

ABIPA – ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE INSTITUTE OF PARITY ACHIEVEMENT



ABIPA is Black History

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director

Many of the organizations found on the pages of The Urban News are Black History in motion.

JéWana Grier-McEachin. Photo: Pro16 Productions

This year ABIPA turns 20—our formal establishment as a nonprofit began in February 26, 2004. It is most appropriate that we honor our legacy birthed by Dr. Charles Blair.

Dr. Blair was a talented doctor, compassionate healer, and visionary thinker. An undergraduate at Amherst and Alcorn State, he graduated from Meharry Medical College and completed his internship, residency, and first medical staffing in the US Army. He rose to the rank of Major as Chief of Professional Services, 546th General Dispensary, while stationed in West Germany.

After coming to Asheville in 1990, Dr. Blair became a staff physician at the Buncombe County Medical Center and Sisters of Mercy Urgent Care. For a number of years, he served on the North Carolina Minority Health Advisory Council. The founder and medical director of the New Hope Community Health Center, Dr. Blair also served as medical director of the Three Streams Family Health Center.

As a pioneer working to achieve quality healthcare for all, his community service includes founding the Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement as well as cofounding Building Bridges, Rites of Passage of Asheville, and The Drum 2000.

The ABIPA team salutes our founding father, Dr. Charles Blair, and all the organizations and individuals that supported the launch of his dream. We proudly hold his light at the center of our work and carry the eternal flame of Health Equity for Asheville and beyond as your community health connection.

Listen to ABIPA's Body & Soul Radio Show on WRES 100.7 FM, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. on wresfm.com.



Dr. Charles Blair, founder of the Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement.
Photo: The Urban News

PRAISE Relaunch Luncheon

Saturday, March 2

2-4 p.m. at Linwood Crump Shiloh Recreational Complex, 121 Shiloh Rd., Asheville, NC 28803.



If your congregation participated in the past, or if you are interested in learning how your church can get involved, we look forward to seeing you.

If you plan on attending, please RSVP by emailing jewana@abipa.org or send a text to 828-778-7122.

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Celebrating 20 Years of Being the Community Health Connection for Asheville and Beyond

Help Us Celebrate Our Birthday by Gifting ABIPA a Donation of \$20

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



Kelly White, MHE, MPH. Photo: Pro16 Productions

What is the History of Your Health?

by Kelly White, MHE, MPH,
ABIPA Health Education Program Manager

Dr. King gave a speech in Chicago on March 25, 1966, to the second convention of the Medical Committee for Human Rights.

One of the most memorable quotes from him was on health: **"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and the most inhuman because it often results in physical death."** The context of the quote is even more powerful today.

Dr. King noted that, "We are concerned about the constant use of federal funds to support this most notorious expression of segregation. I see no alternative to direct action and creative nonviolence to raise the conscience of the nation."

Since that speech, given almost 58 years ago, many of us in the African American community are born into multiple social determinants of health—barriers to leading healthy lifestyles. We are less likely to have the resources needed in order to achieve our highest potential in life. It still surprises me that today, in 2024, we are still dealing with health inequalities that present us with such a raw reality: there is still so much work to be done.

The vision of Dr. Blair decades ago gave life to the creation of entities such as ABIPA that work in tandem with other community partners who also seek to build relationships within communities. We build partnerships with providers in WNC that can drive initiatives like health education and chronic disease management forward.

As we think about heart health this month and beyond, consider these facts about our culture and begin to think about how you can change the narrative for your future generations.



- Some of us are born with multiple risk factors that are passed down to us from generations before us (a.k.a. genetics).
- Many of us are dealing with multiple, uncontrolled, chronic health conditions that we may be taking medications for.
- Preventative care or mental healthcare is generally not sought out if we are feeling well, which is actually one of the best times to see a healthcare provider.

Challenge yourself this year to do what it takes to be a better you. Think about small changes that you have been wanting to implement in your life that can change your overall health.

I want to also remind you that our ABIPA CHW team are a boots-on-the-ground resource within the community that can assist with navigating the healthcare space. We can be a guide in connecting you with primary care. On the other hand, if you are already linked to an office, see your provider and find out what optimum health looks like for someone your age, and what your numbers should be.