

"A TIME TO HEAL"

Focus on the Family Series



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Harford County
Health Department

MINORITY HEALTH PROGRAM NEWSLETTER



...Year, **Five** Loading!!!

As we step into a new year, we thank God for new beginnings and renewed strength. This season allows us to reset our focus on health, wellness, and caring for one another.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our community partners, neighbors, faith leaders, and friends for your continued support of the Minority Health Program.

Entering our fifth year at the Health Department, we are encouraged by the momentum and clarity God has given us.

Since April 2021, we have seen our community grow in awareness, action, and unity around health and wellness.

This gives us hope for a healthier future for our children, who are always watching.





— Felicia M. Grant-Hopkins
Coordinator of Special Programs
Certified Health Minister

Minority Health Program Interest Form



We Can Prevent Cervical Cancer

Each year, there are more than 13,000 cases of cervical cancer in the United States. **Yet we have all the tools we need to prevent cervical cancer today.**

The cell changes that can lead to cervical cancer are caused by HPV—human papillomavirus. Almost everyone who is sexually active will have HPV at some point.

Most HPV infections are harmless. Usually the immune system clears HPV within a few months. Sometimes HPV infections don't clear naturally though. When this happens, women are at risk for cervical cancer.

There are two important tools to prevent cervical cancer: vaccination and screening.

The HPV vaccine prevents infection with the types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer.

Regular screening with Pap and HPV tests can help find problems early and prevent cancer from developing.

Only 58.5% of adolescents ages 13–15 have received the recommended doses of the HPV vaccine.

About 1 in 4 women (26.1%) haven't been screened as recommended.

We Can Do Better!

SOURCE: Healthy People 2030, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Prevention at Every Age

The recommended age for HPV vaccine is 11–12—for both girls and boys. But vaccination can start as early as age 9.

11–12 Why so young? The vaccine produces a stronger immune response when taken during the preteen years. Also, fewer shots are required. Between ages 9 and 14, only two doses are needed. Starting at age 15, three doses are required. The vaccine is designed to prevent infection, so vaccination is recommended at a young age before kids are exposed to the virus.

21 Women should get their first Pap test at age 21. The Pap can find abnormal cell changes on the cervix. If changes are found, they can be treated before they turn into cancer. Cervical cancer is rare before age 21. The cancer progresses slowly so experts don't recommend earlier screening, even for people who are sexually active.

30 There are three choices for women once they turn 30:

- A Pap test alone every three years
- Co-testing with a Pap and HPV test, every five years
- An HPV test alone, every five years

Some healthcare providers may offer all three options, others only one. The only bad option is not getting screened!

65 At 65, women can stop screening if they have had:

- Three consecutive negative Pap results, or
- Two consecutive negative co-testing results

Both negative tests must have been done within the last 10 years, and the results of the most recent test can't be more than five years old.

Visit the National Cervical Cancer Coalition to learn more about cervical cancer prevention.
www.nccc-online.org

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

What is Cervical Cancer?

Cancer is a disease where abnormal cells in the body grow out of control. These cells may spread to other parts of the body and crowd out healthy cells, causing illness.

Cervical cancer happens when abnormal cells from the cervix grow out of control, causing disease. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina.

The main cause of abnormality in cervical cells is human papillomavirus or HPV. HPV is a common infection that is passed through sexual contact. Most times, the HPV infection goes away. Other times, the virus may stay around and cause changes to cervical cells that lead to cancer.

HPV is preventable with the HPV vaccine, which protects against most cancer-causing HPV types. Vaccination is recommended for 11-12-year-old boys and girls. However, vaccination may occur as early as 9 years old and as late as 45 years old.

Cervical cancer can also be prevented by getting regular screenings, like a Pap test. Women should start receiving Pap tests when they turn 21 years old. The Pap test is meant to find abnormal cells in the cervix, so that they can be treated before they cause cancer. There are also HPV tests that can detect infection by cancer-causing types of HPV.

Minority Health and Cervical Cancer

According to St. Jude's Research Center, Black Women are 45% more likely to develop cervical cancer and 75% more likely to die from cervical cancer than white women. Black women are also more likely to be diagnosed with cervical cancer at a later stage of the disease, lowering survival chances.

Historically rooted medical mistrust plays a part in the limited screenings and lack of follow-up that worsen cervical cancer outcomes. In the referencing of medical mistrust, it is important to recognize Henrietta Lacks and her contribution to the scientific field. In 1951, Henrietta Lacks was admitted to Johns Hopkins Hospital for symptoms related to cervical cancer. Sadly, her treatment was unsuccessful, and she passed away at the young age of 31. Unbeknownst to her and her family, doctors collected samples of her cancer cells, which became "immortal cells" used to replicate human cells and perform research all over the world. Henrietta's cells, known as HeLa cells, are responsible for many of the wonders of modern medicine, including the HPV vaccine used to prevent cervical cancer today.

Sources:

<https://www.stjude.org/research/progress/2024/why-do-black-women-have-the-highest-cervical-cancer-mortality.html>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cervical-cancer/symptoms-causes/syc-20352501>

<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/understanding/what-is-cancer>

Cervical Cancer Screening

The What, Why, How and When

What
Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the name of a group of viruses that infect the skin. Some types of HPV are linked to abnormal cell changes on the cervix that can lead to cervical cancer.

While most HPV infections will clear on their own and won't cause any health problems, sometimes the infection does not clear and can cause cell changes on the cervix. These changes may lead to cervical cancer if they aren't found and treated.

Why
Screening can prevent cancer. Regular screening tests—Pap and HPV tests—can help find problems early and prevent cancer from developing. The Pap test can find abnormal cell changes on the cervix before they have a chance to turn into cancer. These changes can then be treated.

Unlike a Pap test, which only detects abnormal cell changes, an HPV test can identify high-risk types of HPV. High-risk types of HPV can lead to cervical cancer and this test helps health care providers know which patients are at greatest risk.

How
During a Pap test or an HPV test, a health care provider will use a medical instrument called a speculum to examine the vaginal area and view the cervix. The cervix is the opening to the uterus.

The health care provider will then use a small brush to collect a sample of cells from your cervix for testing. The whole procedure is quick and takes just a few minutes.

When
Screening should start with the Pap test at age 21. (Screening is not recommended for those under age 21.)

Starting at age 30, there are three options available for screening:

- A Pap test alone every three years
- Co-testing with a Pap and HPV test, every five years

Learn more about HPV and cervical cancer screening, from the National Cervical Cancer Coalition at www.nccc-online.org

Don't Forget Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program
You may be eligible at no cost to you

The program provides:
Mammograms • Clinical breast exams • Pap tests

CANCER Screenings SAVE LIVES
Breast exams, mammograms and Pap tests help detect breast and cervical problems early, when they are most treatable.

FOR MORE INFORMATION Call 443-643-3767

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND MEDICAL SYSTEM | UPPER CHESTER/PEAKE HEALTH | A better state of care.

African American Diabetes Association (AADA) issues Call for Proposals to Combat Crisis at the Hyper-Local Level

11-14-2025 02:37 PM CET | Health & Medicine
Press release from: African American Diabetes Association

A CALL FOR PROPOSALS Establishing hyper-local chapters



AADA Invites Proposals to Build Resilient, Hyper-Local Chapters

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Beltville, Maryland - November 15, 2025 - The African American Diabetes Association (AADA) today issued an urgent call for proposals to establish hyper-local chapters across the U.S. This initiative seeks to build a resilient, community-driven network to combat the severe, disproportionate impact of diabetes on African Americans.

The data is clear: African Americans are 60% more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes and suffer complication rates up to four times higher than non-Hispanic white adults. Compounding this health crisis are potential threats to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Medicaid, which could severely limit access to care.

Anthony Banks, Chair of the Board for AADA said, "We need solutions built on trust, designed by local leaders who understand their community's unique needs."

African American Diabetes Association (AADA) issues Call for Proposals to Combat Crisis at the Hyper-Local Level

The African American Diabetes Association (AADA) is launching a national movement to fight the devastating impact of diabetes on the Black community!

The Stats are Alarming: African Americans are 60% more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes and face complication rates up to FOUR times higher than non-Hispanic white adults. The time for hyper-local solutions is NOW!

We're calling on passionate community leaders to establish AADA Hyper-Local Chapters!

"We need solutions built on trust, designed by local leaders who understand their community's unique needs," says Anthony Banks, AADA Board Chair.

Be the change in your community!

Visionary Proposals are due February 28, 2025, at 11:59 PM EST.

Leon



Leon Nathaniel Rock, M. Ed.

- Co-Founder & CEO African American Diabetes Association
- Member, National Advisory Board Communities United to Manage Diabetes (CUT2MD)
- Cohort 3 Member, The Culture of Health Leadership Institute for Racial Healing, National Collaborative for Health Equity
- Citizen Science Director Nepenthe Health and Wealth Cooperative
- Podcast Producer and Host African American Diabetes Podcast
- Orator and Motivational Speaker

Cell: 240-559-6860

Maryland Mailing Address:

10770 Columbia Pike, Suite 300 - #1086

Silver Spring, MD 20901

RECENT EVENTS



I YOU WE MATTER GIRL'S YOUTH SYMPOSIUM 2025

On November 21, the Minority Health Program proudly hosted the I YOU WE Matter Girls' Youth Symposium at the Ward Y in Abingdon, bringing together middle and high-school-aged young ladies for an evening of connection, confidence, and empowerment. The theme of the night was "Mind, Body, Worth - I YOU WE Matter. When we stand together, we stay safe together."

The symposium was filled with engaging conversations, energizing movement, and creative activities that encouraged self-expression, positive mental health, and healthy decision-making. Families also had the opportunity to connect with local organizations and resources dedicated to supporting youth growth and success.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our incredible vendors, panelists, volunteers, performers, and community partners. Your passion, generosity, and support helped make this event a joyful, inspiring, and impactful experience. Together, we created a space where young ladies felt seen, supported, and celebrated.





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:
JANUARY 30, 2026, 8:30AM-12:00PM

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

<p>Following Sessions: <i>(All sessions: 8:30AM - 12:00PM)</i></p> <p>April 24 Havre de Grace Colored School Museum & Cultural Center, Inc. 555 Alliance St Havre de Grace, MD 21078</p> <p>September 25 Location: TBD</p> <p>December 18 UM Upper Chesapeake Aberdeen 660 McHenry Rd Aberdeen, MD 21001 Community Rooms A&B</p>	<p>Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events will be interactive with raffle prizes! Light breakfast included. Variety of health vendors sponsored by the OLBA Business Suite, (Opulent Lady Business Association). <p>To Register: Please scan the QR code and fill out the form.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div>
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Register to attend: Faith in Action Town Halls

RECOMMENDED Reading & Listening:

- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks
- Henrietta Lacks: The 'immortal' cells that changed the world (video)
- The Anxious Generation
- The Let Them Theory
- Save your Kidneys
- From Loss To Purpose W/ Patrice Bullock | The TMA Connection EP. 102
- Heart & Soul Family Health & Wellness: Towson MD

OUR PARTNERS UPCOMING EVENTS:

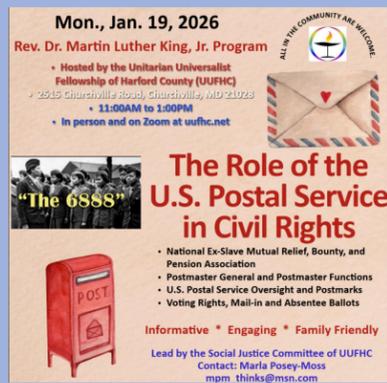


Bailey's Heart and Soul Foundation

Bingo4Bailey

DATE: January 10, 2026
Time: (Doors open at 6:00 pm: Games at 7:00 pm)
Location: The Bel Air Armory
37 N. Main St.
Bel Air, MD. 21014

[Buy Tickets Here](#)

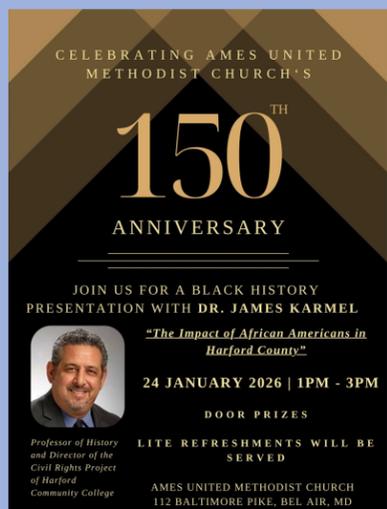


Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Program

The Role of the U.S Postal Service in Civil Rights

Date: January 19, 2026
Time: 11:00 am to 1:00 pm
Location: 2515 Churchville Rd.
Churchville, MD 21028

Led by the Social Justice Committee of UUFHC
Contact: Marla Posey-Moss
Email: mpm_thinks@msn.com



AMES United Methodist Church

Black History Presentation: The Impact of African Americans on Harford County

Date: January 24th, 2026
Time: 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Location: 112 Baltimore Pike
Bel Air, MD 21014

Join AMES United Methodist Church in celebrating their 150th anniversary with a black history presentation by Dr. James Karmel



NAACP: HARFORD COUNTY BRANCH

2026 Freedom Fund Gala

Date: January 24th, 2026
Time: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Location: Rockfield Manor
501 E. Churchville Rd.
Bel Air, MD. 21014

[Register to attend](#)

N-STEP

Gospel Fest

Date: February 1st, 2026
Time: 7:00 PM
Location: 121 N Union Ave
Havre De Grace, MD 21078

Join N-Step in opening Black History Month with a celebration of Gospel Music!

[Buy Tickets 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	• HPV	• COVID-19
• Meningitis	• MMR	• RSV
• Meningitis B	• Varicella	• Polio
• Hep A	• Shingles	• Pneumococcal
• Hep B	• Flu	

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

410-612-1779

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-Eng 443-862-9477



Harford County Health Department

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

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