

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



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

The IFPHA is grateful for the support of our sponsors.



Why Preventing Illnesses is Important

BY KATHEY AVERY RN, BSN, CN

Stroke Awareness Month

IFPHA's goal 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 preventive healthcare. Our vision is a Buncombe County with increased access to affordable and equitable preventive healthcare that addresses the social determinants of health.

As a community nurse since 2008 and a registered nurse at Mission Hospital for many years, I've witnessed the urgent need to prioritize illness prevention over reactionary care addressing acute illnesses. It's disheartening to observe that organizations addressing the social drivers of health, particularly initiatives in BIPOC communities, make health seem like a mere add-on or less significant priority.

From my perspective as a nurse, even after addressing economic and racial disparities (such as transportation), without prioritizing health, individuals can't fully enjoy the rewards of their efforts. Neglecting health can result in unnecessary chronic illness, disability, or even death.

As stated in April's article, from 2017 to 2021 the age-adjusted death rate for Black men in western North Carolina was 40 percent higher than that for white men living in the same counties. The rate for Black women was 15 percent higher than their white neighbors. The rate for Indigenous men was 65 percent higher than white men in the same counties, and the rate for Indigenous women was 70 percent higher than for white women.

Recently, I held focus groups with those in our African American communities who are at a higher risk for many health issues to find out what IFPHA can do to make their health more of a priority.

The issues the group shared were:

- Lack of desire to come to a class to learn anything that will improve or address health—they don't need a class.
- No need to be in a class that "does not pertain to them."
- They don't want to go to the doctor when their primary care physicians or specialists do not respect and listen to them.
- Several people said they have to seek means to take care of themselves.
- Fear of diagnosis was a concern in several groups.

I also noted that fewer men were interested in their health than women. Solutions the focus groups shared with me that may help IFPHA get people into classes/presentations:

- Come to share a meal and then introduce the health information.



- Offer gift cards.
- Keep trying, don't give up.

May is Stroke Awareness Month

A stroke interrupts blood flow to an area of the brain. Strokes can be fatal, but the risk can be reduced. Many risk factors are lifestyle related, so everyone has the power to reduce their risk of having a stroke. More than 80% of strokes can be prevented.

A stroke causes the part of the brain that is blocked by a blood clot

to die. 43% of African Americans have hypertension. You can feel fine and still have high blood pressure. The American Heart Association's 2024 Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Fact Sheet shows that heart disease and stroke claimed more lives in 2021 in the United States than all forms of cancer and chronic lower respiratory disease combined.

The CDC reports:

- Stroke kills about 140,000 Americans each year—that's 1 out of every 20 deaths.
- Someone in the United States has a stroke every 40 seconds.
- Every 4 minutes, someone dies of stroke.

- Every year, more than 795,000 people in the United States have a stroke. About 610,000 of these are first or new strokes.
- About 185,000 strokes—nearly 1 out of 4—are people who have had a previous stroke.

Think F-A-S-T

Warning signs of a stroke.

Face: Numbness or weakness of the face; ask them to smile.

Arms: Weakness can also be of one arm; ask them to raise their arm. Weakness is usually on one side of the body.

Speech: Confusion; trouble speaking or understanding speech.

Time: Call 911 immediately.

You can also have trouble seeing in one or both eyes. You may have trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance, or coordination, or a severe headache with no known cause. Even if you have only one symptom, or your symptoms go away, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital or emergency room.

The risk of having a first stroke is nearly twice as high for Blacks as for whites, and Blacks have the highest rate of death due to stroke.

Source: American Heart Association.

Can We Talk?



Kathey Avery leading a lunch and learn discussion at Linwood Crump Shiloh Center.

To meet the needs of our community as a community nurse, I conduct educational classes at churches, for apartment residence groups, work groups, and for civic, sorority, and other organizations on stroke and the prevention of illness so you can enjoy your long life.

Contact Kathey Avery today at (828) 768-2369 to schedule a class.