



The Council for Health &  
Human Service Ministries

---

United Church of Christ

# Reason to Have Hope

---

---

A Public Health Response to Racism

2021 CHHSM 83rd Annual Gathering: *Together in Hope*

Located in Cleveland, Ohio, CHHSM acknowledges that we reside on the traditional homeland of the Lenape (Delaware), Shawnee, Wyandot, Miami, Ottawa, Potawatomi, and other Great Lakes tribes (Chippewa, Kickapoo, Wea, Pinakahsw, and Kaskaskia) who have stewarded this land for generations. We also acknowledge the thousands of Native Americans who now call Northeast Ohio home.



# Rev. Dr. Elyse Berry, DMin

---

Associate for Advocacy and Leadership Development  
CHHSM  
She/Her/Hers

# Objectives

- Define what **public health** is as a discipline
- Explain why we **must focus on racism** as a threat to health and wellbeing
- Discuss **social determinants of health** and health disparities
- Define **health equity** and give examples of the **work being done** to bring it to life
- Envision and wonder together, ***what is God calling you to do?***



*For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth!...no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it or the cry of distress. No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or old people who do not live out their days...at last they will live in the houses they build, and eat the fruit of the vineyard they plant.*

- Isaiah 65:17-21

# Dr. Susan Moore, MD

“I put forth and I maintain if I was white, I wouldn’t have to go through that...This is how Black people get killed, when you send them home and they don’t know how to fight for themselves.”

- Facebook Post, Dec. 4, 2020



Dr. Susan Moore, in a screenshot from a video she took while hospitalized with Covid-19.



# Flint, Michigan

“I can’t tell somebody they should trust [claims that the water is safe], because / don’t trust them—and I have more information than most people. Science and logic would tell me that it should be OK, but people have lied to me.”

- Michigan Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich



*Woe to you who make unjust policies  
and draft oppressive legislation, who  
deprive the powerless of justice and  
rob poor people—my people—their  
rights, who prey upon the widowed  
and rob orphans.*

- Isaiah 10:1-2



# What is Public Health?

*Public health **promotes** and **protects** the health of people and the **communities** and environments in which they **live, learn, work** and **play**.*

– The American Public Health Association

## *How?*

- 1.) Assessment
- 2.) Assurance
- 3.) Policy Development



*Racism is a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities.*

- Ibram X. Kendi

# Why Focus on Racism?

- *If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression.* - Combahee River Collective
- *Dying of Whiteness*
- 1/3 of Americans don't see systemic racism as a barrier to good health



# Framing Racism as a Public Health Crisis

- Compels us to address the crisis through **systemic change**
- Helps **identify where we fit** in this collective effort
- *Crisis*: the Greek word for “**turning point**”; “**to decide**”

**Racism is a public health crisis.**

# Social Determinants of Health

- Conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age that impact one's health
- Shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources
- Are mostly responsible for health inequities—the unfair and avoidable differences in health—due to unjust policies
- Medical care is estimated to account for only 10-20% of the changeable contributors to healthy outcomes.



# Social Determinants of Health

- Social norms and attitudes (ie: racism, homophobia, sexism, ableism)
- Exposure to violence
- Income
- Quality of Education
- Safe and Affordable Housing
- Access to Transportation
- Access to and Quality of Health Care
- Access to Food and Clean Water
- Access to Nature and Environmental Health
- Language Literacy
- Employment Opportunities
- Citizenship Status
- Preventative Services



# Health Disparities

- Lower life expectancy
- Higher infant and maternal mortality rates
- Higher rates of illness such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and asthma
- Poorer treatment for pain, cancer, cardiovascular conditions, mental health, and end-of-life care



# COVID-19

- Black, Indigenous, and Latinx communities' COVID-19 **mortality rate** is more than **2.7 times higher**
- Navajo Nation's **infection rate** has been the **highest** in the country
- Disparities in **economic stability** and **health care access** have been **linked** to infection rates and death
- Communities of Color are more likely to live in **multigenerational homes**
- Black workers are more likely to be in **jobs deemed essential**
- 1 in 5 state and federal **prisoners** had COVID-19

**Social Distancing  
is...**

**Anti-racist,  
Disability centered,  
Solidarity.**

**#FlattenTheCurveTogether**

**#BeAVoiceCHHSM**





# State Sanctioned Violence

- Black people are 3x's more likely to be killed by police
- Presence of high use of force by police in Communities of Color is associated with an increased risk in poorer health
- 98.3% of killings by police have not resulted in officers being charged with a crime
- Poor data collection by law enforcement has contributed to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women
- Black people overrepresented on death row and are more likely to die by state execution





# State Sanctioned Violence

- Immigration status directly influences health outcomes
- Migrant detention centers have a long history of medical neglect and abuse
- Family separation has long-term damaging psychological and health consequences





# Mass Incarceration and the War on People Who Use Drugs

- **Suicide** is the leading cause of death in jails
- Oppressive **living conditions**
- **60%** of the 2.2 million Americans incarcerated are of **Black or Latinx**
- **Black** people are nearly **6x's** more likely to be incarcerated for drug-related offenses
- **72,000** people died from drug overdoses in 2019



*We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities.*

- 1994 Interview with John Ehrlichman

# Health Equity

- Health equity implies that **everyone** should have a **fair opportunity** to attain their **full health potential**
- Equality  Equity

## Health Equity is Holy

God calls us to co-create, repair, and rebuild our world where everyone has the opportunity for a life of health and well-being.

Such work towards justice and wholeness, is the work of the Spirit.

# Faith-based Response: Assessment

# Advocate Aurora Health

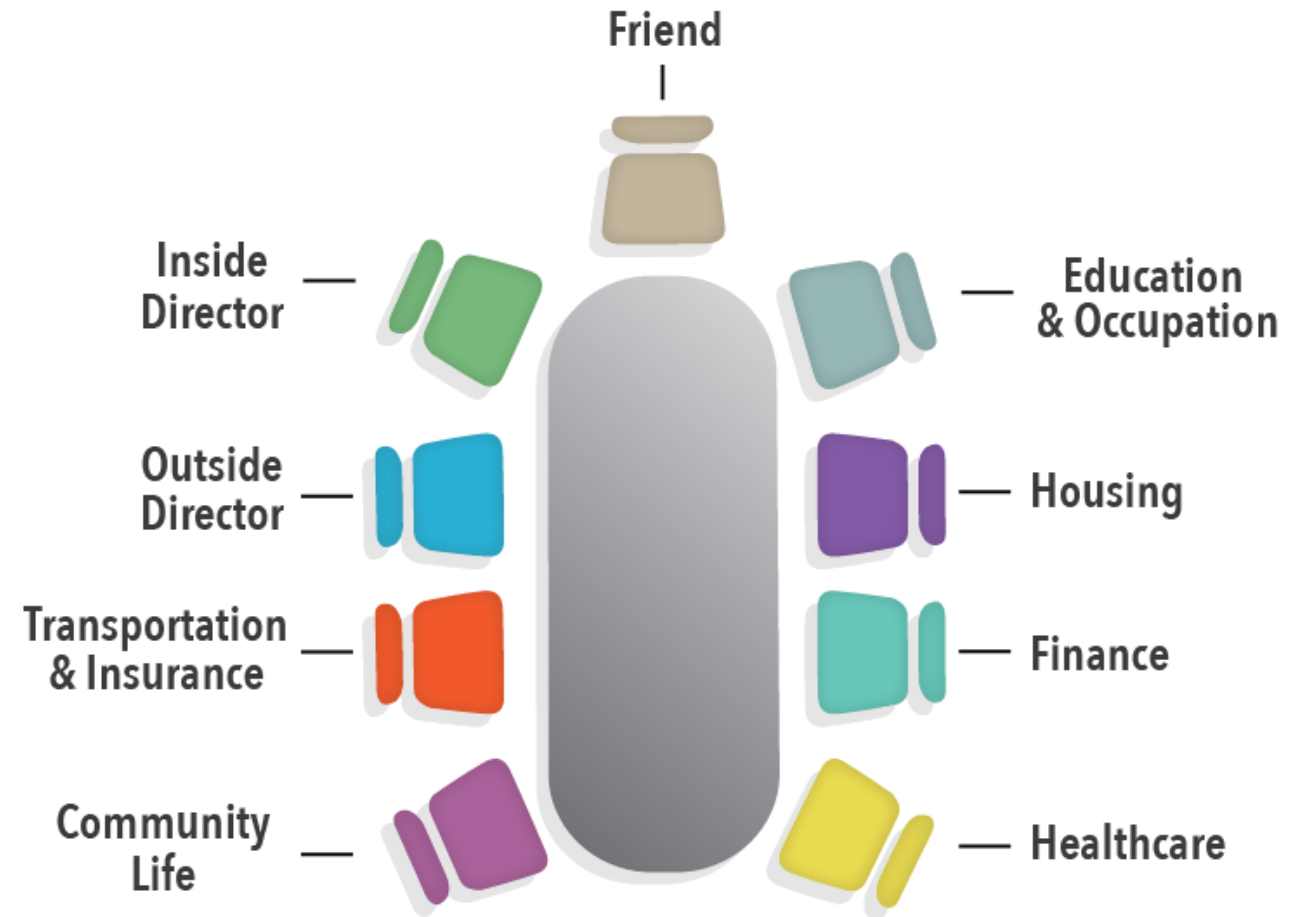
- Center for Faith and Community Health Transformation
- NowPow: platform to “prescribe” non-medical resources
- Close the loop between clinical and community service providers





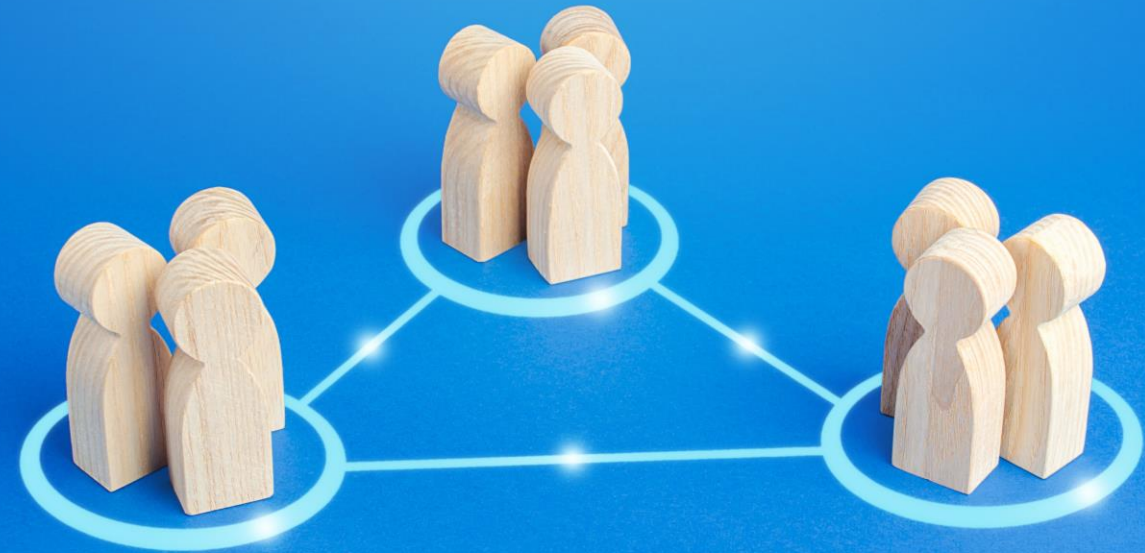
# The Open Table

- Use of social connectedness to assess and address social determinants of health
- Volunteers from a variety of sectors form a “Table” and journey with a person or family weekly over the course of a year



# Forefront Church

- Mutual Aid: Getting people together in your community to provide material support to each other
- Solidarity not charity
- Deep history in marginalized communities
- “If you need aid and we have it, we’re going to give it to you. There’s no parameters or criteria or rules for how you get aid.”



# Faith-based Response: Assurance

# Greater Cleveland Congregations

- Color of Health Initiative
- COVID-19 Testing Sites in member congregations
- Naming racism as a public health crisis



# Black Church Collaboration in Florida

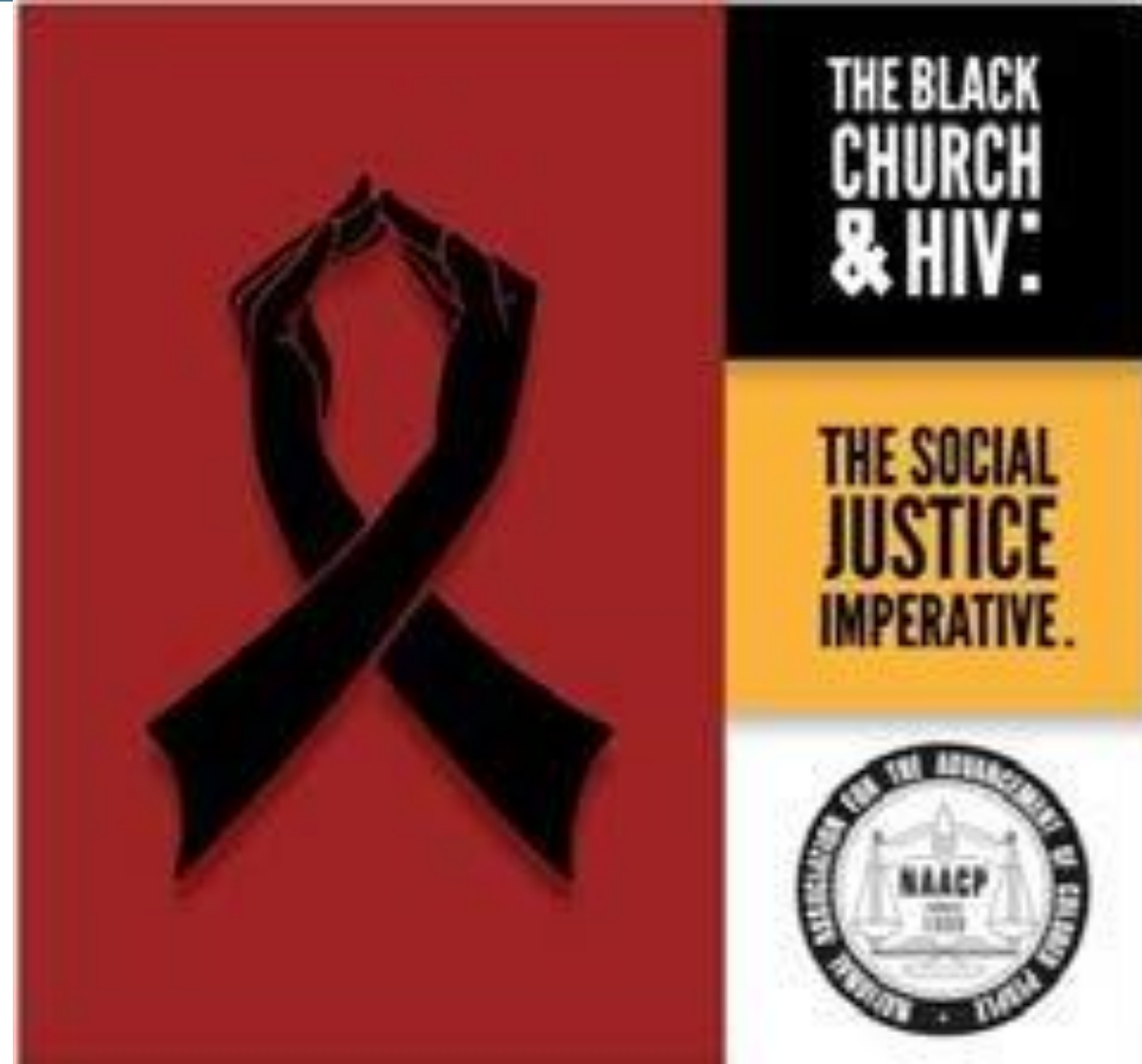
- Black churches in Gainesville becoming COVID-19 vaccination sites
- Response to the history of mistrust, lack of education, and misinformation





# The Black Church & HIV: The Social Justice Imperative

- Use of Town Halls
- Finding partners and core team members
  - Community health expert
  - Local health department staff
  - Member of NAACP branch
  - Local health clinic staff
  - Faith leaders



# MetroHealth Community Trauma Initiative

- Trauma hospital works with local clergy to create healing circles of care after patients are discharged
- “The answers to community violence, the answers to trauma, lie within the community. We know we can help these pastors become bridges.”



**MetroHealth**

# UCC Overdose and Drug Use Ministries

- Education, prevention methods, and training
- Access to naloxone in churches and faith-based organizations
- Spiritual practices
- Breaking down entrenched frameworks and stigma around drug use

**People who  
use drugs  
are beloved  
by God.**

- United Church of Christ  
Overdose and Drug Use Ministries

#BeAVoiceCHHSM  
#HarmReduction



# Faith-based Response: Policy Development



# UCC's Our Faith Our Vote

- Voting and protecting voting rights are essential for health equity
- Correlation between voting behaviors and poor health
- Voting establishes the policy makers



# The Poor People's Campaign: 14 Policy Priorities to Heal the Nation

- Enact comprehensive, free and just COVID-19 relief
- Guarantee quality health care for all, regardless of any pre-existing conditions
- Raise the minimum wage to \$15 / hour immediately
- Update the poverty measure
- Guarantee quality housing for all:
- Enact a federal jobs program to build up investments, infrastructure, public institutions, climate resilience, energy efficiency and socially beneficial industries and jobs in poor and low-income communities
- Protect and expand voting rights and civil rights
- Guarantee safe, quality and equitable public education, with supports for protection against re-segregation
- Comprehensive and just immigration reform
- Ensure all of the rights of indigenous peoples
- Enact fair taxes
- Use the power of executive orders
- Redirect the bloated Pentagon budget towards these priorities as matters of national security
- Work with the Poor People's Campaign to establish a permanent Presidential Council to advocate for this bold agenda

# Missouri Health Care for All

- Citizen-initiated Ballot Measures
- Mobilized voters to get Medicaid expansion on the ballot
- Office space for staff provided in a UCC Epiphany; staff funding from Deaconess Foundation
- Medicaid expansion passed in August 2020, giving health coverage to 230,000 more people





**Ayanna Pressley** ✓

@AyannaPressley

...

You want to thank Black women?

Cancel student debt -- all of it.

Black women carry more student debt than any other group in America.

Save your words of appreciation. Policy is our love language.

1:50 PM · Jan 19, 2021 · TweetDeck



# Truth and Reconciliation Commission

*For more than three decades, the Anglican Church of Canada has been on a journey of listening, truth-telling, repentance and healing with Indigenous Peoples, both within and outside the church. There is an urgent need for further healing and justice-seeking across the land, and we all have a role to play.*

– The Anglican Church of Canada TRC Toolkit, 2015



Truth and  
Reconciliation  
Commission of Canada



*Don't ask what the world needs.  
Ask what makes you come  
alive and go do it. Because what  
the world needs is more people  
who have come alive.*

- Howard Thurman



# Organizations to Know

- The UCC's Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Task Force [ucc.org/red\\_overview\\_racial\\_ethnic\\_disparities/](http://ucc.org/red_overview_racial_ethnic_disparities/)
- The Center for Faith and Community Health Transformation [faithhealthtransformation.org/](http://faithhealthtransformation.org/)
- Stake Holder Health [stakeholderhealth.org/](http://stakeholderhealth.org/)
- The Balm in Gilead, Inc [balmingilead.org/](http://balmingilead.org/)
- Church Health [churchhealth.org/](http://churchhealth.org/)
- Metro IAF [metro-iaf.org/](http://metro-iaf.org/)



## Bibliography

- "14 Policy Priorities to Heal the Nation: A Moral and Economic Agenda for the First 100 Days." Poor People's Campaign. Last modified December 1, 2020. <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/resource/policy-and-legislative-priorities/>.
- APM Research Lab Staff. "COVID-19 Deaths Analyzed by Race and Ethnicity — APM Research Lab." APM Research Lab. Last modified December 10, 2020. <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-by-race>.
- Booker, Christopher, and Connie Kargbo. "Inside the Attempt to Build Trust About the COVID-19 Vaccine in Black Communities." PBS NewsHour. Last modified December 12, 2020. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/inside-the-attempt-to-build-trust-about-the-covid-19-vaccine-in-black-communities>.
- Bouza, Johayra. "The Science is Clear: Separating Families Has Long-term Damaging Psychological and Health Consequences for Children, Families, and Communities." Welcome to SRCD | Society for Research in Child Development SRCD. Last modified June 20, 2018. <https://www.srkd.org/briefs-fact-sheets/the-science-is-clear>.
- Boyd, J. W. "How Mass Incarceration Harms U.S. Health, in 5 Charts." The Conversation. Last modified January 31, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/how-mass-incarceration-harms-u-s-health-in-5-charts-90674>.
- Carlson, Robert. "Cancer Care Barriers Create Racial Disparities in Cancer Survival." STAT. Last modified June 23, 2020. <https://www.statnews.com/2020/06/24/cancer-care-racial-disparities-dismantle-barriers/>.
- Chavez, Nicole. "A Third of Americans Don't See Systemic Racism As a Barrier to Good Health, Survey Says." CNN. Last modified January 13, 2021. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/13/us/racism-good-health-impact-survey/index.html>.
- Christ, Ginger. "MetroHealth Working with Churches to Address Community Trauma." Cleveland. Last modified June 29, 2018. [https://www.cleveland.com/healthfit/2018/06/metrohealth\\_launches\\_new\\_initi.html#:~:text=MetroHealth%20launches%20initiative%20with%20churches%20to%20address%20community%20trauma,-Updated%20Jan%2030&text=Trauma%20responders%20in%20the%20churches,where%20social%20workers%20leave%20off](https://www.cleveland.com/healthfit/2018/06/metrohealth_launches_new_initi.html#:~:text=MetroHealth%20launches%20initiative%20with%20churches%20to%20address%20community%20trauma,-Updated%20Jan%2030&text=Trauma%20responders%20in%20the%20churches,where%20social%20workers%20leave%20off).
- Dawes, Daniel E. *The Political Determinants of Health*. Baltimore: JHU Press, 2020.

"DPIC Releases Major New Report on Race and the U.S. Death Penalty." Death Penalty Information Center. Last modified September 15, 2020. <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/news/dpic-releases-major-new-report-on-race-and-the-u-s-death-penalty>.

Eligon, John. "Black Doctor Dies of Covid-19 After Complaining of Racist Treatment." The New York Times - Breaking News, US News, World News and Videos. Last modified December 25, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/23/us/susan-moore-black-doctor-indiana.html>.

"Ending the War on Drugs." Center for American Progress. Last modified June 27, 2018. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/criminal-justice/reports/2018/06/27/452786/ending-war-drugs/>.

"GCC Announces Free Indoor COVID Testing at Three East Side Sites - News & Events." Greater Cleveland Congregations. Last modified December 3, 2020. <https://www.greaterclevelandcongregations.org/news-events/posts/gcc-announces-free-indoor-covid-testing-at-three-east-side-sites/>.

Gould, Elise, and Valerie Wilson. "Black Workers Face Two of the Most Lethal Preexisting Conditions for Coronavirus—racism and Economic Inequality." Economic Policy Institute. Last modified June 1, 2020. <https://www.epi.org/publication/black-workers-covid/>.

"Health Disparities Between Blacks and Whites Run Deep." News. Last modified April 15, 2016. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/health-disparities-between-blacks-and-whites-run-deep/>.

"Immigration Policy Is Health Policy." Center for Health Progress. Last modified March 20, 2018. <https://centerforhealthprogress.org/blog/publications/immigration-policy-is-health-policy/>.

Kahn, Asha. "Faith-based Mutual Aid Flourishes Amid Pandemic, Protests." ABC News. Last modified June 24, 2020. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/faith-based-mutual-aid-flourishes-amid-pandemic-protests-71435545>.

Kendi, Ibram X. *How To Be an Antiracist*. New York: Random House, 2019.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Stop Blaming Black People for Dying of the Coronavirus." The Atlantic. Last modified April 14, 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/04/race-and-blame/609946/>.

- LaPointe, Jacqueline. "Advocate Aurora Invests in People, Infrastructure for ACO Success." RevCycleIntelligence. Last modified October 15, 2019. <https://revcycleintelligence.com/news/advocate-aurora-invests-in-people-infrastructure-for-aco-success>.
- Lee Brewer, Graham. "Study of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Highlights Police Data Failures." High Country News. Last modified November 14, 2018. <https://www.hcn.org/issues/50.21/tribal-affairs-study-of-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-highlights-police-data-failures>.
- Matthew, Dayna B. *Just Medicine: A Cure for Racial Inequality in American Health Care*. New York: NYU Press, 2015.
- Mavrakis, Emily, and Gainesville Sun. "Black Churches in Gainesville in Talks As COVID Vaccine Sites, Hope to Increase Community Trust." The Gainesville Sun. Last modified January 14, 2021. <https://www.gainesville.com/story/news/coronavirus/2021/01/14/local-black-churches-talks-vaccine-sites-alachua-distributing-faster/4156977001/>.
- "Mental Health and Substance Use." CHHSM. Last modified October 19, 2020. <https://www.chhsm.org/advocacy/center/mental-health-and-substance-use/>.
- Metzel, Jonathan. "Dying of Whiteness." Boston Review. Last modified July 2, 2019. <https://bostonreview.net/race/jonathan-m-metzel-dying-whiteness>.
- "Models." The Open Table®. Last modified May 20, 2020. <https://www.theopentable.org/models/>.
- Morales, Laurel. "Navajo Nation Loses Elders And Tradition To COVID-19." NPR.org. Last modified May 31, 2020. <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/31/865540308/navajo-nation-loses-elders-and-tradition-to-covid-19>.
- "National Police Violence Map." Mapping Police Violence. Last modified October 19, 2020. <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/>.
- Ordaz, Jessica. "Migrant detention centers have a long history of medical neglect and abuse." The Washington Post. Last modified September 18, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/09/18/migrant-detention-centers-have-long-history-medical-neglect-abuse/>.



Pompa, Cynthia. "Immigrant Kids Keep Dying in CBP Detention Centers, and DHS Won't Take Accountability." American Civil Liberties Union. Last modified June 24, 2019. <https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights/immigrants-rights-and-detention/immigrant-kids-keep-dying-cbp-detention>.

Robertson, Derek. "Flint Has Clean Water Now. Why Won't People Drink It?" POLITICO. Last modified December 23, 2020. <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/12/23/flint-water-crisis-2020-post-coronavirus-america-445459>.

Sabin, Janice. "How We Fail Black Patients in Pain." AAMC. Last modified January 6, 2020. <https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/how-we-fail-black-patients-pain>.

Smith, Alex. "Missouri Health Care Advocates Claim Victory On Medicaid Expansion, 230,000 People To Gain Coverage." KCUR 89.3 - NPR in Kansas City. Local News, Entertainment and Podcasts. Last modified August 5, 2020. <https://www.kcur.org/2020-08-04/missouri-health-care-advocates-claim-victory-on-medicaid-expansion-230-000-people-to-gain-coverage>.

"Social Determinants of Health." WHO | World Health Organization. Accessed January 21, 2021. <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health>.

Taylor, Jamila. "Eliminating Racial Disparities in Maternal and Infant Mortality." Center for American Progress. Last modified May 2, 2019. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2019/05/02/469186/eliminating-racial-disparities-maternal-infant-mortality/>.

"Truth and Reconciliation Commission Toolkit." The Anglican Church of Canada. Last modified March 3, 2020. <https://www.anglican.ca/tr/reconciliation-toolkit/>.

Vigdor, Neil. "North Carolina City Approves Reparations for Black Residents." The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia. Last modified July 16, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/16/us/reparations-asheville-nc.html>.

"What is Public Health?" American Public Health Association — For Science. For Action. For Health. Accessed January 19, 2021. <https://www.apha.org/what-is-public-health>.



"What Works: Town Hall Events." The Black Church and HIV. Accessed January 20, 2021. <https://theblackchurchandhiv.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Town-Halls.pdf>.

"Why Lead with Race." HealthEquityGuide.org – A Human Impact Partners Project. Last modified July 27, 2019. <https://healthequityguide.org/about/why-lead-with-race/>.

Wilson, Yolonda. "Dying While Black: Perpetual Gaps Exist in Health Care for African-Americans." The Conversation. Last modified February 5, 2019. <https://theconversation.com/dying-while-black-perpetual-gaps-exist-in-health-care-for-african-americans-110657>.

Yearby, Ruqaiijah, Crystal Lewis, Keon Gilbert, and Kira Banks. "Racism is a Public Health Crisis: Here's How to Respond." Data For Progress. Last modified September 2020. [https://pressley.house.gov/sites/pressley.house.gov/files/20.09\\_Racism-is-a-Public-Health-Crisis.pdf](https://pressley.house.gov/sites/pressley.house.gov/files/20.09_Racism-is-a-Public-Health-Crisis.pdf).

Young, Bessie. "Health Disparities in Advanced Heart Failure Treatment." JAMA Network | Home of JAMA and the Specialty Journals of the American Medical Association. Last modified July 21, 2020. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2768392>.