

ADDRESSING HEALTH DISPARITIES: CAN BLACK WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP BE A SOLUTION?

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Executive Summary

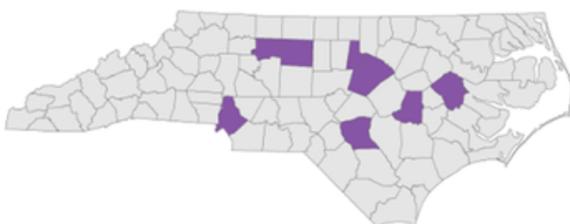
Healthcare is the cornerstone of society. There are inequities that exist, which prevents certain populations from receiving the highest quality of care. Structural racism is a direct cause of health disparities, which has made prejudice institutional practices and policies part of the system. African American women occupy the lowest-paying and most hazardous jobs in healthcare, while representation at the executive level is scarce. With Black women also facing worse health disparities than any other ethnic group, there is a dire need for voices to advocate for the issues that plague this demographic.

Research Methods: Through a literature review that included dissertations, news articles, and journals from Google Scholar and ProQuest was used to collect data for this study. Some literature included accounts of African American women who held leadership roles in healthcare where barriers to advancement and their overall experiences in their field were discussed. Approximately 26 sources, including 7 peer-reviewed journal articles, news articles, and professional organization's websites contributed to this research

Results:

- African Americans in NC and nationwide had a greater rate of cardiovascular disease, cancer, HIV, and homicide.
- Out of the five major health systems which provide healthcare for most of North Carolina, only one was led by an African American woman.
- North Carolina Healthcare Association created the Diverse Healthcare Leaders Mentorship Program.

8 Counties with Half of North Carolina's Black Population, 2010



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Expand mentorship programs that will help African American women in entry and middle-level management in healthcare administration navigate the progression of their careers.

- Education is an essential asset to advancement in any field. Holding a Master's degree or higher is the standard for the healthcare field. With Black women among the most educated demographic group in the United States, there should be more representation in leadership positions.

2. Increase scholarships/grants to target Black women furthering their education.

- Financing higher education is expensive, therefore, offering more scholarships and grants for Black women to assist in furthering their education will help increase those willing to earn an advanced degree.

3. Provide opportunities to gain experience in healthcare administration while completing their education through internships and other experiential learning.

- The most valuable asset to bring to a company is education and experience. Hands-on training in the setting gives the perspective executive the opportunity to learn in the setting they will be working in.