

*COVID-19 Black is a health initiative of Unity Care*



### *Inside the Issue*

#### **BACKPACKS OF TRAUMA**

We're taking a deep dive into the systemic inequities that plague the American healthcare system.

#### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

Information on the Parents Helping Parents community care project, and solidarity with our AAPI community.

#### **JUNETEENTH EVENTS**

Juneteenth is among us! Please come out and support the African Ancestry community.

## **TOWN HALL**



Thursday, March 25, COVID-19 Black held a Town Hall. Over a thousand community members representing all nine Bay Area counties attended the virtual event. In addition to hearing from state health officials, each attendee had the opportunity to hear directly from the highest-ranking Black health official and doctors from their individual counties. We are beyond honored to have provided this immersive experience; direct communication between the community and health officials will help us dispel myths and learn how to protect ourselves and others throughout the duration of this pandemic.

If you missed the town hall, want to rewatch it, or want to show it to a family member or friend, we have some great news for you! The opening session and county break out sessions are now posted on our website at <https://covid19black.org/get-involved/>.

It is so important that our community bands together and support each other during these hard times. Working together we can get through the COVID-19 pandemic, and that all starts with sharing information with each other.



## BACKPACKS OF TRAUMA

Black people in this country have been the direct target of racial discrimination since the transatlantic slave trade more than 400 years ago. Attacks against people of African ancestry throughout history have created huge disparities in healthcare, housing, education, employment, and the legal system, resulting in poor outcomes in health and overall well-being of the Black community in the United States. If racism is a backpack, the varied inequities in all areas of life could be compared to weights inside the pack-- each systemic disparity (health, education, employment) is an addition to the load that Black people carry every day. As time goes by without relief from systemic racism, the backpacks get heavier and heavier on both individuals and entire communities.

The U.S. health system is plagued with inequity: Compared to white people, people of color are more likely to be uninsured, face barriers to care, and suffer from preventable health conditions.

The backpacks of trauma apply to other communities as well. In relation to COVID 19, Indigenous People are hospitalized at a rate four times higher than White people. African Americans are dying at three times the rate of white people. Oddly, however, the vaccination rate among white people is over three times higher than the rate for Latino people (10% vs 3%) and twice as high as the rate for Black people (10% vs. 5%). White people have a higher vaccination rate compared to Latinx and Black people in all reporting states, despite having a lower rate of hospitalizations and deaths.

Healthcare is just one of the many backpacks of trauma the Black community constantly carries around. The movement towards equity for the Black community must be made with the deliberate intent of identifying how systemic obstacles relate to one another and lifting the weight of this "backpack" off of marginalized communities. We must tackle each issue with the clear vision that once each backpack has been dismantled, the community will be happier and healthier.

## COST AND ACCESS TO CARE

*by Physicians for National Health Program*

- People of color account for over half of America's uninsured. Hispanic and Black Americans have significantly higher uninsured rates (19% and 11%) than whites (8%).
- Insured Black families spend nearly 20% of household income on premiums.
- Nearly one-third of Black Americans aged 18 to 64 have past-due medical bills.
- Majority Black communities are 67% more likely to have a shortage of primary care providers.
- Hospitals are more likely to close in communities with high levels of segregation and low-income residents.

## HEALTH OUTCOMES

- Among today's 40-year-olds, whites will live nearly six years longer than Blacks.
- Compared to white Americans, Blacks Americans are twice as likely to die from diabetes, seven times more likely to die from HIV/AIDS, 22% more likely to die from heart disease, and 71% more likely to die from cervical cancer, with higher death rates for all cancers combined.
- Black mothers are twice as likely as white mothers to lack prenatal care and 320% more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications. Black babies are more than twice as likely to die than white babies. Most of these deaths are preventable.

## JUNETEENTH

The African American Community Service Agency is hosting many events in the spirit of Juneteenth.

Here are some upcoming events to join!

### Thursday June 17

Juneteenth Happy Hour & Sankofa  
Open Mic Happy Hour 5:00 - 6:30  
open mic 6:30 - 10:00

### Friday June 18

Education Before the Celebration  
with Morgan DeBaun 9:00 - 10:30

## AND THE BIG EVENT!

### Saturday June 19

Juneteenth in the Park Festival at  
Santa Clara County Fairgrounds

For more information please visit  
<https://www.sjaacsa.org/juneteenth/home>



## PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

Unity Care is partnering with Parents Helping Parents to provide educational training and resources to African Ancestry parents who have children with disabilities. According to KidsData, African Ancestry students make up less than 2.3% of the student population but are suspended at 3 times the rate of their white peers. And foster youth are suspended at 5 times the rate of non-foster youth. According to Santa Clara County Black Educators, only 31% of African Ancestry students graduate from high school having completed the UC/CSU requirements. The school to prison pipeline is thriving right here in Santa Clara County, one of the richest communities on the globe. That is why we are partnering with Parents Helping Parents, to ensure our community is receiving the necessary resources to better advocate and support their children who have disabilities. The central aspect of this work is helping parents be the best advocate for their children. The educational system is extremely complicated, making it difficult for families to navigate how best to support their students whose educational needs are not being met.

Parents Helping Parents has webinars, online learning, assistive technology exploration, 1:1 help, and more available for you. Together, we will address your concerns and identify the resources to meet them. We will help you, your child of any age, and your entire family thrive!

If you have any questions or comments please send our community navigator Kiana an email at [ksimmons@unitycare.org](mailto:ksimmons@unitycare.org) or call the office of Parents Helping Parents at: 408-727-5775.

## AAPI SOLIDARITY

Unity Care condemns the abhorrent violence against Asian, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community members. From 2019 to 2020 hate crimes against the AAPI community increased 162% nationally. California alone leads the country with the most hate crimes against the AAPI community. These racist attacks do not define our state, our community, or ourselves. Unity Care stands in solidarity with the communities under attack right now, and holds space for the grief in this moment.

We are with you. We see you.

The different cultural backgrounds between the AAPI and African Ancestry diaspora communities are to be celebrated individually and together. Our people share understanding of racism, classism, discrimination; and also faith, community support, and the remarkable ability to overcome. We are a resilient people, and together we will stop Asian hate while advocating that Black Lives Matter.

If we come together and put our love, effort, and attention on the same causes, there is nothing we cannot achieve.

Unity Care proudly stands in solidarity with our AAPI brothers and sisters.

