

## **Brockton Area Branch NAACP - Annual Report 2020**

### **Health Committee**

The Brockton Area NAACP Health Committee started 2020 with great plans and expectations, particularly to continue our Prostate Cancer Awareness Initiative. Things were rolling along, then COVID came in with a bang in March 2020. The Committee adapted, and learned quickly what virtual meant, as did everyone in the country and world. We have continued to have meetings by conference calls every 2-3 weeks throughout the year with our partners in this initiative, AdMe Tech Foundation and Good Samaritan Medical Center.

I will highlight programs The Health Committee has been involved with during the year:

**-March 6, 2020**, Health Committee had the honor of meeting with Mayor Robert Sullivan in his Office to review our past accomplishments and plans for programs going forward. Our partners from AdMe Tech and Good Samaritan also attended this very productive meeting, along with Senator Michael Brady and Representative Claire Cronin. There was much energy in the room, and Mayor Sullivan was very supportive of The Prostate Cancer Awareness Initiative. We discussed the prospect of having “A Brockton Prostate Cancer Awareness Day” and again the Mayor was very enthusiastic about this proposal. Then COVID rocked Brockton and the world, so many of our plans were put on hold.

The evening of March 6<sup>th</sup>, Bishop Tony Branch hosted an informative NAACP Forum with Dr. Faina Shtern, Thomas Satham from AdMe Tech, and Immediate Past NAACP President Steve Bernard. One of the most exciting things we learned from Dr. Shtern during this program was that Brockton is no longer one of the leading Massachusetts cities with one of the highest rates of prostate cancer deaths amongst African-American men. This was not the case when we first began our Prostate Cancer Awareness Project almost five years ago. The Brockton NAACP is proud to have been a very active participant in helping to reverse this alarming trajectory.

Unfortunately, The Prostate Cancer Awareness Day scheduled for March 26 at The State House in Boston was postponed due to the pandemic. A number of us from The Health Committee had attended this important and informative event in 2019.

**-May 21, 2020**, The Brockton NAACP participated in a Virtual Town Hall on the COVID-19 Pandemic titled “Take Charge of Your Health” with an impressive group of speakers including Representative Gerry Cassidy, Mayor Robert Sullivan, NAACP Brockton President Phyllis Ellis, Dr. Richard Herman, City of Brockton Pandemic Consultant, Ken Lawson, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Good Samaritan Medical Center, and AdMe Tech’s Dr.Shtern. This Town Hall was viewed by over 2,000 virtual attendees.

**-June 28, 2020**, The Brockton NAACP in collaboration with AdMe Tech and Good Samaritan Hospital presented a Virtual Educational Event titled “Prostate Cancer Awareness in Times of The Covid-19 Pandemic-Know Your Risks and Take Charge of Your Health.” Distinguished Participants included Mayor Sullivan, Representative Claire Cronin, Rev. Huston Crayton, Brockton NAACP President Phyllis Ellis, and participating Physicians Guy Fish, Ryan Frankel, and Faina Shtern. This timely Program helped lead our community into the reality of fighting COVID, as well as the importance of maintaining important health surveillance even in times of COVID.

With COVID and other overwhelming health and social issues in our world, The Health Committee has continued to meet on a regular basis by phone and is trying to plan on appropriate and relevant programs going forward without neglecting our very important “Prostate Cancer Awareness Initiative.”

As the dark days of COVID hopefully will leave our world in the coming year with the onset of vaccines, we have ambitious goals. Our Health Committee hopes to expand our concerns into other health issues including mental health, women’s health, and health disparities that have become glaringly evident during 2020.

Thanks to our President Phyllis Ellis, The Executive Committee, and all the Brockton NAACP members who have supported the Programs and Goals of The Brockton NAACP Health Committee. We look forward to a brighter New Year!

Janet R. Trask

December 28, 2020