

Prioritizing Black Health in Kansas

The Center for African American Health aims to improve health outcomes for Black Kansans.

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Seeking to improve the health outcomes of Black Americans and other marginalized communities, the University of Kansas (KU) Medical Center launched the Center for African American Health last week.

Created by the Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) at KU Medical Center, the [community-led center](#) will focus on education, service, research and policy, according to a [KU news release](#).

“Inequitable policies and practices entrenched in colonialism and White supremacy have negatively influenced the health of Black and African Americans across the lifespan,” the [center’s webpage](#) reads. “A comprehensive program that precisely addresses the health of Black and African Americans and meets the unique needs of this marginalized, historically oppressed group is critically warranted.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, community partners and health leaders at KU discussed ways to spark conversations about [structural racism](#) as a public health issue and its impact on Black [Kansans](#).

“This group posed the question, ‘How can we leverage our resources, advocacy and relationships to improve the lives of Black and African-American people in Kansas?’” said Jerrihlyn McGee, DNP, vice chancellor for diversity, equity and inclusion at KU Medical Center, in the news release. “The response was support for creating a Center for African American Health—essentially a one-stop approach that would include collaboration, relationship-building and c-creation with community partners.”

According to the news release, the center’s work will be guided by four pillars:

- Service through community engagement, advocacy, primary care, referrals, clinical care management and coordination;
- Education through mentorship, building the workforce pipeline and supporting curricular changes;

- Research through improving community-driven practices to conduct innovative, diverse, equitable and inclusive research that uplifts and improves health outcomes for Black and African-American communities;
- Policy through the translation of research into advocacy.

Danielle Binion, the director of diversity, equity and inclusion for KU Medical Center, said the first phase of the launch will include “recruiting and hiring center leadership, completing marketing efforts and continuing to build coalitions in the community.”

To learn more, click [#Health Equity](#) or [#Racism](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[Study Reveals Staggering Toll of Being Black in America: 1.6M Excess Deaths Over 22 Years](#),” “[Rural Residents More Likely to Develop Heart Failure](#)” and “[Babies Born to Black Mothers Face Higher Death Rates](#).”

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