. Gaston has been in the forefront of efforts to improve access to health care for poor, isolated, and minority communities. Her research efforts surrounding children with Sickle Cell Disease led to a nationwide screening program for newborns resulting in a new form of therapy for the babies saving many lives nationally and internationally.

Dr. Gaston went on to become the first African American woman to direct a Public Health Service Bureau and only the second African American woman to achieve the position of Assistant Surgeon General and rank of Rear Admiral in the US Public Health Service. In that role, she managed a 5 billion dollar budget to serve 12 million poor and underserved citizens and improve their health and reduce health disparities between the Black and White populations. She is featured regularly on local TV and radio and currently serves as Co-Director of the Gaston & Porter Health Improvement Center, Inc.