



# It Is Well With My Soul



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18th Annual "Black America's Dialogue on Health" Conference  
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# Agenda



- ❧ Overview of Community Initiative – It Is Well With My Soul: Surviving & Thriving in Unlearning Internalized Racism
- ❧ Racism & African American Health
- ❧ Strategies to Improve Health Outcomes
- ❧ Policy Recommendations
- ❧ Community Leader Recommendations



# It Is Well With My Soul



- ❧ One of 119 racial equity grant recipients for W. K. Kellogg Foundation's America Healing Initiative
- ❧ Vision: To acknowledge & use the indestructible power of the African American community in seeking & sharing the truth of their ancestral heritage, their accomplishments & contributions to society, & their will to survive, heal, & thrive amidst all challenges & obstacles.
- ❧ Addresses Race as a Social Construction, Historical Inequalities, Power & Privilege, Structural/Internalized Racism
- ❧ IIWWMS Wellness Team – Identify & disseminate best practices on culturally proficient health interventions & partnerships (shared decision making) with African American community.





# Impact of Race on Health



- ❧ 100+ research studies link racism to poor health outcomes
  - ❧ Cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, hypertension, respiratory illness, mental health conditions, infant mortality, & pain-related problems
- ❧ Effects of structural & internalized racism are not just psychological or temporary
- ❧ Health disparities by race exist even when controlling for income, education, & insurance (Source: Smedley, B. D. et al, 2003).
- ❧ Health disparities by race are complex & combination of social, economic, biologic, & genetic factors
- ❧ Health Equity Quiz

Source: National Association of County & City Health Officials & Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick



# Racism & Shared Decision Making



- ❧ Shared Decision Making (SDM):
  - ❧ bidirectional dialogue about patients' symptoms & treatment options
  - ❧ treatment plans that address patient preferences
- ❧ African Americans experience SDM with HCPs less often than whites
  - ❧ HCP bias/discrimination and/or cultural discordance
  - ❧ lack of HCP cultural awareness, knowledge, proficiency
  - ❧ mistrust of white HCPs, negative attitudes & internalized racism
  - ❧ deference to HCPs, less sharing of health information, less likely to adhere to treatment regimen



# U.S. & the World



- ❧ Of all the rich countries, for which there is data, U.S. has:
  - ❧ highest rate of infant mortality; homicide; teenage birth; incarceration; child poverty; child injury death;
  - ❧ greatest gap between high and low mortality rate
  - ❧ smallest middle class
  - ❧ highest poverty rate
  - ❧ Largest wealth gap between the rich & the rest of the population
  - ❧ no requirement for employers to provide paid sick leave or paid holidays/vacation

Source: National Association of County & City Health Officials & Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick





# Spirituality & Health



- ❧ The African American experience generally encompasses spirituality
- ❧ Fort Wayne African American Cancer Alliance provided movement classes (physical activity) to gospel music
- ❧ American Heart Association's Go Red Sunday encompasses biblical text with heart disease awareness
- ❧ IIWWMS Wellness Team developed Family Health Series of National Black Genealogy Summit (October 20-22, 2011 in Fort Wayne, IN) includes free health screenings, workshops, and Gospel Concert with intermittent health messages



# Recommendations



## Policy

- Assess and address structural racism in legislative, academic, financial, housing, and business practices
- Draft legislation to eliminate disparate treatment by race
- Promote health insurance coverage for integrative medical interventions
- Town Hall Meetings on Health at faith based venues

## Community Leader

- Incorporate faith leaders/community members in Community Based Participatory Research Projects
- Invite health professionals into faith community for health education, screenings, partnerships for improved health outcomes
- Create Wellness Teams comprised of health, social service, academic professionals and faith community







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