

***“The Status of African Americans,
Low-income Families and Marginalized
Communities in the City of Berkeley”***

TOWN HALL MEETING

SUMMARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(Public Health and Mental Health – Inequities and Disparities)

City Council Work Session

November 19, 2013



Berkeley NAACP – City Council Work Session



Public Health & Mental Health Inequities and Disparities

CURRENT STATUS

- The **City of Berkeley's logo** depicts an array of colorful human faces, as it's pledge of diversity and inclusion within its borders for all people!
- **Complaints** - The Berkeley NAACP received numerous complaints in the areas of **Employment; Education; Housing; Public Health, Mental Health; and Criminal Justice in the City of Berkeley.**
- **Town Hall Meeting on Saturday, July 13, 2013** - The Berkeley NAACP Chapter; ACLU Berkeley North Eastbay; African American/Black Professionals and Community Network; Coalition for a Safe Berkeley; SEIU 1021 BMC and the Peace and Justice Commission hosted a Town Hall meeting to address inequities, disparities and discrimination in **Employment; Education; Housing; Public Health, Mental Health; and Criminal Justice.**

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Public Health & Mental Health

Inequities and Disparities



TOWN HALL MEETING

- More than (125) participants at the Town Hall meeting were in agreement that there are significant problems in the City of Berkeley in relationship to inequities, disparities and discrimination in the areas of employment; education; housing; health care, mental health; and criminal justice as it relates to African Americans, Low-income Families and Marginalized Communities in the City of Berkeley.
- **NAACP Town Hall Summary Report with Recommendations** was produced and disseminated. It highlighted: **Employment; Education; Housing; Public Health; Mental Health and Criminal Justice**

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Public Health & Mental Health Inequities and Disparities

COUNCIL WORK SESSION

- At this Work Session we will discuss **inequalities, disparities and allegations of discrimination** in public health and mental health services and treatment in the City of Berkeley and the results of our Town Hall report.
- **African Americans and Latinos** are the most affected by unequal access and treatment to quality health resources and by social inequalities and disparities that have an impact on their health and mental health.

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Public Health & Mental Health Inequities and Disparities

PUBLIC HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS

- The City of Berkeley is *one of only three cities* in the state of California that maintains its own independent **local Public Health jurisdiction.**
- The City of Berkeley is *one of two cities* in the state of California that maintains its own independent **local Mental Health Jurisdiction.**

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Public Health & Mental Health Inequities and Disparities

RESTRUCTURE A SEPARATE HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT

- The City's decision to merge the Health Services Department into the Housing and Community Services department may have been the right thing to do at that time, in order to *Save Money*...But, a lot of staff believe the merger is **NOT** effective for various reasons.
- Current and future **demands for quality** public health and mental health services requires the City to invest in securing professional polished, knowledgeable and innovated **Senior Leadership** in the fields of public health and mental health.

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HEALTH STATUS

- African Americans live approximately **10-years less** than other racial groups and suffer from most chronic illness.
- Health inequities and disparities have been caused by institutionalized racism in every system in American life.
- The **City of Berkeley's 2007**, Health Status report states that African Americans have higher rates of illness and deaths from diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and stroke, compared to White residents of Berkeley.
- The **City of Berkeley's 2013, Health Status** report states that African Americans in the City of Berkeley have worse health outcomes than the 2007 report; the worst in the County!
- High Rates of **Service Use** by Clients (**NUMBERS**) **Don't Translate into Wellness and Recovery**...It translates into bad outcomes...Usually, due to lack of culturally responsive service and treatment approaches and models.

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FAMILY, YOUTH AND CHILDREN SERVICES

- The Family, Youth and Children's unit of Berkeley Mental Health **workforce and work space** has been **cut by almost 50%** and staff continues to deliver high quality service, albeit at a cost to the few remaining staff - **Overworked and Stressed!**
- Non-Medi-Cal funding streams must be sought, because **Medi-Cal funding** only brings in about \$180,000 to children's services.
- It is difficult to sustain the **demand** for children, youth and family mental health services at the current level of funding and support.
- All acquired **NEW funds** must be strictly guaranteed for children, youth and family services - **NOT** for upper management administrative costs and positions.

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FAMILY, YOUTH AND CHILDREN SERVICES

- FYC staff is located in several different school sites in Berkeley (High Schools, Middle and Elementary Schools) a staff person may travel to as many as **four schools in one day**.
- At Berkeley Technology Academy (B-Tech) the **rates of PTSD** is very high among Black and Brown students; this affects their ability to learn. An **increase in mental health services** at this site is needed.
- One study showed that of the **33 Seniors** polled at B-Tech, **98%** of them met the criteria for **PTSD**.
- A fiscally **fair exchange** between BUSD and School Based Mental Health programs needs to be developed as relationship building continues.

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MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS

- African American mental health consumers are **over represented** in the mental health system and most receive inappropriate treatment.
- There is research to support that black mental health clients are **commonly misdiagnosed**, are prescribed inappropriate medications for their ethnic composition and they remain in treatment for **lengthy durations**. Mainly, **due to limited use of best practices and community defined practices** in the field of Mental Health services for African Americans.

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SERVICES FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS

- Providing **culturally congruent** (similar) services to African American consumers in public health, mental health and social service settings in the City of Berkeley is essential in order to **improve outcomes** for African American clients, their families, and the community-at-large.
- Culturally Responsive **services and treatment** that are **welcoming, respectful and client-centered** nets the best outcomes for African Americans.

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NAACP COMPLAINTS

- The NAACP received allegations that cited some serious **discriminatory employment practices** within the city and we received a lot from staff in the **Health Housing and Community Services** department.
- A lot of City staff that attended the Town Hall meeting believed that the **merger of the Health Department** into the Housing Department was a **Mistake**.
- Public Health and Mental Health focuses on the **Quality of People's Lives** and Housing mostly focuses on **Buildings; Contracts and Money**.
- Different **philosophies and ideologies** about service delivery... (**Apples and Oranges**)

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NAACP COMPLAINTS

- Some city staff at the Town Hall Meeting discussed their **fears** and concerns about working in a **work environment** that is **disrespectful** and where some supervisors try to **intimidate** them.
- **Isolation** is another tactic that is being used to **create division** among staff members in divisions. **No staff divisional or department meetings** to discuss transformation and changes. Therefore staff are left to listen to **rumors about their jobs** and the direction of the division and the HHCS department.
- **Communication is really bad** in the HHCS department; very little information is shared with staff. A lot of staff, especially African Americans believe that they **are not respected and/or treated like professionals** in the Health, Housing and Community Services Department; especially in the mental health division.
- Mental Health has **NOT** had a **Mental Health Manager for almost two- years**; thereby, leaving the direction of mental health services in the hands of novice.

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Public Health & Mental Health Inequities and Disparities



RECOMMENDATIONS: PUBLIC HEALTH

- **Restructure Berkeley Public Health, Mental Health and Environmental Health Divisions back into a Health Department with seasoned professionals at the helm**
- **Secure annual funding of \$350,000.00 from Alta Bates/Summit for the operations of the Black Infant Health Program**
- **Develop accountability standards for place-based Health Equity Work**
- **Integrate Culturally Congruent services into public health's service delivery system and with community-based partners for African Americans that are welcoming, respectful and uses culturally responsive practices and models**
- **Violence is addressed as a public health condition**
- **Increase resources in order to eradicate violence; especially as it affects youth and communities of color**
- **Community Health Commission provides closer Oversight of the public health division**
- **Mandatory on-going Cultural Competency training for public health staff.**

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Public Health & Mental Health

Inequities and Disparities

RECOMMENDATIONS: MENTAL HEALTH

- **Restructure Berkeley Public Health, Mental Health and Environmental Health Divisions back into a Health Department with seasoned professionals at the helm**
- **Hire Mental Health Clinicians of color, especially Males**
- **Integrate Culturally Congruent services** into mental health's service delivery and within system of care partner agencies for African Americans that are welcoming, respectful and uses culturally responsive practices and models
- **Violence is addressed as a mental health condition**
- **Increase resources in order to eradicate violence; especially as it affects youth and communities of color**
- **Increase Mental Health Services Act funding for low-income residents in South and West Berkeley**
- **Non-Police involvement with Mental Health Services (BPD used only for life threatening matters)**

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Public Health & Mental Health Inequities and Disparities

RECOMMENDATIONS: MENTAL HEALTH

- Permanently invest in a **Mental Health Crisis Support System** for **black youth and their families**
- Increase the operation of **Mental Health Mobile Crisis Unit to 24-hours – 7-days a week** - Mobile Crisis Unit should respond to calls ***without*** BPD (BPD used only for life threatening matters)
- Mandatory training for **Mental Health Clinicians** in the areas of **Community Defined Practices and Wellness and Recovery Models** and other best practices for communities of color
- Require annual all **staff mental health divisional** meetings
- Mental Health Commission provide **closer Oversight** of the mental health division
- Mandatory on-going **Cultural Competency training** for all mental health staff.

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RECOMMENDATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL

- Restructure Berkeley Mental Health, Public Health and Environmental Health Divisions back into a Health Department with seasoned professional mental health and public health leadership and oversight (The Affordable Health Care Act also requires having seasoned city senior professionals in place)
- Develop mechanism for on-going staff input at the Senior Management level in the HHCS department
- HHCS Senior Management are required to take additional annual training that relates to employee relations and effective team building
- Create a mental health and public health oversight advisory committee comprised of African Americans, Low-income individuals and people from marginalized communities (33% each group)
- Increase resources to eradicate violence; especially as it affects youth

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Public Health & Mental Health Inequities and Disparities



RECOMMENDATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL

- Address **racism and racial profiling** within the City of Berkeley, because it leads to **serious health and mental health disparities** that are affecting African American youth and the African American community-at-large
- Use **Mental Health Services Act funding** to develop a two-year **culturally responsive citywide transformation process** with community stakeholders in order to **eliminate inequities and disparities and reduce discrimination in the City of Berkeley.**

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SERVICES

- In order to **eliminate health inequities and disparities** **adequate funding** must be established to serve the community in a way that provides quality services in order to **notably decrease poor health outcomes** in the African American community.
- A lot of **programs and services are not funded appropriately** in order to provide the service levels that are required to **effectively address health and mental health inequities and disparities** in the black community.
- The **Affordable Health Care Act** is a funding resource that can be used to address public health and mental health inequities and disparities.

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FUNDING POSSIBILITIES

- Mental Health Services Act
- Increase Landlord Renter's Tax
- Create a **City Health Inequities and Disparities Fund** and Secure Funding from Alta Bates/Summit; University of Berkeley; Kaiser; Bayer etc...(Every entity in the City of Berkeley is responsible for the Health and Welfare of the Community)
- Seek funding from Real Estate Sales tax
- Consider a small increase on Hotel and Corporate taxes
- Seek State and **Federal Matching Funds**
- City General Fund
- Hire on call Grant Writers to focus specifically on mental health and public health funding sources
- Reposition Some City Positions – **Review the Management Partner's report.**

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Public Health and Mental Health Inequities and Disparities

IMMEDIATE ACTION ITEMS FOR COUNCIL

- Approach **Alta Bates** and request funding for the Black Infant Health Program - **\$350,000. annually**, as part of their community benefit responsibility.
- Allocate **funding to increase Mobile Crisis Services** to 24-hours per day/7 days per week.
- **Hire** a minimum of at least **two clinicians of color** to address mental health issues and violence prevention activities for youth.
- Allocate funding to: Train all staff in **culturally responsive services** with an on-going accountability evaluation and to train **Managers and Supervisors in leadership methods** that are participatory.

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CITY OF SAN JOSE MODEL

- City of San Jose – Less than 3.0% African American population
- African American Community Service Agency (AACSA)

MISSION:

It is the mission of the African American Community Service Agency (AACSA) to **preserve the dignity and culture of a diverse African American Community** and to provide services that promote full participation of African Americans in the general society.

- The AACSA is housed in an old fire house (San Jose Firehouse #2) that is owned by the City of San Jose. The building is approximately 5,000 square feet. Since 1979, it has been centrally located in San Jose at 6th and Julian Streets to best respond to the needs of the African American Community.
- **Culturally Responsive and Appropriate Services provided to the African American community.**

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Public Health & Mental Health

Inequities and Disparities

THE UPSTREAM PARABLE

People are being swept downstream by a river's raging water. The crowd on shore works to pluck them out of the rushing water, but many are missed and swept away. Lost. As most of the crowd continues its losing battle, a few trail-blazers tromp upstream to see exactly why all those people are falling into the river in the first place. They identify the root cause of the problem (people are trying to cross a dangerous river without having the benefit of a bridge), come up with a solution (build a bridge), and put the solution into action.

The result: People stop falling into the river. They are no longer at risk and there is no need to focus all the effort on pulling people out of the river one at a time. That's public health policy at work.

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THE DEFINITION OF INSANITY:

Is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results!

Let's Stop Pulling People Out of the River One at a Time...

“LET’S DO SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT”

- The **Berkeley NAACP** wants to work with the **City of Berkeley, Berkeley Unified School District, Community Agencies, Residents and All Stakeholders** in order to **eliminate inequities, disparities and discrimination** in the areas of **Employment, Education, Housing, Mental Health and Health and Law Enforcement** in Berkeley.
- The **Berkeley NAACP** is committed to **fighting for civil and human rights for all people.**

