

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### Chicago - Perspectives 2017

The vitality of the Black (African descendent) community is ultimately driven by its health and well-being. The theoretical and practical concepts of health as defined by various health agencies such as, World Health Organizations (WHO), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Health and Human Services (HHS), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Health People 2020 and others are acknowledge, however we reserve the right to define our concept of health as fit for our constituents.

Health is not the absence of disease, but the overall well-being of the greatest number of African people living in the United States and the African diaspora. The necessity to address our communal mental, physical and spiritual health, is contingent upon taking control of our access to; healthy food production/distribution, community based human restorative development, training modalities for 'traditional' and technologically driven treatment/ healing practices and practitioners. We are also infusing the concept of improved health and wellness through the lens of health equity.

Within our paradigm health is a right, and health equity is defined as the right to attain one's best possible health based on the highest health standards available. This concept of health equity is not to use health dipartites as means of comparing health outcomes for becoming equally sick/ill/diseased; but for the comparison to be among our own achievable best health outcomes based on our predefined benchmarks. In other words we will not use health indices to compared ourselves to a dominate group but to other Black (African) communities including communities within the African diaspora.

Our evolution into self- sufficiency requires our collective attention and commitment to developing healthcare practices that are conducive to our individual, familial and community well- being. The Black community has historically depended on a hostile system to provide what only Black people can provide sustainably. The intent and mindset that drives this agenda, is the acknowledgment that only we can define, create, implement and sustain our collective well- being in our communities and on this planet. Our current health and wellness challenge presents opportunities for savvy entrepreneurs to develop better healthcare infrastructures and systems; foster on-going dialog and discussion of health and unify those of us committed to meeting the needs of ourselves, our families and our community. The following strategic framework provides a path towards optimum health and wellness as long as we commit to do the work required to thrive!

### 2017 Health Emphasis

Changing the perspective of health by utilizing the concept of Health Equity to interpret and measure improved health outcomes and wellbeing.

#### Population Health

Family Health- focus on Women's Health

Incarceration/Returning Residents

Veterans

**Specific Health Aliments**

Cancer (all types)

Diabetes

Heart (including High Blood Pressure, Strokes)

HIV (including Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections)

Mental/Substance Abuse

Violence Prevention/Intervention

**Health Care System/Services**

Alternative/Holistic Health

Data Interpretation/Outcomes/Dissemination

Health Careers

Insurance Coverage

Global Health

**Public Policy Recommendations**

1. To engage more 'like-minded' public health practitioners in developing or changing current health policies using the lens of health equity.
2. Advocate for and or support the recruitment, promotion and advancement, of Blacks into allied healthcare programs .
3. Advocate for and or support a mandate to establish first aid and CPR training in high schools and college .
4. Advocate for and or support the establishment of healthcare delivery training in high schools and healthcare services programming that exposes high school and elementary students to healthcare careers.
5. Establish and support, public first aid stations manned by community members with appropriate training from first responders.

**What Can Elected Officials/Civic and Social Leaders Do**

1. Read and discuss the current NBAC Black Agenda in its entirety.
2. Collaborate and work with NBAC members and others for establishing legislative or policies for achieving health equity among Black/African decedents based on the NBAC Health and Wellness strategies.

3. Inform and support policies which will benefit Blacks/African-Americans individuals as it pertains to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicaid Expansion, Medicare and any other newly proposed legislation that will only strengthen better health comes and not erode health care progress .
4. Advocate for and support legislation that reframes violence and crime in as a public health challenge. Engage community participation in problem solving through public and civic education.
5. Advocate for and or support legislation mandated funding for more African descendants accreditation/licensure to become social workers, counselors, substance abuse counselors, mental/trauma specialists, prevention specialist and or public health practitioners.
6. Collaborate with other Black focused organizations to develop and utilize better research models and evidence-based practices within their legislative policies.

## Community Strategy

1. Develop urban gardening clubs in every neighborhood that engages young and old to participate in growing fresh organic produce in available empty lots and teach canning techniques to residence.
2. Petition state government to allow gardening clubs to accept link as payment for fresh produce.
3. Civic organizations and churches develop healthy food events in partnerships with local chefs to demonstrate healthy cooking techniques in community, using produce from neighborhood gardens.
4. Advocate for healthy food preparation in local schools, using locally grown produce and meats.
5. Civic organizations must advocate for and support green space development in and for local communities.
6. Develop and or support coalition building to advocate for parity in healthcare practices and healthcare institutions that serves the Black community.
7. Civic organizations develop local sporting teams and events to foster discipline, civic engagement and healthy residence.

8. Identify various health care agencies, determine their role and function within Black communities.
9. Examine and evaluate health agencies as it relates to services and health outcomes

### **Organizational Strategy**

1. Develop Wellness Campaign that promotes pride, self-esteem and identity in Black/African culture.
2. Increase number of Social Workers, Counselors, and Psychologists in schools that are predominantly Black - focus on conflict resolution, coping skills and Post Traumatic Stress.
3. Increase access to health curriculums for school children focused on healthy lifestyle choices (i.e. Diet and Exercise).
4. Develop and or support afterschool programs' visits to local grocery stores.
  - Organize Financial- Volunteer Support of local YMCA's/ Boys and Girls Club programs which teaches physical fitness in African American Communities.
  - Afterschool Sports programs or teaching exercise- Organized Recess/Physical Education.
  - Programming that teaches critical thinking and emotional intelligence k-12.
  - Establish farmers markets and healthy food hubs in African American communities (highlight African American Farmers).
  - Launch National Campaign that connects diet, lifestyle choices to disease development/prevention.
5. Educate, train, and recruit an increase percentage more (per year) African American Healthcare Providers including an array of Public Health practitioners.
  - Expose School aged children to STEM curriculum and supplemental resources starting k- 12.
  - Develop/support Mentoring Programs that focus on exposing Black/African American students to healthcare professions.
  - Establish National Mentoring Program of African American Healthcare Professionals to mentor college and graduate students in their field of study.

6. Improve access and navigation to healthcare in predominantly Black/African American communities
  - Advocacy programs to promote health insurance coverage.
  - Establish Additional Community Partnerships with existing Federally Qualified Health Centers and Hospitals.
  - Establish relationships with other Black communities throughout the country and African diaspora.
  - Create Human Restorative Development Centers in African American communities that focus on holistic traditional healing techniques through the 1115 Waiver of the Affordable Care Act, ACA.
  - Promote requirement of Cultural Competency for non-African Americans working in African American communities- Healthcare Providers, Police Officers.
  - Programming that focuses on improving access to palliative and long-term care.

### **What can Organizations Do**

1. Collaborate with other groups to promote Health Equity campaigns, events and forums.
2. Develop various benchmarks and measurement to evaluate improvements of health equity.
3. Develop a report card system to evaluate various health agency services and health outcomes.

### **What Individuals Can Do**

1. Make an effort to purchase fresh produce, meats and bakery products whenever possible.
2. Make an effort to prepare fresh meals for self and family.
3. Engage in regular exercise at every opportunity.
4. Support any civic organizations focused on providing and or ensuring health equity, parity and social justice in healthcare.
5. Support any endeavor to create and or provide healthy foods through local gardens, farmers markets and local grocery stores that sell fresh produce etc.

6. Engage in preventative health screenings and follow ups i.e. (dental, vision, and regular checkups)
7. Create and or participate in local peace circles and stress management forums as it relates to mental health or substance use.
8. Keep and file all medical record documentation for future review (including family members),
7. Provide direct (in-direct) experiences as it relates to services rendered by health agencies, share with others at community forums and other public events.