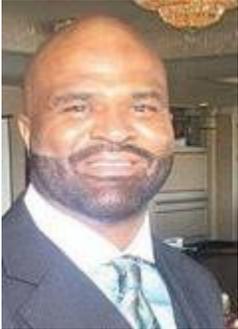




NAACP

Pennsylvania
STATE CONFERENCE

PRESS RELEASE



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Allegheny County

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COMBAT ZONE: FIGHTING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The NAACP has advocated since its inception dismantling systemic structures that perpetuate discriminatory practices. However, in 2020 the fight is still as strong as ever.

As the work of the NAACP continues to evolve, the attack of the COVID-19 pandemic has in fact unmasked the impact of health disparities to vulnerable communities. In a press conference on April 18, 2020, a candid discussion took place with Brandon Flood, Secretary, Pennsylvania Board of Pardon; Steve McFarland, Pardons and Commutations Liaison, Office of Lieutenant Governor John Fetterman; Julie Strickland-Gilliard, Regional Director of Western Pennsylvania, Office of Lieutenant Governor John Fetterman; and Kenneth L. Huston, President, NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference, moderated by Tené Croom, Press and Public Relations Coordinator for the NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference. All agreed that the Health Disparity Task Force established by Governor Tom Wolf which will be chaired by Lieutenant Governor John Fetterman could be a viable vehicle to not only address health disparities impacting the minority community, but would seek to identify a resolve to greatly diminish health disparities, particularly as it relates to the African American community. All of the individuals have one thing in common and that is a general knowledge of the social determinates that has far too long been denied as contributors to the ills of society that have plagued the African American communities. In Governor Wolf's announcement of the new Task Force, he stated, "The Lieutenant Governor will chair a new Health Disparity Task Force that will work to identify short- and long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in our vulnerable communities." With examining the immediate circumstances of the COVID-19 virus to determine short-term goals, the Task Force, once completely formed, will also be able to identify long-term goals to begin to produce outcomes which recognizes the systemic inequalities that currently exist. Along with setting initial goals and hopeful outcomes, benchmarks will be established to measure progress to ensure that recommendations submitted will in fact be a catalyst for constructive and real change. The expectation is to not only effect mitigating the furtherance of the COVID-19 pandemic, but set a precedent for eliminating disparities commonly experienced by African Americans and other minority groups and that NAACP representatives will be at the table to have a voice in this critical conversation.

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Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest nonpartisan civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities. The Pennsylvania State Conference was established in 1934 and pursues the same mission throughout the Commonwealth.