

March On! Festival Spotlights Black Health Experiences via Visual Arts

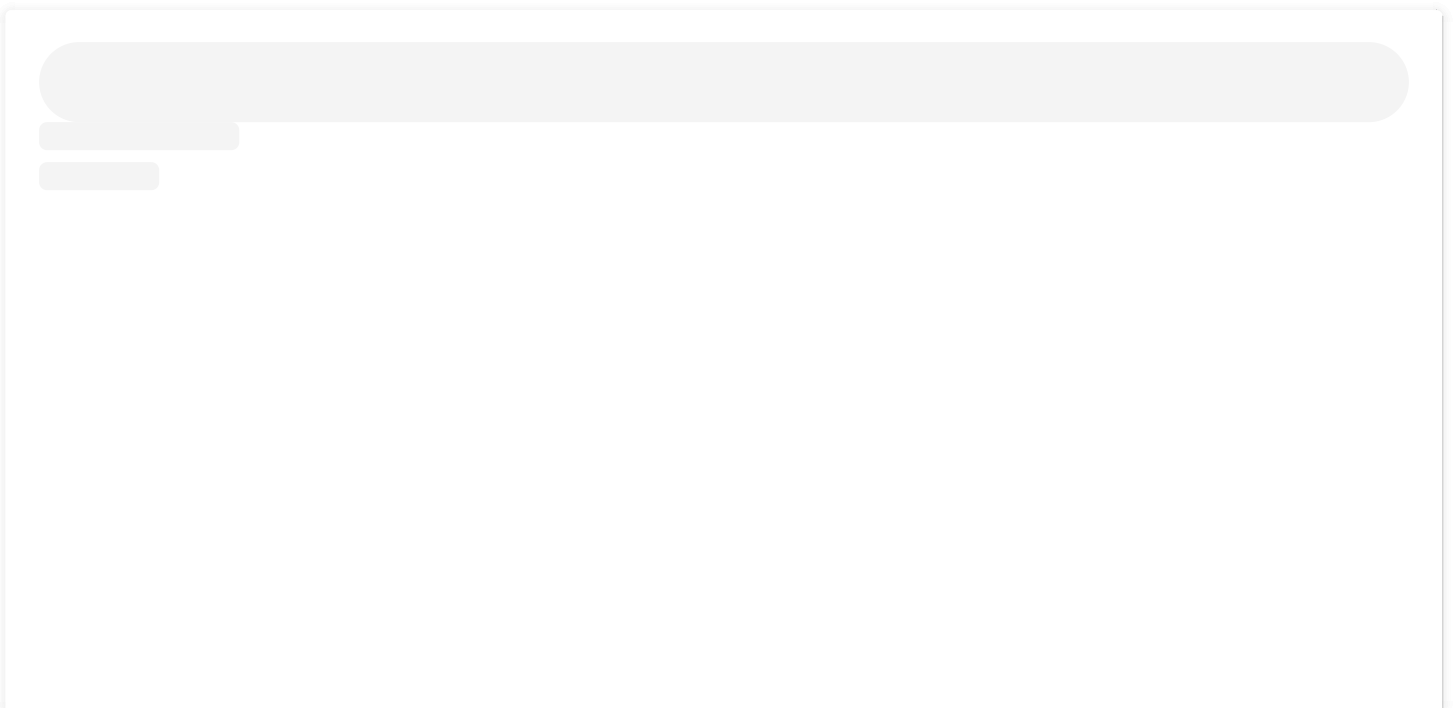
March On! honors films and other visual arts that shed light on health disparities, civil rights issues and more impacting health care.

September 30, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

In mid-September, the March On! Festival, the longest-running civil rights [film](#) festival, returned to Washington, DC, for six days of programming focused on [social justice](#), [health equity](#) and more.

March On! acknowledges health as a civil rights issue and examines how history has shaped medical mistrust, limited [access to care](#) and contributed to [mental health](#) disparities and inequitable care that persist today.

This year's theme, "The Right to Be Well," explored how storytelling can shed light on health disparities and inspire change. Through film, music, art and conversation, the festival highlighted often-overlooked stories, including disability justice, gendered health experiences and medical ethics.



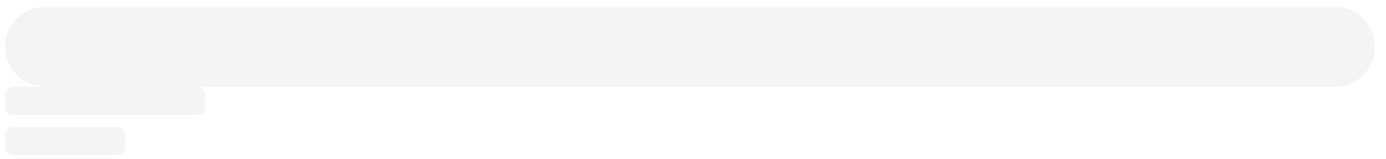


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The weeklong festival featured bold, galvanizing storytelling, live performances and honest discussions with artists, activists and scholars via film screenings and powerful panels.

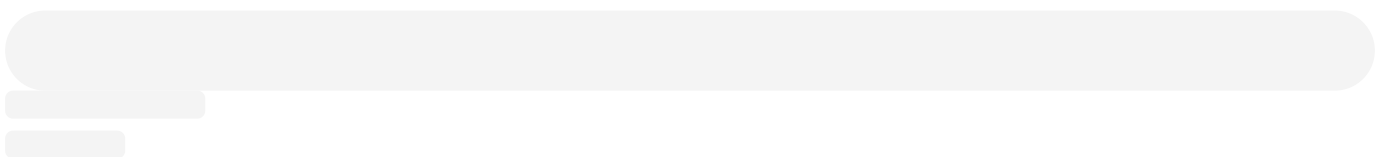
In-person and digital panels and workshops educated attendees about [health disparities](#) impacting Black Americans, such as [maternal](#) mortality, [high blood pressure](#) and [heart disease](#).



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Films featured topics including systemic racism and medical health, music, legal justice and teaching African American history in classrooms.



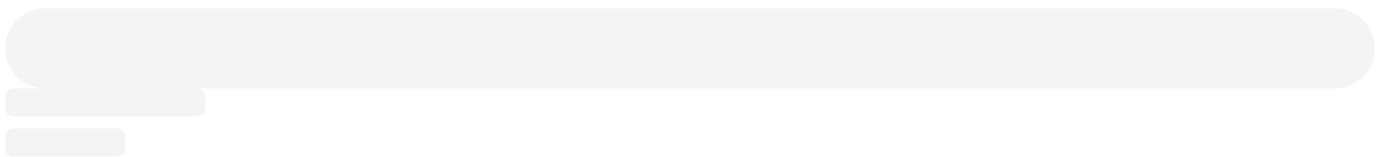


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The event kicked off with its Annual Awards Night Gala honoring visionary civil rights leaders. Senator Cory Booker (D-N.J.) received the Lifetime Legacy Award for his commitment to equity and justice.

The March On! Award went to Stanley Nelson and Marcia Smith, cofounders of the MacArthur Award-winning Firelight Media, a nonprofit providing mentorship, funding and artistic development opportunities to emerging documentary filmmakers of color.





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To view the full list of filmmaker competitions included at the festival, [go here](#). For a series of videos from the event, [go here](#).

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<http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/march-festival-spotlights-black-health-experiences-via-visual-arts>