



News Release

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Back-to-School Wellness Expo Addresses Health Needs in D.C.'s Ward 8

The Collaboration for Equitable Health with Black Nurses Rock DMV provided health care education, health screenings, and food packages for underserved Washingtonians.

ARLINGTON, V.A. (Aug. 25, 2024) – Yesterday, The Collaboration for Equitable Health, a national partnership between the American Diabetes Association®, American Heart Association®, American Cancer Society®, the University of Michigan School of Public Health, and powered by Bank of America, hosted the Back-to-School Wellness Expo tackling chronic diseases in D.C. alongside local community health organization Black Nurses Rock DMV Chapter and resident services organization National Housing Trust.

The free community event featured blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol screenings, immunizations, HIV/AIDS testing, breast health education, tips on heart health, resources for smoking cessation, and an opportunity to share stories about diabetes care. The event had back-to-school haircuts from local barbers, face painting, henna tattoos, balloons, line dance demos, a DJ, a personal chef, free food, prize giveaways, representatives from Tigerlily Foundation, and more.

“This weekend’s back-to-school expo is yet another example of the power of community in addressing health inequities. We were thrilled to support Black Nurses Rock and will continue to meet people where they live as we work towards a healthier Ward 8,” said Malaika Hill, ADA director of Health Equity and Community Impact.

The Expo is part of a 12-month program aimed at addressing the health inequities that lead to a higher prevalence of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers in D.C.’s underserved communities. Inequities like a lack of access to health care centers, mental health services, and nutritious food contribute to higher prevalence of chronic diseases. The program will offer residents comprehensive health screenings, referrals for continued care, and education on nutrition and physical activity.

“Achieving health equity starts with trust, and that trust isn’t built overnight. Black Nurses Rock is committed to prevention, health education, and long-term wellness. We took one step closer to that today and are grateful to the ADA for their support,” said Perina Gaines, president and CEO of Black Nurses Rock.

“We are grateful to the Washington View community and staff for helping us put on Saturday’s Back-to-School Expo, bringing essential health resources to residents. Our goal is to ensure every child starts the school year healthy and prepared, and we’re thankful to all the partners and

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volunteers who made this possible." - Raisa Johnson, managing director of resident services, National Housing Trust

Open to residents of the Washington View apartments and neighboring communities, the 12-month program is designed to reach underserved community members in Ward 8. Led by Black Nurses Rock DMV, the program connects nurses of color with residents to help ensure education is well received.

"This expo means a lot to me and is so important for our kids. It's not just about back-to-school supplies or the health check-ups; it's knowing folks in the community care about us. Events like this one show that we're not alone. I'm grateful my children got what they need to have a successful start to the school year." - [Ward 8 Resident]

KEY STATS:

- Approximately [42,900 adults in D.C.](#), or [7.8% of the adult population](#), have diagnosed diabetes. Every year, an estimated 3,300 adults in D.C. are diagnosed with diabetes.
- Diabetes is the most common and one of the most expensive chronic conditions in America.
- The adult-diagnosed diabetes prevalence in Ward 8 is 13.5% compared to the citywide prevalence of 7.8%.
- The percentage of D.C. residents living below 200% of the Federal poverty level is between 47.4 and 50.6% in Wards 7 and 8 (ZIP Codes 20019, 20020, and 20032 only) compared to approximately 26.8% citywide.
- Wards 7 and 8 have the highest obesity prevalence in D.C., with approximately 34% of residents in ZIP Codes 20019, 20020, and 20032 living with obesity (compared to 23.9% citywide).
- At least 90% of residents in much of Wards 7 and 8 have low access to a supermarket (compared to 17% nationwide).

About the Collaboration for Equitable Health

The Collaboration for Equitable Health, powered by Bank of America, is a four-year collaboration between the nation's leading health organizations— the American Diabetes Association®, the American Heart Association®, and the American Cancer Society®. It was launched in 2022 with the goal to catalyze change and address the leading causes of death in communities of color— heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes.

About the American Diabetes Association

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) is the nation's leading voluntary health organization fighting to bend the curve on the diabetes epidemic and help people living with diabetes thrive. For 84 years, the ADA has driven discovery and research to treat, manage, and prevent diabetes while working relentlessly for a cure. Through advocacy, program development, and education we aim to improve the quality of life for the 136 million Americans living with diabetes or prediabetes.

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Diabetes has brought us together. What we do next will make us Connected for Life[®]. To learn more or to get involved, visit us at diabetes.org or call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383). Join the fight with us on Facebook ([American Diabetes Association](#)), Spanish Facebook ([Asociación Americana de la Diabetes](#)), LinkedIn ([American Diabetes Association](#)), X ([@AmDiabetesAssn](#)), and Instagram ([@AmDiabetesAssn](#)).

About Black Nurses Rock DMV Chapter

Founded in 2016, Black Nurses Rock DMV Chapter is a dedicated group of professional nurses focused on enhancing health outcomes and promoting health equity within the District of Columbia's communities of color. Our mission extends to combating health disparities, addressing social determinants of health, and overcoming barriers to healthcare access. Through our collective passion, expertise, and unwavering determination we serve as catalysts for positive change in the lives of DC residents, striving to identify and meet the needs of our community.

About National Housing Trust

National Housing Trust (NHT) is the nation's leading expert in preserving and modernizing affordable housing. NHT brings development, lending, policy, energy solutions and resident services under one roof. We bring a practice-informed approach to policy as a result of our experience creating nearly 4,000 affordable units across 12 states, as community development lenders, and renewable energy consultants. For nearly 40 years, our expert team has partnered with residents, local experts, and national leaders to find the solutions that work so everyone, everywhere can be proud of where they live.

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