

32nd National Black Nurses' Day on Capitol Hill
Theme: "Addressing Social Determinants of Health: NBNA's Call to Action"

The Epidemic of HIV/AIDS

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) supports comprehensive efforts to reduce the rates of HIV/AIDS and its devastating effects. NBNA calls on the 116th Congress to address the many social determinants of health that exacerbate the disproportional effects of HIV/AIDS on the Black community.

Background

We are approaching the 4th decade of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and there are:

- **Over 700,000 deaths have occurred from HIV/AIDS in America**
- **Over 1.1 Million people are currently living with HIV in the U.S.**
 - 15% or 1 in 7 are unaware of their diagnosis
- **In 2017, 38,739 people received an HIV diagnosis in the U.S. and 6 dependent areas**
 - Gay, bisexual men and other men who have sex with men bear the most burden (26,000)
 - Black/African American men = 10,223, Hispanic/Latino = 7,425, White = 7,390
 - Heterosexual contact accounted for 24% (9,578) of HIV diagnoses
 - IDU accounted for 9% (3,425) of HIV diagnoses
- **Women accounted for 19% (7,529) of HIV diagnoses**
- The majority of new case 19,968 (52%) occurred in the South
- **African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos are disproportionately affected by HIV. In 2017:**
 - African Americans accounted for 43% (16,694) of HIV diagnoses and 13% of the population.
 - Hispanics/Latinos accounted for 26% (9,908) of HIV diagnoses and 18% of the population.

Recommendations to Legislators

- NBNA encourages full support of the *"Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America"* to decrease HIV infections 75% in five years and 90% in 10 years. <https://www.cdc.gov/endhiv/index.html>
 - **The appropriation of \$291 Million dollars in the FY 2020 HHS budget as requested by the administration for the implementation of the plan.**
- Diagnosing all individuals with HIV as early as possible after infection.
- Treating HIV rapidly and effectively after diagnosis to achieve sustained viral suppression.
 - **Support the FY 2020 HHS budget request of \$2,389,027,000 to fund the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program**
- Protecting individuals at risk for HIV using proven prevention approaches.
 - **Increased and equal access to Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) medications for disproportionately affected Black communities.**
- Responding rapidly to detect and respond to growing HIV clusters and prevent new infections.
- Support all efforts to replenish the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), malaria.

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Climate Change and Environmental Justice

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) supports comprehensive efforts to endorse action to address climate change through equitable initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare communities for unavoidable changes leading to reduction of climate-related health effects. NBNA calls on the 116th Congress to also support clean air and water protections and initiatives that support healthy environments and people. Moreover, the most at-risk populations are children, elderly, low-income, and minorities. Climate change disproportionately impacts the physical, mental and social well-being of Black communities.

Background:

- Human-caused climate change creates significant risks to human health including:
 - Deterioration of air quality (particularly particle matter and ozone pollution) from more intense wildfires and hotter temperatures. Poor air quality contributes to worsening new and existing cases of asthma, increases in allergens and allergy symptoms, aggravation of chronic lung and cardiac diseases, and premature death.
 - More extreme heat days and heat waves will increase the likelihood of temperature-related illness.¹
 - Increased risk of diseases carried by insects (e.g. dengue fever, Zika, malaria, Lyme disease) from rising temperatures and changes in precipitation.¹
 - More intense and severe droughts and heavier periods of precipitation, rising sea levels, and severe storm surges that contribute to flooding can impact water quality and food supply, increasing potential for water and food-related illnesses.¹
 - Stress-related and mental health impacts from community disruption and extreme weather events.¹
- Climate change exacerbates existing health inequities and disproportionately impacts certain populations, including children, older adults, those with chronic health conditions, some communities of color, low-income communities, and indigenous peoples.²

Recommendations to Legislators:

- Support House Resolution 109 introduced in February 2019 - Recognizing the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal.⁴
- NBNA opposes restricting or amending Clean Air Act authority.
- NBNA supports at least level funding for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement and enforce environmental health protections. NBNA opposes inclusion of anti-health riders in appropriations bills.
- NBNA supports the need for health protective EPA regulations that work towards addressing climate change or climate-related impacts. **NBNA opposes efforts to:**
 - Weaken or eliminate the Clean Water Rule.
 - Weaken the clean car standards.
 - Weaken standards that regulate methane pollution from oil and gas operations/production.
 - Repeal the Clean Power Plan and weaken carbon emission standards from power plants.
- NBNA supports the inclusion of nurses to serve as spokespersons on climate change and environmental justice related health issues.

References

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Smoking and Vaping

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) supports comprehensive efforts to reduce the rates of smoking and vaping and its devastating effects. NBNA calls on the 116th Congress to address smoking and vaping as a leading public health addiction contributing to various chronic diseases such as cardiovascular, pulmonary disease and brain health. Cigarettes, e-cigarettes and tobacco products contain many dangerous toxins. The recent rise in mortality with vaping particularly in young adult's initiates immediate call to action. Moreover, smoking disproportionately impacts the physical, mental and social well-being of Black communities in comparison to other communities and this is especially concerning. The National Black Nurses Association joins the American College of Chest Physicians in their commitment to prevent and address tobacco-dependence.

Background

- Tobacco use imposes a heavy economic burden on the world: the cost of smoking alone is estimated to be US\$ 1,400 billion, or 1.8% of global gross domestic product (GDP) (1).
- Tobacco dependence as a chronic disease acknowledges the altered central nervous system (CNS) neurobiology in tobacco-dependent patients.
- Each year, more than 7 million people die from tobacco use (1), with over 80% of deaths occurring in low- or middle-income countries
- As of October 10, 2019, 1,300 lung injury cases associated with the use of vaping have been reported to CDC from 49 states.
- Twenty-six deaths have been confirmed in 21 states with the youngest victim being a 17-year-old from New York.
- The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced, killing more than 7 million people a year
- Second-hand smoke causes more than 890 000 premature deaths per year (2).

Recommendations to Legislators

- Support the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act
- Support States with laws defining e-cigarettes and restricting youth access
- Support states requiring licenses for retail sales of e-cigarettes
- Support legislation against vaping
- Support national legislation increasing age to 21 for vaping and banning any liquid flavors
- **Support S. 1832 / H.R 4019: Smoke-Free Schools Act of 2019**

References

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Gun Violence and Related Consequences

The National Black Nurses Association supports comprehensive efforts to reduce gun violence and its devastating effects. NBNA calls on the 116th Congress to address gun violence as a public health crisis that affects people of all ages and races in the United States. Gun violence disproportionately impacts the physical, mental and social well-being of Black communities in comparison to other communities and this is especially concerning.

Background

Multifaceted and comprehensive measures are sorely needed to reverse the following trends in gun violence and related consequences in the United States:

- As of December 1st which is the 335th day of the year, there had been 385 mass shootings in the U.S., according to data from the nonprofit Gun Violence Archive (GVA), which tracks mass shootings in the country.¹
- Recurrent and recent mass shootings at schools (William C. Longstreth Elementary School, PA., Saugus High School, Santa Clarita, CA.). In the first 46 weeks of 2019 there were 45 school shootings. That's an average of one school shooting a week. Mass shootings also occurred in Walmart shopping centers in Duncan, Oklahoma and El Paso, Texas.¹
- Gun violence is a leading cause of premature death in the U.S.²
- For those ages 15-34, homicide is the leading cause of death for Black people.³

Recommendations to Legislators

- NBNA encourages legislation that would provide for a 7-day waiting period before a semiautomatic firearm, a silencer, armor piercing ammunition, or a large capacity ammunition magazine may be transferred.
- NBNA encourages legislation that limits overall access to semiautomatic assault weapons.
- NBNA supports current recommendations from the American Public Health Association requesting common sense measures to reduce gun violence namely but not limited to:
 - Requiring and strengthening criminal background checks for all firearm purchases, including all firearms sold at guns shows and on the internet.
 - Swift appropriation the **\$25 million dollars** recently approved to support federal gun violence research as detailed in the two bills below.
 - **Support H.R. 435: Gun Violence Research Act** that repeals the practices that prohibits the Department of Health and Human Services from sponsoring research on gun violence.
 - **Support H.R. 674 / S. 184: Gun Violence Prevention Research Act of 2019** that authorizes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct or support research on firearms safety or gun violence prevention.
 - Expanding the collection and analysis of data related to gun violence and other violent deaths by increasing the funding for CDC's National Violence Death Reporting System (the only state-based surveillance reporting system that pools data on violent deaths from multiple sources into a usable, anonymous database).
 - Expand access to comprehensive mental health services to anyone affected by gun violence, and those with mental health conditions that might pre-dispose them to consider using guns.

References

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2. American Public Health Association (APHA) (2019). Gun Violence. Retrieved from <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/gun-violence>
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Mental Health, Depression and Suicide in Adolescents & Young Adults

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) supports comprehensive efforts to reduce the rates of mental illness, depression and suicide in adolescents and young adults and its devastating effects. Mental health disorders are a major leading public health issue that negatively impacts the health and well-being of all communities but disproportionately the black community. NBNA calls on the 116th Congress to address mental illness, depression, and suicide as a public health crisis and the many social determinants of health that exacerbate the disproportioned effects on physical, financial and social well-being of Black communities.

Background

- Serious mental illness causes \$193.2 billion in lost earnings each year across the economy
- More than 47,000 people died from suicide in 2017
- Death by suicide in African American men were four times greater than for African American women, in 2017
 - Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States
 - Suicide rates for black female teens rose 182 % between 2001 and 2017.
 - Suicide is the leading cause of death for people 10 to 34 years of age
 - The fourth leading cause among people 35 to 54 years of age
- A recent study found that a 63% increase in young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 reporting symptoms of depression between 2009 and 2017
 - 10% of African-Americans will deal with major depressive disorder during their lifetime
 - African Americans living below the poverty level, are twice as likely to report psychological distress.

Recommendations to Legislators

NBNA strongly urges the 116th Congress to:

- Support the mental health workforce, so more trained professionals are available to help individuals with mental illness.
 - *Applauds the recent passage of H.R. 1865 providing \$12 million to establish the Loan Repayment Program for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Workforce*
- Help support integration of health and mental health care.
- Strengthen community crisis response systems, so people experiencing a psychiatric crisis can get help sooner.
- Combat suicide in our schools and communities.
- Help support grants expanding evidence-based programs for prevention, diagnosis, treatment and recovery services.
- Support the passage of **S. 1122: Mental Health Services for Students Act of 2019**, to revise and extend projects relating to children and to provide access to school-based comprehensive mental health programs.
- NBNA supports multifaceted and comprehensive approach to reducing the stigma of mental health illnesses and request that Congress work to support efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of black communities that are disproportionately affected by ensuring access to treatment, and improved quality of treatment.

References

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