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California Black Health Network Commemorates Black Health Equity Advocacy Week

(SACRAMENTO, CA) – The [California Black Health Network](#) (CBHN) proudly announces the commencement of Black Health Equity Advocacy Week (BHEAW) in California, running from **May 6 to May 10, 2024**. The occasion underscores CBHN's commitment to championing health equity and empowerment for Black Californians, ensuring they have the resources and support they need to live long and healthy lives. California leads as the first state to pass a resolution addressing health disparities impacting the Black community, emphasizing the need for increased attention and awareness.

This marks the second annual Black Health Equity Advocacy Week, following [last year's resolution](#) led by Assemblymember Akilah Weber, M.D. (D-San Diego) and championed by the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC). The resolution established, for the first time ever, a statewide focus on the urgent need to address the health disparities gap for Black Californians. Throughout the week, CBHN will lead a series of advocacy events and communications activities aimed at elevating awareness, fostering dialogue, and galvanizing action to address the pervasive health disparities disproportionately impacting the Black community.

"The California Black Health Network's tireless advocacy brings our state that much closer to dismantling systemic inequities that have plagued Black Californians for far too long," said Assemblymember Akilah Weber, M.D. "My heartfelt congratulations to CBHN for more than four decades of unwavering dedication. It's been an honor to meet with the Health Equity Advocacy Training participants and constituents from my district to hear their stories and help shape more equitable policies for all."

Black Californians have persistently faced the highest death rates from breast, cervical, colorectal, lung, and prostate cancer, alongside elevated rates of infant and maternal mortality. The life expectancy at birth for Black Californians currently stands at 75.1 years, five years shorter than the state average and the lowest life expectancy among all racial and ethnic groups in California. Additionally, Californians living with sickle cell disease, a hereditary blood disorder predominantly affecting the Black community, have an even shorter life expectancy, at only 43 years, compared to the national average of 78 years.

BHEAW is a weeklong campaign to galvanize the Black community by bringing awareness to the long-standing structural inequalities that negatively impact the health and well-being of Black Californians. It also aims to uplift existing efforts to address such inequalities and dismantle the environmental and systematic barriers that contribute to disproportionate health outcomes, while striving for racial justice, social justice, and environmental justice. CBHN's [toolkit](#) offers guidance on navigating systemic barriers to mental health care, addressing stigma, accessing community support, and utilizing culturally relevant coping mechanisms. It's intended to empower individuals, community leaders, and healthcare providers to better support the mental health of Black Californians.

"Black Health Equity Advocacy Week represents a critical moment in our ongoing efforts to combat systemic inequities and cultivate a healthier future for Black individuals and families in California," said Rhonda Smith, Executive Director of the California Black Health Network. "We want to do our part to ensure that Black Californians across the state know that they have the power to reclaim their health, rewrite their health story, change health policy, change the narrative, and make the healthcare system work better for them," concluded Smith.



CALIFORNIA BLACK HEALTH NETWORK

For more information, please visit [Black Health Equity Advocacy Week 2024](#).

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About the California Black Health Network

CBHN is the only Black-led, statewide organization dedicated to advancing health equity for all African Americans and Black Immigrants. CBHN conducts outreach, education, and advocacy to achieve health equity for Black Californians to address critical issues that lie at the intersection of racial justice, social justice, and environmental justice. We work to ensure that all Black Californians, regardless of their education, socio-economic class, zip code, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness, or immigration status have access to high-quality and equitable primary and behavioral healthcare and avoid unnecessarily succumbing to disease.

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