



# ABIPA Health Highlights

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

LOCATE • EDUCATE • NAVIGATE • ADVOCATE

COMMUNITY

**ON SITE ACTIVITIES**

56 Walton St., Asheville

**Building Brothers BREAKFAST**

Saturday, September 14

Prostate & Diabetes Health, 8 a.m. at the ABIPA office.

Healthy Breakfast Options provided by

Call (828) 251-8364 to schedule ABIPA for your organization or church events.

**Donate to ABIPA**

Tax deductible donations can be made by sending a check to: ABIPA, PO Box 448, Asheville, NC 28802; or click the donation tab at www.abipa.org. Thank you for your support!

Thank you to our funding partner and community partner agencies for making our work possible.



and the **Buncombe County Service Foundation**

**ABIPA**

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**Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement**

ABIPA promotes economic, social, and healthy parity achievement for African Americans and other underserved populations in Buncombe County through advocacy, education, research, and community partnerships.

[www.ABIPA.org](http://www.ABIPA.org)



## What Is Your “Why?”

*This month I celebrate my 45th year on earth and I am thankful for every moment I have experienced, good and bad.*

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director  
Photo: Pro16 Productions

I wanted to be a little more reflective today as many of us are taking in, again, all of the images and sounds surrounding the mass shootings in the news. I can't see how anyone could be desensitized enough to not shed a tear for all that has been lost to a problem that seems to be never ending. Can people simply do the opposite of hate?

I often sit and think I am too busy for my own good, but there is so much to be done—we should all do what we can in our corner of the world to make it a little brighter.

I am involved in a number of organizations in addition to ABIPA, and I am self-aware of my “why” in each instance.

I am a member of the Asheville Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, because I think that African American women are stronger together. It is a beautiful thing to be part of a professional group of women who are linked in service and friendship.

I am a member of the Shiloh Community Association because it is imperative that we build on the legacy and embrace the future

through current efforts to preserve and advance the hopes and dreams of community.

I am a member of WRES because it is important that our voices, through spoken word and melody, are always heard. Music is, literally, the soundtrack to our lives.

I am a member of the Martin Luther King Association of Asheville and Buncombe County because the only way we can keep hope alive is if we live out the dream 365 days a year.

I am a member of Mountain True because our environment, part of our everyday lives, is often taken for granted.

I am a member of the women's ministry at Bethel Seventh-day Adventist Church because we must minister to each other because women take on so many burdens alone.

I remember someone saying I must be running for something



because I am involved in so much. To be blunt, that is the farthest thing from the truth of who I am and desire to be. I despise politics, though it is a means to an end. I just want to do my part to make my little corner of the world the best place to live, work, and play.

Yes, I do too much. Yes, I feel deflated from time to time. But I pick each one up, refuel my spirit, and keep it moving.

This month I encourage you to reflect on your “Why” and these seven sayings—some silly and some sound—that give me life.

**Lunch & Learn**

Every Wednesday  
Led by Kathey Avery RN, BSN, from 12 noon to 1 p.m. at the Linwood Crump Shiloh Recreation Complex.

**PRAISE**



**5th Annual Praise Awards**  
Sunday, August 25  
Held at UNC Asheville beginning at 6 p.m. in the Mountain View Room.

- ★ Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get.
- ★ It's gonna rain on your head.
- ★ When people show you who they are, believe them the first time.
- ★ Have a sense of urgency before an emergency.
- ★ Lead with love.
- ★ I can forgive you, love you, and move on.
- ★ I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.



Photo: Pro16 Productions

## Infant Mortality, and Epigenetics

By Kathey Avery, RN, BSN, Director of Clinical and Community Connection

*The disparity ratio in Buncombe County between 5-year infant mortality rates for African American and white infant mortality has increased over the past year; in 2015 the rate was 3.1.*

One of the ways of addressing this issue has been through the infant mortality classes conducted by ABIPA's PRAISE initiative this year.

The CDC reported some causes for the differences, including stress and genetics. In Buncombe County, the economic disparity between African Americans and whites may be a significant contributor.

African American women of every socioeconomic level have higher rates of infant mortality than white women who haven't finished high school, and black women who immigrated here from other countries. A lifetime of racism can literally get in our DNA

and affect the health of our newborns for more than one generation. How?

Epigenetics, which is the study of changes in gene activity that are not caused by changes in the DNA sequences. It is the study of gene expression. These changes may stay for the remainder of the cell's life. One of the natural protections passed from generation to generation through DNA is the protection received through breastmilk.

**August is National Breastfeeding Month**

We know breast milk is proven to have protective effects in reducing many health problems. Buncombe County and the City Commission fully support promoting awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding to our

communities and making breastfeeding areas more accessible to our new mothers. Breastmilk could epigenetically protect a child from developing diseases as he or she grows older. What a natural way to begin solving a big problem!

The Complete Health Improvement Program's involvement in tackling infant mortality continues in Buncombe County, most notably in the partnership and support it provides to Mothering Asheville, Sistas Caring for Sistas doula services, and integrating those services more fully into MAHEC OB. CHIP is also working to amplify the central message of Mothering Asheville—racism is killing babies in our community and across the country.

*Did You Know?*