



WELCOME

WHY TORONTO? >

HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT >

VISION & STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

OUR LEADERSHIP >

FACULTY DIRECTORY

OUR SUPPORT STAFF

LOCATION & CONTACT

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE PRIZES & AWARDS

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE: SELF-STUDY REPORT

COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

NEWS ▾

DoM Matters Newsletter

Alumni Newsletter

ICES Daily Headlines [↗](#)

Healthy Debate [↗](#)

Dermatology: The Patient's Voice

EVENTS >

## Dermatology: The Patient's Voice

Apr 10, 2020

The first guiding principle of the Department of Medicine, University of Toronto is to "ensure that the perspectives and experiences of our patients and their families drive our work," and with this in mind, we are pleased to introduce a Patient's Voice column to our newsletter. The Division of Dermatology recognizes that a person-centred care approach - ensuring patients are engaged and directly involved in their own care - is a key component of high quality healthcare, leading to improved health outcomes and reduced burden on health services.

This exciting new addition to the Division of Dermatology newsletter comes in partnership with the Canadian Skin Patient Society (CPSA). Our first 'patient voice' comes from Latoya Palmer, a dermatology patient who speaks on her experience with Hidradenitis Suppurativa and how it has affected her life. We are supportive of integrating and amplifying the patient voice in dermatology and hope you find it a rewarding read!

### Battling the Quiet Storm

*Latoya Palmer*

When you think about the many lumps, bumps, lacerations, smell, and the pain you encounter as a person living with hidradenitis suppurativa (HS), being strong on the outside is the only option you have. However, that strength only hides the many physical scars and emotional trauma of having HS. HS is a chronic autoimmune skin disease that causes inflammation of the sweat glands and painful nodules and abscesses.

My name is Latoya Palmer and I've been through 15 major surgeries starting from my breast, left and right arm pit, a skin graft taken from my hip to above my knee (in order to replace the skin from my right axilla), my entire left bikini line as well as my right side and abdomen. Five out of the 15 surgeries are the input and output of three portocaths because the veins in my arms no longer have the strength to maintain an IV needle for antibiotics when needed.

Due to my experience with HS, especially with my most recent surgery, I have felt the desire to bring more awareness to living with HS. This disease is a debilitating illness that affects our personal life through all angles causing those who have HS to struggle mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and lose self-care. I have created the "Hidradenitis & Me" Support Group as a step to allow ourselves to begin to heal, take our life back, and to end the quiet storm of feeling alone through our journey.

Hidradenitis & Me Support Group monthly sessions are held every last Tuesday of the month from 7pm - 8:15pm EST at 100 Emmett Ave Toronto, Ontario. HS warriors who are not local are welcome to join us on Skype @hidradenitis.me, follow us on Instagram: hidradenitis.and.me or email us at: [hidradenitis.me@gmail.com](mailto:hidradenitis.me@gmail.com) for more information.