



## How radiologists can help medically underserved communities at home and abroad



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 radiology partners®

Dr. Arlene Richardson

**It all started several years ago when Radiology Partners (RP) was offering opportunities to support [RAD-AID International](#), a nonprofit (501c3) organization with the mission of increasing and improving radiology and medical imaging for medically underserved regions by delivering clinical support and radiology education to healthcare workers in these areas.**

I have always had a heart for service, so I got involved as a volunteer. In 2017, I had the opportunity to travel with RAD-AID to Tanzania through my local practice, RP Chicago. The hospital in the Tanzanian community we served had recently launched the country's second MRI program, so their MRI training was limited. For two months, I worked with radiologists to provide education and training, offer protocol optimization and workflow solutions, assist with MSK imaging and help with community outreach.

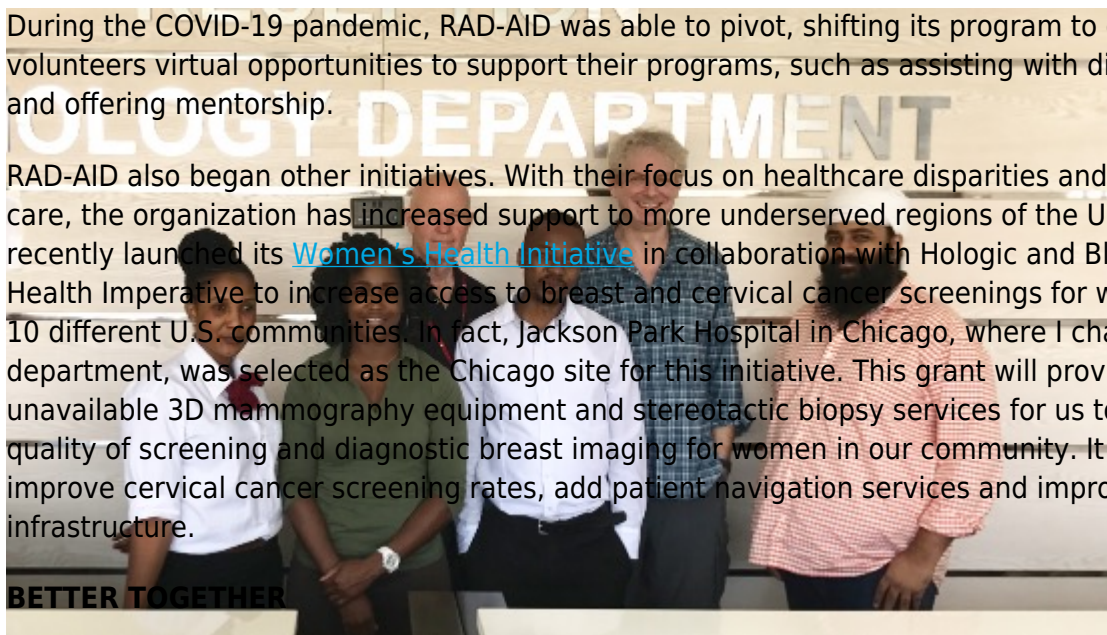
Seeing the community's needs firsthand was so helpful to understand exactly what RAD-AID does: RAD-AID is working to optimize the role of radiology in global public health initiatives and to build sustainable healthcare solutions for long-term viability of radiology services in communities that need it.

## HOW TO SERVE BACK HOME

After my trip to Tanzania, I knew my work with RAD-AID wasn't over. I began serving remotely, continuing to offer virtual assistance in training, education and support, and eventually worked my way up to my current role as Director of the RAD-AID Tanzania program.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, RAD-AID was able to pivot, shifting its program to offer interested volunteers virtual opportunities to support their programs, such as assisting with distance learning and offering mentorship.

RAD-AID also began other initiatives. With their focus on healthcare disparities and access to quality care, the organization has increased support to more underserved regions of the United States and recently launched its [Women's Health Initiative](#) in collaboration with Hologic and Black Women's Health Imperative to increase access to breast and cervical cancer screenings for women of color in 10 different U.S. communities. In fact, Jackson Park Hospital in Chicago, where I chair the radiology department, was selected as the Chicago site for this initiative. This grant will provide previously unavailable 3D mammography equipment and stereotactic biopsy services for us to improve the quality of screening and diagnostic breast imaging for women in our community. It will also help improve cervical cancer screening rates, add patient navigation services and improve our IT infrastructure.



I'm proud that in early 2020, RP announced [a global health partnership with RAD-AID International](#),

committing to collaborate with RAD-AID's global network of more than 13,000 radiology volunteers to help 85 hospitals in 38 countries they serve.

Our colleagues at vRad have been supporting RAD-AID since 2018, when they started the [First Read Initiative](#), a program where vRad physicians can donate the funds from the first read of their day to RAD-AID.

## JOIN US

Now, all roles in radiology can get involved with the organization, including radiologists, AI experts, IT professionals, nurses and technologists, even virtual lecturers and teachers. Different regions have different needs, and RAD-AID is able to offer opportunities for all radiology professional to support, whether its remote or on-site. There will even be opportunities to travel again with RAD-AID in the future.

My experience has been invaluable with RAD-AID. This organization is very close to my heart, but now, after seeing its dedication to medically underserved regions only continue in the most challenging circumstances, I know that it's invaluable to many communities in the United States and across the globe.

If you would like more information about RAD-AID, you can [sign up for the e-newsletter and/or register for the annual conference](#). If you are interested in volunteer opportunities, visit the dedicated [RP/RAD-AID portal](#).

*Dr. Arlene Richardson is a radiologist at RP Chicago. [Radiology Partners](#) is a leading physician-led and physician-owned radiology practice in the U.S. For the latest news from RP, follow along on our [blog](#) and on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).*