African American Male Wellness Walk Encourages Regular Health Screenings

The event offers free resources and testing for Black men, who face higher death rates from preventable diseases.

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Last week, over a hundred people attended the National African American Male Wellness Walk in Louisville, Kentucky, which encourages Black men to get tested for preventable diseases.

The event took place at the Norton Sports and Learning Center in Louisville and included a 5K walk around the center's track followed by an educational fair inside the facility and free testing for blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, HIV, sexually transmitted infections and prostate cancer for men who may not be getting tested or seeing their doctor regularly.

The African American Wellness Agency (AAWellness), which sponsors these walks throughout the country, launched in 2004 in Ohio to raise awareness of preventable diseases in the hope of increasing life expectancy among Black men. The walks are attended by over 100,000 people each year, according to the AAWellness website.

Event organizer Kamari Wooten, 38, was inspired to host the walk in Louisville after attending the event in Ohio last year and receiving concerning blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol test results that led to major lifestyle changes.

"I just thought it was imperative with the health disparities we face as Black men, not knowing our numbers, our life expectancy rate for a Black man is 67 years old when our counterparts are 80," Wooten said in a WLKY article.

Steven Patton, PhD, a family doctor for Norton Healthcare in Louisville, said Black men face a clear racial disparity and encourages them to get tested regularly.

"Women are outliving us; they have an additional five years on us in general. When it comes to the Black man, he has an additional five years less compared to his white counterpart," he said.

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