



PRESENTS

2019 Black History Month Forum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

‘Reimagining: Health · Education · Social Justice’

Community Forum on the Health Impacts of Exploitive Ticketing and Avoidable School Suspensions on African Americans Living in Buffalo

- **Thurs., Feb. 28, 2019**
- **4:30 PM – 8 PM**
- **Buffalo Academy For Visual and Performing Arts**

Buffalo, NY – Feb. 4, 2019 -- The [African American Health Disparities Task Force](#) (AAHDTF) has announced “**Reimagining: Health, Education, Social Justice... A Community Forum on the Health Impacts of Exploitive Ticketing and Avoidable School Suspensions on African Americans Living in Buffalo**” will take place **Thurs., Feb. 28, 2019 at the Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts, 450 Masten Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209.**

The “2019 Reimagining Forum” – in recognition of Black History Month – is free and open to the public. It is part of AAHDTF’s ongoing Igniting Hope Buffalo series. (Igniting Hope Buffalo 2018: “Building a Just Community with a Culture of Health and Equity” was held April 2018, 2018 at the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. Igniting Hope Buffalo 2019 is set for Aug. 17, 2019.)

The “2019 Reimagining Forum” will feature noted educator and school leader **Shaun Nelms, Associate Professor (Clinical), Warner School of Education, University of Rochester**; and Superintendent East High EPO; William & Sheila Konar Director of the Center for Urban Education Success Educational Leadership. <https://www.warner.rochester.edu/facultystaff/who/nelms>. Professor Nelms will keynote discussion focused on information and solutions pertaining to avoidable school suspensions.

Joanna Weiss, Co-Director, The Fines and Fees Justice Center located at 185 W Broadway, Suite C538, New York, NY, <https://finesandfeesjusticecenter.org/team/> will address exploitive ticketing for small infractions such as parking violations, selling single cigarettes, loitering, etc., that serve as a tax on the African American community for government services that do not benefit the community, while at the same time significantly impacting the community’s physical and mental health.

Ms. Weiss holds a J.D. from the George Washington University Law School, an M.A. from the George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs, and a B.A. in political science from Bryn Mawr College. Her experience includes serving as the Director of Criminal Justice at the Laura and John Arnold Foundation where she created and managed the Foundation’s fines and fees portfolio, garnering millions of dollars of support for 20 research, litigation and technical assistance projects to address the negative impacts of fines and fees in the justice system.

African American Health Disparities Task Force

Contacts:

Kelly M. Showard, MS, NYCPS, Director of Community Relations
Erie County Medical Center

Office: 716-898-4737; Cell: 716-238-4433

kshoward@ecmc.edu

Peter J. Ciotta, Communications Director

Millennium Collaborative Care PPS

Office: 716-898-1062; Cell: 716-346-6511

PCiotta@millenniumcc.org

"Immediate stressors from unfair practices may produce health disparities such as depression and high blood pressure that physicians can treat. However, the economic and social impacts of unjust policies have life-long consequences for social determinants of health that changes in social policies must cure," explained **2019 Forum Chair Linda Pessar, M.D., Director, Center For Medical Humanities, Professor of Clinical Psychiatry Emerita, [Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences](#)**.

"Unjust practices create immediate stressors that result in health disparities and long term consequences such as loss of drivers' licenses, or failure to graduate from high school that are social determinants of health," added **Rev. George F. Nicholas**, MDiv, Pastor, [Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church](#) and AAHD Task Force Convener. "Furthermore, low income individuals can be forced to spend as much as 70 percent of their resources to resolve avoidable fines. This just adds to their economic burden and compounds problems that they – and ultimately – all of us will have to deal with."

2019 Forum Agenda

- **4:30 PM: Start**
- Registration
- Information Tables
- Healthy Dinner

- **5 PM – 6 PM: Plenary Session**
- **Professor Shaun Nelms** will lead discussion focused on information and solutions pertaining to avoidable school suspensions.

- **Joanna Weiss, Co-Director, The Fines and Fees Justice Center**, will address exploitive ticketing for small infractions that serve as a tax on the African American community.

- **6 PM – 7:15 PM: Breakout Sessions**
- 1) School Suspensions
- 2) Exploitive Ticketing

- **7:20 PM – 8 PM: Summary Session**
- 1) Attendee Responses – Reports from Breakout Sessions and connections to Social Determinants of Health and the African American community.

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About The African American Health Disparities Task Force

Vision:

The African American Health Disparities Task Force will eliminate race/ethnicity-based health disparities among African Americans in the City of Buffalo, NY by addressing the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH).

Mission:

The African-American Health Disparities Task Force (SDOH) identifies areas of racial/ethnic health disparities in the City of Buffalo, proposes and helps implement solutions on a community level, and influences public policy to improve the health and health care of the community. Through collaboration with its community partners, the AAHDTF focuses on: Research, Advocacy, Policy, Program Development, Community Engagement, Assessment, Education, Consulting.

Established in 2015, the AAHDTF is committed to the following goals and accomplishments:

Goals:

- Establishment of a working group of community partners that represent the African American Community, Academia, Clinical representatives, healthcare institutions and community-based organizations as the African American Health Disparities Task Force.
- Develop and implement a workplan that will engage the community in a robust and interactive strategy, concentrating on the SDOH to eliminate race-based disparities.
- Establishment of an African American Disparities Office.

AAHDTF Accomplishments

- 2018 Igniting Hope: Building A Just Community with a Culture of Health and Equity
- 2016 Testimony on AA Health Disparities before the Erie County Legislature Health Committee
- 2015 Task Force in Health Care Disparities in the African American Community

Partners:

Concerned Clergy of WNY – coalition of African American pastors serving congregations in Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Lackawanna whose focus is improving the quality of life for African Americans in those communities.

Erie County Medical Center

HOPE Buffalo - a project of CAI, a diverse, mission-driven non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of health care and social services delivered to vulnerable populations worldwide. CAI functions as a strategic convener of a diverse group of key stakeholders, including residents within the city of Buffalo who are engaged and empowered to address health equity and improve the health and wellness of disparity populations in the WNY region.

Millennium Collaborative Care – a Performing Provider System (PPS) in the New York State Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) Program dedicated to igniting healthcare change in Western New York, by partnering with physicians, healthcare providers and community-based organizations to improve the delivery of health care for Over 270,00 Medicaid clients.

NeuWater & Associates, LLC – focuses on improving population health in urban centers by improving SDOH outcomes.

Population Health Collaborative of WNY – a collaboration of organizations working to build capacity to improve community health, helping to improve quality of healthcare and spearheading reforms that drive down the costs of healthcare.

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Partners (Continued):

University at Buffalo:

- Center for Successful Aging
- Center Medical Humanities
- Center for Urban Studies
- Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI)
- Department of Urban and Regional Planning
- Graduate School of Education
- Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences
- School of Law
- School of Management
- School Nursing
- School of Public Health and Health Professions

Areas of Focus

Tobacco

- Million Hearts® - UB School of Nursing

Nutrition

- Healthy Corner Store Initiative – NeuWater & Associates, LLC
- Healthy Food Community Advocate Program – NeuWater & Associates, LLC
- ECMC Farmers' Market - ECMC

Clinical

- Clinical Transformation/Integration and Care Coordination – Millennium
- Health in the Neighborhood – Concerned Clergy/Jacobs School of Medicine
- Health Literacy in Houses of Worship – Concerned Clergy of WNY
- Barber/Beauty Shop Blood Pressure Screening and Health Literacy Program - Millennium

*Each partner has several initiatives that fit these areas of focus, in addition to the ones listed.

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2019 African American Health Disparities Task Force Members

Stacy L. Beauford, MBA

Lieutenant, Internal Affairs Division
Buffalo Police Department

William Covington

John D. Craik, JD

Executive Director
Population Health Collaborative of Western New York

Kenyani Davis, MD, MPH

Community Health Center of Buffalo
Assistant Medical Director,
Millennium Collaborative Care

Julia Devonish, MD, PhD

Department of Cancer Prevention, Epidemiology and
Biostatistics

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Margarita Dubocovich, PhD

Senior Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion
Office of Inclusion and Cultural Enhancement
University at Buffalo

Susan Grinslade, PhD, RN, PHN-CS, BC

Clinical Professor
University at Buffalo School of Nursing

Randy Hoak

Associate State Director
AARP NY

Rita Hubbard-Robinson, JD

CEO of NeuWater & Associates, LLC
Patient Activation Measure Director/Consultant and Host,
"Millennium Health Matters",
Millennium Collaborative Care

Alan Lesse, MD

Senior Associate Dean for Medical Curriculum;
Associate Professor of Medicine, Pharmacology
And Toxicology, and Microbiology and Immunology;
Vice Chair for Education, Department of Medicine
Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences;
Chief of Infectious Disease, VA Western New York Healthcare
System

LaToyia Malcolm, MS

Outreach Team
Behavioral Health Disease Management Department
BlueCross Blue Shield of WNY

Stan Martin, MM

Director
HOPE Buffalo

Michele Mercer, RN, MSHSA

Chief Clinical Integration Officer
Millennium Collaborative Care

Timothy Murphy, MD

SUNY Distinguished Professor of Medicine
Director of the Clinical and Translational Science Institute
(CTSI)
University at Buffalo

Rev. George Nicholas, MDiv

Senior Pastor, Lincoln Memorial United Methodist
Founding member, Concerned Clergy Coalition of Western
New York
Convener, African-American Health Disparities Task
Force
Member, Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Taskforce

Magdalena Nichols, MHA

Chief Officer of Development & Strategic Partnerships
Jericho Road Community Health Center

Nancy Nielsen, MD, PhD

Clinical Professor
Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences
University at Buffalo

Heather Orom, PhD

Assistant Dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Associate Professor, School of Public Health and Health
Professions
University at Buffalo

Danielle Pelfrey Duryea, MA, JD, LLM

Professor, Health Law
Director, Health Justice Law & Policy Clinic
University at Buffalo School of Law
Associate Director, UB Center for Successful Aging
Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences

Brittany Perez, OTD, OTR/L

Director of Outreach and Engagement
Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access
University at Buffalo

Linda Pessar-Cowan, MD

Director, The Center for Medical Humanities
Professor, Clinical Psychiatry Emerita
UB Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical
Sciences

Reverend Kinzer M. Pointer, MCM

Pastor of Agape Fellowship Baptist Church;
Chairman, Board Managers, Millennium Collaborative Care
PPS;
Chairman, Erie County Poverty Commission;
Board Chair, Greater Buffalo United Ministries;
Board Secretary, Child Care Resource Network;
Convener, Concerned Clergy Coalition of Western New York

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Rev. Rachelle Sat'chell Robinson, M.Div
Founder, Deep Wells Ministries
Associate Pastor, First Shiloh Baptist Church

Antonio Regulier
Program Manager
R.E..A.C.H

Kelly Showard, MS
Director of Community Relations
Erie County Medical Center Corporation

Henry Taylor, PhD
Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Founding Director, Center for Urban Studies
University at Buffalo

Laurene Tumiel Berhalter, PhD
Associate Professor and Director of Community Translational
Research Department of Family Medicine
University at Buffalo

Willie Underwood, MD, MSci, MPH
Department of Urologic Oncology
Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center (RPCI)
Chair, Erie County Medical Society's Legislative Committee

Randy Yerrick, PhD
Professor of Science Education
Associate Dean for the Graduate School of Education
University at Buffalo

Larry Zielinski, MBA
Executive-in-Residence for Health Care Administration
University at Buffalo School of Management