

ABIPA – ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE INSTITUTE OF PARITY ACHIEVEMENT

Chronic Disease Awareness Month

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director

Building Healthier Communities Through Prevention, Equity, and Action

Every July, Chronic Disease Awareness Month reminds us that improving health requires more than treating illness—it requires investing in prevention, addressing inequities, and empowering communities. Chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, and chronic respiratory illnesses remain the leading causes of death and disability in the United States, accounting for more than 90 percent of healthcare spending. Yet many of these conditions can be prevented or better managed through education, early detection, healthy lifestyles, and access to quality care.

At ABIPA, we understand that chronic disease is not simply a medical issue—it is a community issue. Far too often, the communities experiencing the greatest burden of chronic disease are the same communities facing barriers to healthcare, affordable housing, nutritious food, reliable transportation, and economic opportunity. Health outcomes should never be determined by race, income, or ZIP code. Achieving health equity means ensuring every individual has the opportunity to live their healthiest and most fulfilling life.

Prevention begins where people live, work, worship, and gather. Small, consistent changes—such as eating healthier foods, increasing physical activity, managing stress, avoiding tobacco, and receiving routine health screenings—can significantly reduce the risk of chronic disease. However, lasting change occurs when individuals have access to trusted information, supportive environments, and culturally responsive resources that make healthy choices achievable.

This is where Community Health Workers (CHWs) make a lasting difference. As trusted members of the communities they serve, CHWs educate, advocate, and help individuals navigate healthcare systems while connecting families to vital community resources. At ABIPA, our CHWs embody our commitment to “Locate, Educate, Navigate, and Advocate,” ensuring that no one has to face chronic disease alone.



JéWana Grier-McEachin. Photo: Red Angle Photography

Managing a chronic illness also requires caring for the whole person. While medications and medical appointments remain essential, holistic care includes supporting emotional wellness, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, financial stability, and strong social connections. Community organizations, faith communities, support groups, local wellness programs, and patient advocacy organizations all play an important role in helping individuals and caregivers improve their quality of life.

Financial barriers should never prevent someone from receiving the care they need. Prescription assistance programs, community resources, and healthcare navigation services can help reduce the cost of medications and treatment while connecting families to additional support that improves long-term health outcomes.

Chronic Disease Awareness Month is also an opportunity to strengthen our collective commitment to healthier communities. It calls upon healthcare providers, policymakers, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and residents to work together to expand access to preventive care, invest in community-based solutions, and eliminate the disparities that continue to impact underserved populations.

At ABIPA, we remain committed to advancing health, social, and economic parity through advocacy, education, research, and partnerships. Together, we can move beyond treating disease and begin building communities where prevention is prioritized, barriers are removed, and every person has the opportunity to thrive. This July, let us all take one step toward better health—for ourselves, our families, and our communities.

Special Summer Event

Free Saturday Shop

Saturday, July 25

Our special summer shop for free supplies takes place from 3-6 p.m. at St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, 170 Fayetteville St., Asheville, NC 28806.

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.



Celebrating 22 Years of Being the Community Health Connection for Asheville and Beyond

Help Us Celebrate Our Birthday by Gifting ABIPA a Donation of \$22

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



Tyja Lassiter

Tyja Lassiter

Our 2026 Summer CAYLA Intern

My name is Tyja Lassiter, and I am a hardworking, determined, and goal-oriented

person. Sports are a big part of my life, especially softball and cheerleading. Through these activities, I've learned the importance of teamwork, discipline, and never giving up. They have shown me that success comes from hard work, dedication, and believing in yourself even when things get difficult.

I enjoy challenging myself and becoming a better person every day. Whether in school, sports, or my personal life, I always give my best effort. I believe every obstacle is an opportunity to grow stronger and learn something new. These experiences have helped me become more confident and responsible.

After graduating from high school, I plan to attend college and continue my education while also playing sports if I have the opportunity. My goal is to earn a degree that will help me build a successful career and make a positive impact on others. I want to be financially independent, support my family, and inspire younger students to work hard and chase their dreams.

In the future, I hope to continue growing as a leader and as a person. I know success will not happen overnight, but I am willing to put in the effort to achieve my goals. With determination, faith, and perseverance, I believe I can accomplish anything I set my mind to. I am excited about what the future holds and ready to create a successful and meaningful life.

FREE SATURDAY SHOP



Saturday July 25th

3-6 PM | St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church
170 Fayetteville St., Asheville, NC 28806

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