



For Immediate Release

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## **Oakland local awarded \$800,000 for commitment to health equity**

This health justice lawyer receives prestigious MacArthur Fellowship.

**OAKLAND, Calif. (Oct. 12, 2022)** – Priti Krishtel is simply guided by the belief that everyone deserves the ability to heal. She devotes her daily life to ensuring the public is informed about and included in the pharmaceutical patent system. Today, Krishtel is recognized as one of 25 MacArthur Fellows. From a jazz cellist performing social justice-oriented compositions to an environmental engineer creating solutions to curb plastic waste, no two Fellows are the same. By honoring them with the Fellowship, the MacArthur Foundation invests in individuals who have demonstrated dedication and innovation in their pursuits. With her global efforts to expand healthcare access for all, Oakland's own Krishtel has shown herself to be nothing short of this criteria.

Krishtel, 44, currently serves as co-executive director of the Initiative for Medicines, Access, and Knowledge, also known as I-MAK. She co-founded I-MAK in 2006 after witnessing the detrimental effects of limited access to life-saving medication due to patent monopolies. Krishtel and her team release a series of reports, named "Overpatented, Overpriced," which document the ways pharmaceutical companies have exploited the U.S. patent system. Her work also involves presenting reforms for patent legislation and disputing unethical uses of the patent system. Krishtel, like other MacArthur Fellows, was unaware of her nomination during the selection process. Nominators come from various professional backgrounds and are experts in their chosen fields. After Krishtel's nomination, her profile was evaluated and selected through several rounds, before reaching board approval to officially designate the honor. The MacArthur Foundation awards Krishtel \$800,000, which she will receive in quarterly installments over five years.

“By adopting a ‘no-strings-attached’ policy, we provide the maximum freedom for the recipients to follow their creative vision, whether it is moving forward with their current activities, expanding the scope of their work, or embarking in entirely new directions,” said John Palfrey, president of the MacArthur Fellows Program. “There are no restrictions on how the money can be spent, and we impose no reporting obligations.” Whether Fellows use their funds towards child care or increased salaries for members in their organization, Palfrey believes the grant allows recipients to continue making an impact with little financial constraint. [Click this link for the complete list of 2022 Fellows.](#)

Krishtel has shaped the fields of health policy and intellectual property since the beginning of her career.

- She earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California at Berkeley in 1999 and a Juris Doctor from New York University School of Law in 2002.
- At the peak of the international AIDS pandemic, Krishtel focused on expanding access to antiretroviral (ARV) treatments.
- From 2003 to 2006, she was a part of the Indian NGO Lawyers Collective.
- She has contributed to a variety of media outlets, such as San Francisco Chronicle, The New York Times, and USA Today.
- Krishtel has published in Science, Journal of the International AIDS Society, and The British Medical Journal.
- Krishtel and her team at I-MAK successfully led efforts in India to oppose a patent on leukemia drug Gleevec, in which company Novartis attempted to price gouge the medication significantly.

Where some institutions fall short in serving the public, Krishtel leads a team who seeks to ensure life-saving innovation is for all.

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supports creative people, effective institutions, and influential networks building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. MacArthur is placing a few big bets that truly significant progress is possible on some of the world’s most pressing

social challenges, including advancing global climate solutions, decreasing nuclear risk, promoting local justice reform in the U.S., and reducing corruption in Africa's most populous country, Nigeria. In addition to the MacArthur Fellows Program and the global 100&Change competition, the Foundation continues its historic commitments to the role of journalism in a responsive democracy as well as the vitality of our headquarters city, Chicago.

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