

# "A TIME TO HEAL"

Focus on the Family Series



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Harford County  
Health Department**

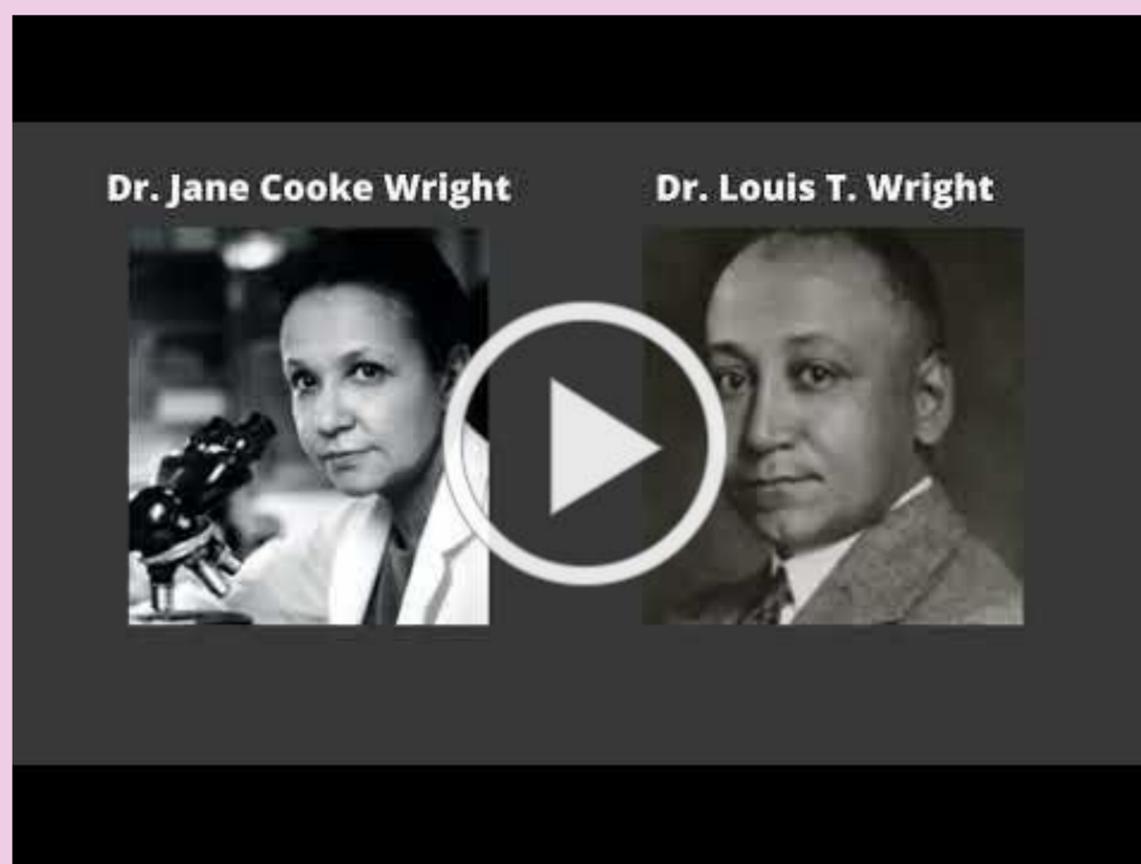
## MINORITY HEALTH PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Fill out our interest form!



This February, the HCHD Minority Health program proudly celebrates the 100th anniversary of Black History Month to honor the lasting contributions of Black communities in shaping public health. We are committed to health education, expanding access to resources, and strengthening partnerships to promote health equity in Harford County now more than ever through our upcoming 'Faith in Action Town Hall' event, which will take place on Friday, February 27th. See more information under the "Upcoming Events" section.

See the following video to learn more about Jane Cooke Wright, the first black female oncologist and pioneer in chemotherapy.



## Heart Health: February Spotlight



### Heart Disease: What Our Community Should Know

Heart disease is a term used to describe problems that affect the heart. This can include blocked blood vessels, irregular heartbeats, weak heart muscles, or problems with heart valves. Some people feel symptoms like chest pain, shortness of breath, or fatigue, while others may feel nothing at all, making regular checkups very important. **Symptoms vary depending on the type of heart disease.** You can learn more about symptoms and causes by [clicking here](#).

### What Are the Risk Factors for Heart Disease?

One of the most important steps in protecting your heart health is understanding the risk factors for heart disease and what you can do to lower your risk. You may be at higher risk if you:

- Have **high blood pressure**
- Have **high cholesterol**
- Are **overweight** or have obesity
- Have prediabetes or **diabetes**
- **Smoke or use tobacco products**
- Do not get **regular physical activity**
- Have a **family history** of early heart disease
  - Before age 55 for men
  - Before age 65 for women
- Have a history of **preeclampsia**, a pregnancy condition that causes high blood pressure and protein in the urine
- Have unhealthy **eating habits**

Some risk factors, such as age, sex, and family history, cannot be changed. However, many risk factors can be managed. Regular physical activity, healthy eating, stress management, and other self-care practices can lower your risk of heart disease.

## Heart Disease in Harford County

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Harford County.

According to the 2023 Health Equity Report, African American/Black residents have higher death rates from heart disease than White residents. This shows the importance of early education, screenings, and access to quality care in our community.

## Black Women and Heart Disease

Heart disease affects Black women at higher rates than women in other racial and ethnic groups:

- 59% of Black women ages 20 and older are living with some form of heart disease
- Black women are more likely to experience high blood pressure and obesity
- Black women are more likely to have undiagnosed diabetes
- The risk of stroke for Black women is twice as high as for White women

Cardiovascular disease is also the leading cause of maternal death in the United States. Black maternal mortality is 3.5 times higher than that of White women. Black women are more likely to develop pregnancy-related heart conditions before, during, and after pregnancy, including:

- High blood pressure disorders
- Preeclampsia and eclampsia
- Postpartum cardiomyopathy, a type of heart failure

**Menopause** can also affect heart health. Black women are more likely to experience menopause at a younger age, which may increase cardiovascular risk. For all women, the years before, during, and after menopause are critical times to prioritize heart health.

**Taking Care of Our Hearts Together**  
in the African American Community

Heart disease is largely preventable, yet many people will likely develop coronary heart disease, the most common form of it. The disease affects millions, but some groups, such as African Americans, are affected more than others. Together, we can change that. Make heart disease prevention a priority for yourself and those in your community!

**Why are African Americans at higher risk of heart disease?**  
As a group, African Americans have high rates of certain risk factors for heart disease, such as physical inactivity, overweight and obesity, smoking, and having uncontrolled high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol. Knowing your risk factors is key to understanding how to prevent heart disease and build a strong and healthy heart.

**What steps can you take to improve your heart health – individually and as a community?**  
Social support can help a lot. Studies have shown that having positive, close relationships and feeling connected to others has health benefits. Meet up with friends and family and encourage each other to commit to these heart-healthy habits – together:

- Stay Active**  
Aim for 150 minutes of moderate physical activity weekly. Break it up into manageable chunks, like 30 minutes 5 days a week, or 10 minutes three times a day, 5 days a week. Take a walk after a meal, play a pickup basketball game, join a dance class, or do anything you enjoy that gets your heart pumping.
- Eat a Heart-Healthy Diet**  
Whether it's a family gathering or your daily meals, fill your plate with vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean proteins, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products. Limit foods that are high in saturated fat, sugars, and salt and sodium, too.
- Track Your Blood Pressure**  
High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease. Have your blood pressure checked at each healthcare provider visit and track your numbers using a **blood pressure log**. Ask if you should self-measure your blood pressure at home.

**Risk Factors**

- About one-third of African American women 18 and older do not get enough physical activity.
- 17% of African American men 18 and older smoke.
- Almost 7 in 10 African American men 20 and older are overweight.
- Hypertension (high blood pressure) affects more than 50% of African American men and women.

**Among African American adults 20 and older:**

Women	Men
13% have diabetes	12% have diabetes
30% have high cholesterol	28% have high cholesterol

NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute | hearttruth.gov | 1

**Know the warning signs of heart attack and stroke**  
You could save your life

Heart attack and stroke are life-or-death emergencies — every second counts. If you think you or someone you're with has any symptoms of heart attack or stroke, call 911 immediately. For a stroke, also note the time when the first symptom(s) appeared. A clot-busting drug received within 3 to 4.5 hours of the start of symptoms may improve your chances of getting better faster.

**Heart Attack Warning Signs**  
Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. The warning signs are:

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Shortness of breath. This may occur with or without chest discomfort.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Other signs may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

**Stroke Warning Signs**

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, or trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

The acronym F.A.S.T. is an easy way to recognize and respond to the sudden warning signs of stroke. The letters stand for:

- **Face drooping** — Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop or is it numb?
- **Speech difficulty** — Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence such as, "The sky is blue." Is the sentence repeated correctly? Are they unable to speak, or are they hard to understand?
- **Arm weakness** — Ask the person to raise both arms. Is one arm weak or numb? Does one arm drift downward?
- **Time to call 911** — If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 911 and get them to the hospital immediately.

The American Heart Association and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute are working together for women, for healthy hearts.

GoRedForWomen.org

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**KEY NUMBERS TO KNOW FOR YOUR HEART HEALTH**

Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 killer of women, making it vital for all women to understand their personal risk factors. Knowing your risk starts with knowing four important numbers.

**TOTAL CHOLESTEROL**

- What is it?** It's a soft, fat-like substance found in the blood and in all the body's cells.
- How does it affect your health?** When cholesterol builds in the inner walls of your arteries over time, it hardens and turns into plaque. High cholesterol contributes to a higher risk of cardiovascular diseases, such as atherosclerosis and stroke. High cholesterol usually has no symptoms.
- What should you do?** Get your cholesterol checked through a blood test called a lipid profile. A provider will draw blood from your arm or through a finger prick.
- What's a healthy number?** Discuss with your doctor what healthy numbers are for you.

**BLOOD PRESSURE**

- What is it?** It's the force of blood against the arteries when the heart beats and rests.
- How does it affect your health?** High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is a condition that makes the heart work harder than normal. High blood pressure usually has no symptoms. If high blood pressure is left untreated, it can scar and damage your arteries, which can greatly increase your risk of heart attack, heart failure and stroke.
- What should you do?** It's important to get your blood pressure checked at least once a year, but regularly monitoring at home is recommended. Measure twice in the morning and twice in the evening.
- What's a healthy number?** Blood pressure numbers of less than 120/80 mm Hg are considered within the normal range for non-pregnant individuals.

**BLOOD SUGAR**

- What is it?** It's the amount of sugar (glucose) in the blood.
- How does it affect your health?** High blood glucose, also known as hyperglycemia, can put you at greater risk of developing insulin resistance, prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. Untreated diabetes can lead to many serious medical problems, including heart disease and stroke.
- What should you do?** Get your blood sugar levels checked with a simple blood test.
- What's a healthy number?** A normal and healthy range for a fasting blood glucose level is lower than 100 mg/dL.

**BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)**

- What is it?** It's a numerical value of your weight in relation to your height.
- How does it affect your health?** Carrying too much fat — especially in the waist — increases the risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes.
- What should you do?** Weigh yourself regularly and understand your BMI. If you're overweight or obese, you can reduce your risk for heart disease by losing weight and keeping it off through healthy eating and physical activity.
- What's a healthy number?** A person's ideal body weight varies by gender, age, height and frame. Your body mass index and waist circumference provide good indicators of whether you're at a healthy weight. The recommended range of BMI is 18.6-24.9 and a waistline measurement of no more than 35 inches for women and 40 inches for men. Curious to learn about ranges? Learn more here: [heart.org/bmi](http://heart.org/bmi).

For more information on these four important risk factors, visit [GoRedforWomen.org/KnowYourNumbers](http://GoRedforWomen.org/KnowYourNumbers).

Go Red for Women is nationally sponsored by **CVSHealth**.

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# RECENT EVENTS

I YOU WE MATTER GIRL'S YOUTH SYMPOSIUM 2025 Video:



On February 4th, the Minority Health program attended the Maryland Department of Health Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities' **21st Annual Health Equity Conference**. The office focuses on advancing health equity in Maryland through several different focus areas and responsibilities. **Learn more here!** Felicia, Faith, and Unique were able to network with other programs in the state working towards health equity in their communities.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**New: Faith in Action Town Hall " Where Faith, Health, & Community Action Meet"**

*"Faith in Action"*  
**TOWN HALL**  
*Where Faith, Health, & Community Action Meet*



Faith in Action Town Halls bring together faith leaders, community leaders, and local organizations to address critical health issues and turn knowledge into action for Harford County residents.

**January Topic:** "The Silent Strain: Chronic Kidney Disease, Faith, and Community Action," with emphasis on Hypertension, Diabetes, and Sickle Cell Anemia.

First Session:  
**FEBRUARY 27, 2026, 8:30AM-12:00PM**

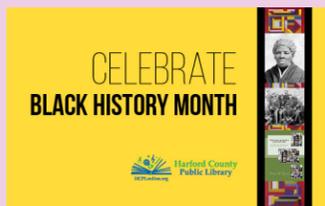
*The TUNE Center (Towson University Northeast)  
 510 Thomas Run Road, Bel Air, MD 21015*

<p><b>Following Sessions:</b>  <i>(All sessions: 8:30AM - 12:00PM)</i></p> <p><b>April 24</b>        Havre de Grace Colored School        Museum &amp; Cultural Center, Inc.        555 Alliance St Havre de Grace, MD 21078</p> <p><b>September 25</b>        Location: TBD</p> <p><b>December 18</b>        UM Upper Chesapeake Aberdeen        660 McHenry Rd Aberdeen, MD 21001        Community Rooms A&amp;B</p>	<p><b>Details:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Events will be interactive with raffle prizes!</li> <li>Light breakfast included.</li> <li>Variety of health vendors sponsored by the OLBA Business Suite, (Opulent Lady Business Association).</li> </ul> <p><b>To Register:</b>  <i>Please scan the QR code and fill out the form.</i></p> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 10px;">    </div>
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# RECOMMENDED Reading:

- New York Society Library Black History Month Reading List; 28 Days of Discovery and Inspiration
- Harford Civil Rights Project (HCC)
- Black Mental Health Matters

# OUR PARTNERS UPCOMING EVENTS:



## Harford County Public Library (HCPL)

Celebrating Black History Month

**Date:** February 1st - February 28th

**Time:** Varies

**Location:** Locations across the county

[See More Here](#)



## Instant Change

After School Mentorship Program for Youth

**Date:** Every Wednesday in February

**Time:** 4:30 - 7:00

**Location:** American Legion Service Post 17  
415 State Hwy 755,  
Edgewood, MD 21040

[See More Here](#)



## Havre De Grace Colored School

Langston Hughes Youth Oratorical Contest

**Date:** Saturday, February 7th

**Time:** 1:00 - 3:00 pm

**Location:** Cultural Center at the Opera House  
121 North Union Avenue,  
Havre De Grace, MD, 21078

[See More Here](#)



## NAACP

Civil Rights Tour

**Date:** Saturday, February 28th

**Time:** 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

**Location:** *Depart from* Bel Air Elementary  
30 E. Lee St  
Bel Air, MD, 21014

[See More Here](#)

# ON-GOING PROGRAMS



## MARYLAND VACCINE PROGRAM (MVP)

**Free Adult Vaccine Program.**  
Open to all uninsured or underinsured residents. Must be 19 years of age or older.

**Available Vaccines:**  
*\*Subject to change*

- Tdap
- Meningitis
- Meningitis B
- Hep A
- Hep B
- HPV
- MMR
- Varicella
- Shingles
- Flu
- COVID-19
- RSV
- Polio
- Pneumococcal

Clinics held Wednesdays 8:30AM-3:30PM. Please call or email [hcd.immunizationclinic@maryland.gov](mailto:hcd.immunizationclinic@maryland.gov) for appointments.

**410-612-1779**




Harford County Health Department

## Family Dental Clinic

1 N. Main St. HEALTH CENTER  
For Children (Ages 1-20) and Adults on Medicaid

### SERVICES

- Cleanings
- X-Rays
- Fluoride
- Sealants
- Oral hygiene instruction
- Nutritional education
- Restorations (Fillings)
- Extractions
- Root canals
- Crowns
- Space maintainers
- Referrals for specialty care when deemed necessary

### HOURS & LOCATIONS

Monday to Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm

**1 North Main St.**  
Bel Air, MD 21014  
410-638-3060

**2204 Hanson Rd.**  
Edgewood, MD 21040  
443-922-7670



## CHECK OUT THESE Membership Packages

### DARE 2 LIVE WELL MEMBERSHIPS

**SIGN UP TODAY!**

LIVE LIMITLESS	LIVE ABUNDANT	LIVE WELL
<b>PACKAGE INCLUDES</b> 6 Core Services Per Month or 2 Core Services Per Month & 2 Speciality or 1 Core Services Per Month & 1 Shockwave Session. (Valued at over \$790)	<b>PACKAGE INCLUDES</b> 4 Core Services Per Month or 1 Core Service Per Month & 1 Speciality Service. (Valued at over \$550)	<b>PACKAGE INCLUDES</b> 2 Core Services per month. (Valued at over \$250)
\$250 PER MONTH	\$175 PER MONTH	\$99 PER MONTH

**MOST POPULAR**

Core Services :  
Chiropractic Adjustments  
Physical Therapy  
Electric Stimulation  
Vibration Therapy  
Re-Examinations

Specialty Services :  
Spinal Decompression  
Cold Laser Therapy (15 Mins per region)  
Red Light Therapy

**CONTACT US TODAY AT (410) 877-8077**



## You don't have to feel this way at any age.

Mood swings, stubborn weight gain, low libido, brain fog, and exhaustion are NOT "just getting older."

With natural hormone balancing + targeted wellness support, we help you feel younger from the inside out.

- ✓ Better energy
- ✓ Restful sleep
- ✓ Improved mood
- ✓ Stronger metabolism
- ✓ Restored confidence & vitality

**Book your consultation today.**



## Heart & Soul

Family Health & Wellness  
667-290-8301

Contact us!

Felicia Grant Hopkins - 443-252-7692

Faith Murray-Engl 443-862-9477



Harford County Health Department

Harford County Health Department | 120 South Hays Street | Bel Air, MD 21014 US

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