

# INSTITUTE FOR PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE & ADVOCACY



Kathey Avery, RN, BSN

**Avery Health - Education and Consulting** brings extensive experience and knowledge to help individuals and groups achieve positive health outcomes and implement equity.

**Kathey Avery**, founder and owner of Avery Health - Education and Consulting, has more than 35 years of experience in healthcare and community activism. She is dedicated to raising awareness about, and helping in the prevention of, chronic diseases and preventable cancers through patient and public education and personal accountability.

Contact Kathey Avery today at 828-768-2369 to schedule a talk or workshop. For more details, please visit [www.AveryHEC.com](http://www.AveryHEC.com)



The mission of the **Institute for Preventive Healthcare & Advocacy** is to promote optimum health for all residents of Buncombe County and surrounding areas by addressing the social determinants of health and the inequities in access to affordable and preventive healthcare.

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

The IFPHA is grateful for the support of our sponsors.



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

## Minority Health and Autism Awareness

BY KATHEY AVERY RN, BSN, CN

*Happy Spring everyone! April is Minority Health Awareness and Autism Awareness Month.*

Buncombe County's CHIP (Community Health Improvement Process) program selected the following quality of life conditions that will improve as a result of collective action.

- Birth Outcomes/Infant Mortality
- Mental Health and Substance Misuse
- Chronic Health Conditions: Heart Disease and Diabetes

### Infant Mortality Prevention

Buncombe County has seen an increase in number of infants who died in their first year of life. Almost twice as many African American babies die as white babies, making this a notable health disparity. This is a key community health indicator to help monitor improvements in women's health, health equity, and poverty.

The Institute for Preventive Healthcare and Advocacy (IFPHA) addresses infant mortality by addressing the root causes and educating African American women on racial trauma by looking at the effects of stress caused by epigenetics. My goal as community nurse is to educate our women on causes contributing to higher infant mortality rates in Buncombe County.

When IFPHA provides education, we provide stress relief gift bags that also contain information about local resources, such as SistasCaring4Sistas doulas. Our goal is to improve infant mortality rates for our women now and for the next generation.

### Chronic Health Conditions

IFPHA's team has been working in our communities to identify chronic illnesses by surveying individuals at a senior living facility, several public housing facilities, African American churches, and affordable housing facilities. Targeted health education will improve health and better help individuals manage their chronic health conditions.

According to Census Bureau projections, the 2021 life expectancies at birth for African Americans is 70.8 years, with 74.8 years for women, and 66.7 years for men. For non-Hispanic whites, the projected life expectancies are 76.4 years, with 79.2 years for women, and 73.7 years for men. The death rate for Blacks/African Americans is gener-

ally higher than whites for Covid-19, heart disease, stroke, cancer, asthma, influenza and pneumonia, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and homicide.

As minorities, we need to be aware of our health conditions and how they can shorten our life expectancy if not addressed.

### Autism: What You Need to Know

Many of us know or are related to someone with Autism.

According to the National Library of Medicine, Autism rates among racial minorities in the United States have increased by double digits in recent years, with African American rates now exceeding those of whites in most states, and Hispanic rates growing faster than any other group, according to new CU Boulder research.

It is estimated that Autism Spectrum Disorders affect 1 in 500 live births per year. However, due to varying techniques for diagnosis and treatment, the disability remains the subject of debate.

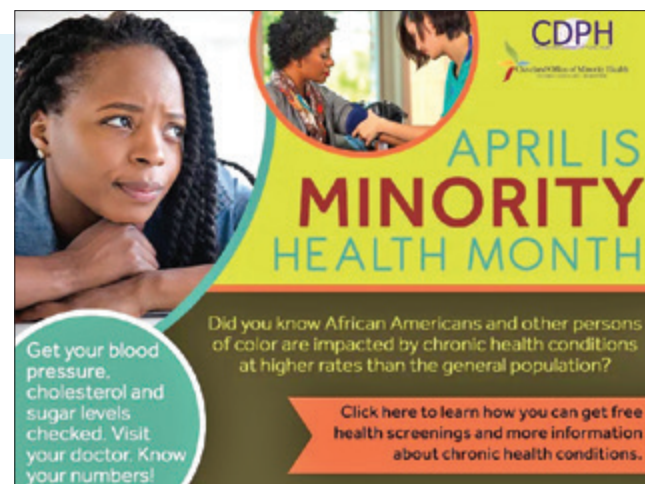
African Americans tend to suffer disproportionate rates of disability and disease when compared to other racial and ethnic groups due to lack of access to preventative and curative care.

However, evidence demonstrates that although rates of diagnosis for autism occur at the same rates in all racial groups, diagnosis in African American children occurs later than in white children. As a result, African American children may require longer and more intensive intervention.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), or autism, is a complex neurological and developmental disorder that affects how a person acts, communicates, learns, and interacts with others.

ASD affects the structure and function of the brain and nervous system. Because it affects a child's development, ASD is called a developmental disorder. ASD can last throughout a person's life. People with this disorder have problems with communication, interactions with other people (social skills), restricted interests, and repetitive behaviors.

People with autism can have different symptoms. For this reason, autism is known as a spectrum disorder—a group of disorders with a range of similar features. ASD includes Autistic disorder ("classic" autism), Asperger syndrome, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder (or "atypical" autism).



Asperger syndrome is sometimes said to be a milder version of classic autism, mostly affecting social behaviors. Unlike people with autism, many people with Asperger syndrome have normal or above-average intelligence and language skills.

Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) includes some, but not all, of the features of classic autism and/or Asperger syndrome. This category also includes childhood disintegrative disorder and Rett syndrome, two conditions in which a child develops normally for several months or years, then loses skills related to language, movement and coordination, and other cognitive functions.

### Some Symptoms of Autism

- Delayed language skills.
- Delayed movement skills.
- Delayed cognitive or learning skills.
- Hyperactive, impulsive, and/or inattentive behavior.
- Epilepsy or seizure disorder.
- Unusual eating and sleeping habits.
- Gastrointestinal issues (for example, constipation)
- Unusual mood or emotional reactions.

Sources: WNC Network, Buncombe County Health Department, OMH US Dept. HHS, CDC, NLM.



Join Kathey Avery during lunch on the third and fourth Wednesdays of the month at the Linwood Crump Shiloh Community Center. The community nurse will address "Hot Topics" and provide education and knowledge to help keep you healthy. All are welcome!