

Transforming Times

2023 Wrap-up

Kimberlydawn Wisdom, MD, MS, FACEP



The weathering effect: how racism contributes to poor health outcomes

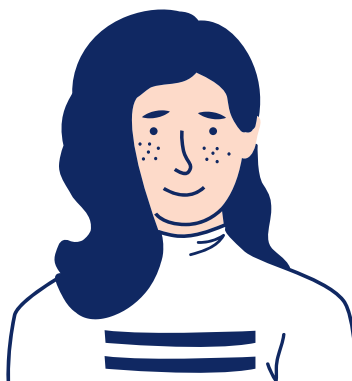
Enduring the daily struggles of racism and poverty not only has significant effects on mental health, it can affect physical health, too.

While it was once thought that genetics, diet and exercise largely account for differences in health outcomes among race and ethnicity, it's more than that. The weathering phenomenon describes how racism, microaggressions and socioeconomic disadvantages put someone under chronic, daily stress that literally wears down – or weathers – their physical health, leading to accelerated aging and leaving them susceptible to poor health outcomes. The weathering phenomenon was proposed by public health researcher Arline Geronimus, Sc.D. decades ago. She used data to explain why Black women have healthier babies in their teens than in their 20s. In their 20s, Black women have endured a decade's more worth of chronic stress, increasing their biological age and leading to higher risk pregnancies and poorer pregnancy outcomes.

And what's more:

- [Maternal and infant mortality](#) rates are higher in Black people than any other race or ethnicity.
- [Black men](#) are more likely to have poor outcomes from prostate cancer and Black women are more likely to have poor outcomes from [breast cancer](#) than the white population.
- Black and Hispanic people are more likely to be afflicted with chronic health conditions like diabetes, kidney failure, [high blood pressure](#) and [stroke](#).
- In 2020, [life expectancy decreased](#) for all races and ethnicities due to the COVID pandemic. But for White people it decreased by 1.5 years, while for Black and Hispanic people, it decreased by 3 years and for Native American people, it decreased by 4.5 years. The pandemic magnified [longstanding disparities](#) in healthcare, as people of color were disproportionately affected by the pandemic and developed a [higher incidence of severe disease](#).

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How chronic stress impacts your health

[Chronic stress](#) releases a hormone into our bodies called cortisol. This creates our fight-or-flight response to help us think and move quickly when we sense danger. Our heart rate goes up, our blood pressure goes up. The systems in our body that we don't need at the moment function at a lower level so we have more energy to focus on the systems in our body that help us get out of the way of danger.

If we're under chronic stress, all of these bodily changes that we undergo when cortisol is released can lead to long-term inflammation, damaging our organs and contributing to a host of health issues.

Race versus income level

The daily injustices of racism and "othering" apply, no matter whether you are low, middle or high income. In fact, [research shows](#) that when Black women take their newborns to Black doctors, they have a lower mortality rate. This isn't to say Black infants should only see Black physicians. Rather, it calls out a need for physicians, nurses and anyone who works in a clinical setting to counteract institutionalized racism and unconscious bias so all patients receive equitable care and the most favorable outcomes.

While this isn't a problem that can be solved swiftly, institutions like Henry Ford Health have implemented a board-approved, 5-year, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice (DEIJ) strategic plan to ensure diverse and equitable practices, and to identify implicit biases and apply swift action to address them, using education, reflection and understanding.

[Kimberlydawn Wisdom, MD, MS, FACEP](#) is the Senior Vice President of Community Health & Equity and Chief Wellness & Diversity Officer for Henry Ford Health. [Read more about Dr. Wisdom.](#)



MLK Day, other observances keep diversity, equity, inclusion and justice front and center

Henry Ford Health hosted its 24th annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King's life and legacy – the first such in-person event since 2020 – in January 2024 at Henry Ford Hospital. This year's theme, "Uniting as One: Valuing Every Voice for Change," reflected on Dr. King's legacy and explored avenues to build a more inclusive healthcare system by calling on Henry Ford and community members to work together to discover innovative solutions to achieve equity for diverse communities and create safe spaces for all voices. The event explored the root causes of health disparities, examined successful community projects and inspired attendees to become positive change agents in their communities and the world.

The celebration included reflections on Dr. King's enduring impact; musical performances; and a thought-provoking discussion with our keynote speaker, [Dr. Renee Branch Canady](#). Dr. Canady, CEO of the Michigan Public Health Institute and author of [Room at the Table: A Leader's Guide to Advancing Health Equity and Justice](#), shared her reflections on how change is accelerated when all voices are heard. The event offered virtual viewing at six additional locations across the organization. To provide more opportunities to honor Dr. King's life and legacy, Henry Ford supported other celebrations across Detroit, including:

- Wayne State University's tribute to Dr. King, Jr. featuring presentations, music, and dance followed by a conversation with Santita Jackson, political analyst, radio and TV host, internationally recognized vocalist and daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Jesse Jackson.
- In conjunction with several student faith-based organizations, Michigan State University Chapel hosted an Ecumenical Service in honor of Dr. King which featured a variety of artistic performances, including the MSU Gospel Choir. A Soul Food tasting reception followed the service.
- The Henry Ford Medical Group Department of Preventive Cardiology hosted a free cardiovascular screening and heart health education event at the Henry Ford Medical Center Second Avenue location in honor of Dr. King's vision of making quality healthcare available in all communities.

MLK Day is not the only time we celebrate equity and justice. In May and June of 2023, Henry Ford partnered with United Way on its [21-Day Equity Challenge](#) to increase understanding of and develop willingness to confront racism, sexism, and other forms of inequity. According to Dr. Kimberly Dawn Wisdom, "This challenge is a way for all of us to build habits of seeing and addressing inequity and injustice – something at the heart of our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) strategic plan."

During the Challenge, team members signed up using their Henry Ford email addresses to receive daily emails with articles and videos exploring how inequity plays a role in our region's social and economic landscape. Nearly 1,800 HFH team members participated in some or all of the challenge.

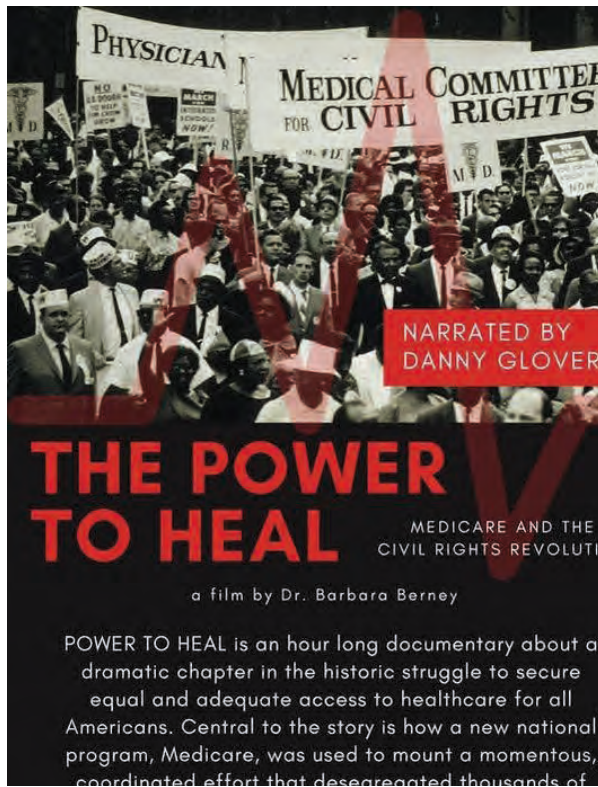


United Way for Southeastern Michigan

In addition to the above, in honor of Black History Month, Henry Ford Health purchased the streaming rights to the documentary [The Power to Heal](#) through February 2023 and hosted two panel discussions. The Power to Heal was created by [Dr. Barbara Berney](#) and explores the historic struggle to secure equal and adequate access to healthcare for all Americans. The Henry Ford screening event was attended by 321 attendees. An additional screening and panel discussion took place in October 2023 in conjunction with Michigan State University Health Sciences, as part of the Henry Ford + MSU Health Equity Film Series.



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And in April of 2023, to commemorate Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day), the Henry Ford Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice hosted “Honoring Yom HaShoah: Lessons from the Holocaust, Anti-Semitism Yesterday and Today,” an online panel discussion about the conditions and ideologies that led to the Holocaust. Yom HaShoah is a day of remembrance for the six million Jews who died during the Holocaust. Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom, Senior Vice President of Community Health & Equity and Chief Wellness & Diversity Officer, moderated the talk featuring special guest panelist Ruth Bergman, director of Education at the Zekelman Holocaust Center. Other panelists included Henry Ford leaders Bob Riney, CEO and President; Betty Chu, M.D., MBA, Associate Chief Clinical Officer & Chief Quality Officer; cardiologist Barry Lewis, M.D. and Michael Lewis, M.D., chair of Anesthesia.

[Watch a video](#) of the discussion by signing in with the password tRNmFUT2.



Participants in the Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance panel

Flash from the past: MLK Day 2023 observance

Last year, Henry Ford recognized Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, its 23rd such event, with a virtual viewing of the documentary *Toxic: A Black Woman's Story* followed by a panel discussion exploring the issues critical to improving maternal health equity. Facilitated by Kimberlydawn Wisdom, M.D., Senior Vice President of Community Health & Equity and Chief Wellness & Diversity Officer, Henry Ford Health, the panel of Henry Ford Health leaders and community health advocates explored the many underlying factors, such as toxic stress, racial inequities, unconscious bias and microaggressions, that impact the health of Black women. After viewing the short film, team members joined a panel of Henry Ford leaders and providers, community health advocates, and social services professionals in a robust discussion about factors that impact many Black women's experiences during and after pregnancy.

To learn more about *Toxic: A Black Woman's Story*, visit toxicshortfilm.com.

Please join us for the 23rd annual Henry Ford Health Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Recognition

Monday, Jan. 16, 2023

11:00 a.m. *Toxic: A Black Woman's Story* Virtual Screening
 11:30 a.m. Panel Discussion
 12:30 p.m. Closing and Call to Action

Dr. King dreamed of a world where every family has an equal opportunity to see their children thrive. Unfortunately, Black families experience infant mortality at a higher rate than any other race. Through the story of Nina we will explore the intersection of bias, social determinants of health, toxic stress, and microaggressions, examine how they impact birth outcomes, and discuss ways to address them.

Credits: 2 LARA Implicit Bias training hours

Panel Moderator:
 Kimberlydawn Wisdom, MD, MS
 Senior Vice President, Community Health & Equity and Chief Wellness and Diversity Officer
 Henry Ford Health

Healthcare Equity Scholars Program graduates third cohort of change-making scholars

Recognizing the need for fostering the development of a learning community of experts equipped to promote equity in healthcare, Henry Ford's Institute on Multicultural Health created the Healthcare Equity Scholars Program (HESP). This year-long program empowers participants, called Scholars, to conduct research and quality improvement projects aimed at eliminating healthcare disparities and fostering organizational change at the departmental or institutional levels. Two previous cohorts of Scholars graduated in 2014 and 2017.

In June 2023, HESP graduated 29 Scholars, its third and largest cohort of the program, representing at least 25 different departments across Henry Ford and Health Alliance Plan. The cohort began in April 2022 and engaged in monthly seminars through May 2023, covering topics such as Identity, Intersectionality and Building a Learning Community; Organizational Accountability for Pursuing Equity in Healthcare; and Making the Business Case for Equity. The graduation ceremony included remarks from HESP faculty and senior advisors, and featured poster presentations of quality improvement or research projects that Scholars completed over the course of the program, addressing disparities across the organization.

"We wanted to provide protected time for this cadre of organizational change-makers to focus intently on equity in the quality improvement context," said Marla Rowe Gorosh, MD, HESP faculty member from the Henry Ford Department of Family Medicine. She added, "Our goal was to make HESP a meaningful personal journey for participants, as well as a professional development opportunity akin to a graduate school seminar."

HESP was designed and implemented under the leadership of Denise White Perkins, MD, PhD, Director of Healthcare Equity Initiatives for the Henry Ford Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Interim Chair of Family Medicine. Dr. White Perkins, Dr. Rowe Gorosh, Amanda Holm with the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and Shiny Issac of the Department of Community Health, Equity and Wellness served as lead facilitators for the program. Senior Advisors for the 2023 iteration of HESP include Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom and Dr. Betty Chu. The HESP faculty continue the process of supporting the organizational change-makers from all three cohorts, facilitating continued networking and collaboration as well as personal and career development.



From left, HESP faculty members Amanda Holm, Dr. Denise White Perkins, Dr. Marla Rowe Gorosh, and Shiny Issac.



HESP graduates and faculty celebrate outside the Pistons Performance Center in Detroit.



Dr. Marla Rowe Gorosh addresses the assembled Scholars and honored guests at the graduation event.

Michigan Medicaid challenges after COVID-19

As the dust settles on the COVID-19 pandemic, a new set of challenges emerges for many Americans, particularly those who rely on Medicaid health insurance coverage. Across the nation, the termination of the COVID-19 health emergency has led to the reinstatement of regular annual redetermination processes for Medicaid, putting low-income families at greater risk of losing access to affordable healthcare services. According to a February 2024 Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) Report, almost 17 million Americans have lost health insurance coverage so far.

To ensure cost would not be a barrier to getting timely care for COVID-19, the U.S. Congress passed the 2020 Families First Coronavirus Response Act preventing state agencies from terminating Medicaid coverage. Medicaid is a federally funded health insurance program that provides medical care to more than 85 million low-income Americans, pregnant women, and children. More than 3.1 million Michiganders rely on the program every year to meet their medical needs.

Medicaid became a lifeline for many families as some businesses closed down or suspended their operations causing unemployment to soar during the pandemic. Interruptions in care were prevented and more than 700,000 more Michigan residents enrolled in Medicaid. Many people haven't been required to reapply for coverage since March 2020.

When the public health emergency ended May 11, 2023, states were allowed to begin reviewing Medicaid eligibility again and terminate health insurance coverage for those that no longer qualified. Michigan began a year long process of assessing all Medicaid enrollees for eligibility. Medicaid reenrollment forms were sent to the last known address of beneficiaries. According to a November 2023 Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) report about 1 in 3 enrollees have been disenrolled. As of February 13, 2024, Maine had the lowest Medicaid disenrollment rate – 13% – of any state with publicly available data compared to Michigan at 35%, KFF reported. Arkansas, meanwhile, had the highest disenrollment rate at 59% followed closely by Montana, Utah, and South Dakota each at 57%.

Many were deemed ineligible because they no longer met the income requirements. Thousands more were removed from the state's Medicaid rolls due to procedural reasons including the submission of incomplete applications, missing proof of income documentation, and incorrect addresses. In Michigan, procedural reasons accounted for 83% of lost coverage, leaving many vulnerable residents searching for new, affordable health insurance coverage to meet their ongoing medical care needs.

The MDHHS is working diligently to reach residents through text messaging campaigns, brochures, websites, factsheets, social media posts, and radio advertisements to prevent any additional loss in coverage.

Michigan residents that have been disenrolled should call their MDHHS case worker or to reapply visit michigan.gov/MIBridges.

STEPS study enrolling seniors to improve reduced-pain functioning

Seniors using Technology to Engage in Pain Self-management (STEPS) is a 5-year, randomized controlled trial, funded by the National Institute on Aging. Henry Ford Health is partnering with the University of Michigan's School of Public Health to complete this study.

The purpose of this study is to test whether the STEPS intervention, delivered by Community Health Workers, can improve pain-related functioning among older adults with musculoskeletal pain. The study intervention takes place over seven weeks and is open to adults older than 50 who have self-reported chronic musculoskeletal pain, have a phone, have had pain that is 4 or more on a 0-10 scale, and report that pain makes it difficult to do their usual activities.

Study enrollment is ongoing. Anyone in the city of Detroit or surrounding area who would like to learn more may contact **844.456.4668** or **STEPS-info@umich.edu**.

Recent publications, recognitions, honors, and awards



Kimberlydawn Wisdom, MD, MS, received the Torch of Wisdom Foundation (TOWF) Icon Award in April of 2023, as part of the TOWF “Honoring Local Heroes” event recognizing everyday heroes and local leaders who are making a difference in the community. The awards pay tribute to the work, power, and resilience of

women in our local community who have displayed bold and fierce leadership.



In February of 2023, a team of authors, including Jaye Clement and Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom, had an article published in the journal PLOS ONE titled “Community health workers as change agents in improving equity in birth outcomes in Detroit.” This peer-reviewed article summarized progress made during the first iteration of Henry

Ford’s longstanding Women’s Improvement Neighborhood Network: Detroit/Sew Up the Safety Net project, and concluded that the findings of its evaluation “underscore the benefits of using CHWs [Community Health Workers] to positively influence social determinants of health and improve pregnancy outcomes for Black women.”

Henry Ford Health was ranked 12th on the prestigious DiversityInc list of Top Hospitals and Health Systems in the United States for 2023.

This honor underscores our dedication to creating a diverse talent pipeline, nurturing talent development, holding leadership accountable for diversity initiatives, and promoting supplier diversity. We extend our sincere gratitude to each member of the Henry Ford Health community for your contributions to this achievement and our overarching goal of achieving equity for all.



In December of 2022, Bethany Thayer, Director of Henry Ford’s Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, was appointed to Governor Whitmer’s Council on Health, Physical Fitness & Sports. The Council’s goal is to improve the health of, and increase physical activity among, Michigan residents to achieve its vision that the

State and its communities embrace and support physical activity and health education.



In November of 2023, Denise White Perkins, MD, PHD, Director of Healthcare Equity Initiatives and interim chair of the Department of Family Medicine, and Jaye Clement, Vice President of Community Health Programs and Strategies, were named Notable Leaders in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion by Crain’s Detroit

Business. The honorees champion diverse workforces, equitable and just financing, affordable housing and education, and inclusive, welcoming opportunities. They hold difficult conversations, create innovative opportunities, and take training to a higher level.



In July 2023, Crain’s Detroit Business gave Healthcare Heroes awards to several Henry Ford leaders. President and Chief Executive Officer Bob Riney (second from left) received the Corporate Achievement in Healthcare award, honoring his efforts to bring to fruition the health system’s transformational development efforts in the City of Detroit. Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom (middle), Chief Wellness & Diversity Officer and Senior Vice President of Community Health & Equity, accepted the Advancements in Care award for her work to sponsor and build the Women-Inspired Neighborhood (WIN) Network with the goal of reducing infant deaths in Southeast Michigan’s Black community. The Allied Health Heroes award went to Dr. Martina Caldwell (second from right), Medical Director of Diversity and Inclusion, and Dr. Ikenna Okereke (right), Vice Chair of Surgery and Director of Thoracic Surgery, for helping pave new paths for students of ethnically diverse backgrounds to pursue medical careers. Congratulations to the awardees! (Pictured at left is Bethany Thayer, RDN, Director of Henry Ford’s Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, who attended the award ceremony in support.)

Henry Ford hosts 2022 healthcare anchor network convening, carries standard for community investments

The Healthcare Anchor Network (HAN), a national member organization, has become a key player in catalyzing health systems to use their hiring, purchasing, investing and other key assets to build inclusive local economies that sustain healthy communities. In October 2022, Henry Ford Health co-hosted a meeting of nearly 60 HAN members, convening the group along with Corewell Health, ProMedica and Trinity Health. More than 250 attendees brought their focus and insights to the importance of work done by healthcare anchor institutions to invest in communities.

A highlight of the program was the CEO panel which met on the second day of the conference to discuss leaders' roles in embedding anchor mission strategies into organizational culture and explore the value of prioritizing population health and value-based purchasing. Henry Ford President & CEO Bob Riney participated alongside Tina Freese Decker, President & CEO of Corewell Health; Arturo Polizzi, President & COO of ProMedica; and Michael A. Slubowski, President & CEO of Trinity Health.

The panel considered the challenges and opportunities that come with aligning organizational resources around remedying long-standing inequities, and touched on authentically engaging with communities to foster health and wellbeing. The group was unified in citing health disparities as a top priority for leaders.



Dr. Kimberly Dawn Wisdom provides opening remarks

The event included site tours of anchor institution engagement and investments to illustrate such strategies as impact purchasing, including Henry Ford's investments in key public and open spaces with an emphasis on public art as an engagement strategy.



From left, Henry Ford's Marc Corriveau, Mary Jane Vogt, Valencia Stoudamire, Bob Riney, Michele Harrison-Sears, Jaye Clement, and Tom Habitz attend the 2022 HAN convening in Detroit.

Other tours provided examples of place-based investments that spur economic development in urban core areas, and of "impact workforce" commitments to bolster local economies through hiring and workforce development programs and policies. Through this anchor mission approach, health systems fully activate their unique platform in partnership with the community to meaningfully address economic and racial inequities that contribute to poor health.

"We believe that our role, and I know my colleagues feel the same way, is to figure out how to truly improve the health of communities," said Riney, adding that "you can't improve the health of communities if you aren't dealing with inequities, if you're not dealing with resource deprivation that gets in the way, if you're not dealing with jobs or economic inequities."

Henry Ford representatives also attended a convening of HAN in San Francisco in 2023. Attendees participated in "deep dives" on place-based investment strategies, such as developing affordable housing and homeownership, maximizing the impact of philanthropic donations, making direct investments in local economies, and leveraging non-financial assets, relationships and expertise to increase impact.

Summit applies equity-centered design thinking to develop solutions that improve health outcomes



Dr. Kimberly Dawn Wisdom and Dave Edwards, National Vice President of Business Development at Premier, Inc., enjoy a lighthearted moment at the summit

In September 2023, Henry Ford Health, Henry Ford Innovations, PINC AI™ Applied Sciences, community organizations, patient advocacy groups and life sciences organizations came together in Detroit with a shared commitment to advance cancer care, aiming to ensure equitable screening, diagnosis and treatment of cancer for historically marginalized and underserved communities.

The second annual “Advancing Health Equity Through Innovation and Collaboration” summit zeroed in on crucial health issues plaguing our country’s underserved communities, with a special focus on lung cancer, prostate cancer and multiple myeloma. Teams engaged in an equity-centered design thinking process to collaboratively develop prototype solutions with the goal to eliminate inequities in care. Vikas Relan (Henry Ford Innovations) and Sharifa Alcendor (Henry Ford Institute on Multicultural Health) helped coordinate

the event, bringing speakers from various Henry Ford Health entities that address disparities in care together with attendees from within HFH and HF Cancer, the community, and life science corporations for an impactful 1.5 days of learning and designing solutions.

Day one focused on the barriers patients encounter along their cancer care journey and showcased inspirational collaborations between Henry Ford and key community stakeholders to promote health equity. To see these collaborations in action and gain a firsthand understanding of the systemic barriers to healthcare, the group took a tour through Detroit, ending at and featuring New Calvary Baptist Church in the city’s East Side neighborhood.

Church leaders highlighted the Faith Community Nurses Network and their close work with Henry Ford Health to reach the congregants through programming, resources and education – all aimed at improving health inequities and access to vaccines, preventive healthcare and information about clinical trials.

“Churches in the African American community are more than houses of worship; they are trusted beacons of hope and healing,” said Sharifa Alcendor, Manager, Multicultural Health. “Through faith and fellowship, these longstanding community staples have the power to not only nourish the soul with spiritual and emotional support, but also provide the knowledge and guidance to link community members to needed healthcare resources to nourish the body.”

During the tour, “we prioritized listening to those affected by social determinants of health, to church leaders connecting communities to vital services, to dedicated social and community health workers and to individuals facing the challenges of cancer,” added Jim Snyder, DO, Henry Ford Cancer, Henry Ford Innovations.

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“These conversations, often emotionally moving, took place in the heart of Detroit’s marginalized community, providing a new perspective into our patients’ struggles. I departed humbled and proud of Henry Ford Health’s existing health equity efforts and filled with hope for the transformative impact of this event in channeling resources for lasting community health improvements,” added Dr. Snyder.

On day two, teams reflected on their discussions and experiences from the previous day. They prioritized the barriers to cancer care that marginalized communities face and then shifted the discussion to creative, innovative solutions to address the barriers. The teams are continuing to refine these prototype solutions and will seek feedback from a clinical council of experts from Henry Ford Health, PINC AI™ Applied Sciences and the Detroit community. The goal is to pave the way for multi-stakeholder-led projects that will be implemented and tested.



Advancing Health Equity Through Innovation and Collaboration summit working group reflects on Day 1 discussions and experiences.



Advancing Health Equity Through Innovation and Collaboration summit attendees embark on a bus tour visiting New Calvary Baptist Church in Detroit.

Henry Ford’s LiveWell Blog offers a treasure trove of wellbeing resources

Launched in 2014, the Henry Ford LiveWell Blog provides an interactive educational platform to help patients, community members and our employees move forward in their journey to wellbeing. The blog is a joint project of the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and Henry Ford’s Marketing Department. Each weekday, the blog features a new article providing health and wellness advice and insights from experts across Henry Ford Health on a variety of topics, including:

- Nutrition and delicious, healthful cooking (with recipe videos!)
- Fitness tips to help readers stay motivated
- Myth-busting and expert advice on health fads and trends
- News about innovative treatments and research
- Strategies for raising healthy kids and teens
- Articles on coping with stress, sleeping better, managing chronic diseases and more

“We started the blog as a way of engaging consumers in wellness and strengthening our relationships with current and future patients,” says Beth Thayer, Director of the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. “We strive to make it a combination of reputable information and fun, dynamic content, and visitors have responded to that.”

To date, the blog has published more than 1725 articles and 200 recipes. In 2023, it accrued an average of 835,000 pageviews per month, and was responsible for over 50% of user traffic to henryford.com, making it the site’s largest organic driver of traffic.



To visit the blog, go to henryford.com/blog or scan the QR code.

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