

# Diversity among doctors drives trust in health care

By Patricia Maryland  
NNPA Guest Columnist

Black History Month gives us the opportunity to reflect on the countless examples of the contributions that African-Americans have made to build our country. By celebrating these pioneers who helped shape America, we are inspired to overcome adversity and realize the positive change we, too, are capable of enacting in areas where inequity still persists. Black health is one such example where much has been achieved, but much more can be done to secure positive health outcomes in the Black community.

We know that on virtually every measure of health, African-Americans fare far worse than their White counterparts – from diabetes to heart disease to infant mortality. These disparities can be explained by myriad and co-influencing factors, including a lack of access to affordable healthcare, nutritional education and safe spaces to exercise.

A less apparent, but equally troubling, reason for unequal outcomes in



Black health is a strong sense of skepticism – even mistrust – in physicians, in medicine and in the healthcare system in general. The impact of the Tuskegee syphilis study, a four-decades-long clinical trial in which African-American men, unaware of their condition, endured the disease for the purpose of medical observation, still looms large on the Black consciousness, perpetuating a culture of wariness that has lingered for generations.

Mistrust in medicine is particularly pronounced among African-American men, many of whom will enter the healthcare system only after their conditions are severe or life-threatening. A 2011 study by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found

that Black men who self-identified as “highly mistrustful” of healthcare were more than twice as likely to delay check-ups and cholesterol screenings, and three times more likely to delay a routine blood pressure screening, than those who were more trusting.

Distrust, skepticism, fear — these beliefs are intensely embedded in the history of Black healthcare, but they are ones we must overcome if we are to truly improve the health of our families and communities. Today, too often, a lack of trust can become a huge liability, even a death sentence, for Black patients.

I became a healthcare professional, because I saw my family members, friends and neighbors plagued by diseases that could have

been prevented, if they had taken a proactive approach to their care. While it’s important to acknowledge that African-Americans’ relationship with the healthcare system is complex, our community cannot afford to remain disengaged in these matters.

That’s why all of us must take a hard look at the barriers that prevent African-Americans from achieving health equity and commit to an effort to reclaim Black health and wellness.

On the part of individual members of the Black community, that means not only taking advantage of the coverage opportunities provided by the Affordable Care Act, but also taking a hands-on approach to health — one that seeks out care in a timely and accountable fashion and works to nurture a positive culture of health in our families, churches, neighborhoods and cities.

On the part of healthcare providers, this work will require a new standard of care that recognizes the unique needs of minority populations and designs a care strategy around what works for each individual patient.

Working with physicians at our facilities, we are learning that when we actively engage the patient in his or her care, we’re better able to build meaningful, long-term relationships that lead to better health outcomes. This personalized care approach is proving vital in earning trust and improving the health of the African American community.

Representation also matters when it comes to building confidence in healthcare among minority communities. Black Americans make up 13 percent of the population, yet they account for barely 4 percent of practicing physicians nationwide. What’s more, studies show

relationships between patients and physicians of the same race or ethnic background also are characterized by higher levels of trust, respect and patient satisfaction.

It’s clear that more needs to be done to encourage African-Americans to pursue medical professions — and ensure the proper supports are in place to nurture diversity in the field.

As we remember and reflect on Black history — the bad and the good, the darkness and the light — there is no better time than now to commit to actions that will make our community healthier and stronger. And it begins by working together to break down barriers, real and perceived, to the care we need and deserve.

*Patricia A. Maryland, Dr.PH, is the President of Healthcare Operations and Chief Operating Officer of Ascension Health.*

## Creating the life you really want to live

You say you want to spend more time with your family, but instead stay late at the office to get ahead in your career.

You vow to give back to your community by volunteering, but can’t work it into your schedule.

In short, there’s a disconnect between people’s words and actions when it comes to what matters most, says Lee Stoerzinger, a financial planner (www.leestoerzinger.com) and author of “On The Back Burner,” which explores how Americans can align the values they espouse with the values they live.

“In theory, we should all try to live a life that is as close as possible to what we say we care about most,” he says. “In reality, that doesn’t happen.”

Too often, how people think about money gets them off track, Stoerzinger says. They strive for the highest-paying job, an expensive car and a luxurious house.

As a financial planner he understands the importance of money and how crucial it is to manage it wisely.

But as a family man who adopted two Haitian children orphaned by a 2010 earthquake, he also knows a person’s legacy shouldn’t be limited to material goods bequeathed to family members.

“When you think about it, defining your values should be easy,” Stoerzinger says. “It’s what you believe about God. It’s how you want to raise your children. It’s what you want to spend your free time doing.”

The trick is to create a mindset that helps you give greater weight to what matters most and inspires you to act. Anyone can take steps to get thinking and acting in the right direction, Stoerzinger says, such as:

- Focus on family activities. Create a new family tradition, such as organizing a monthly game night, buying tickets to a baseball game in the summer, or taking an annual road trip. You could have donuts the morning of your kid’s birthday, start a family book club or visit a shelter once a month to feed the homeless.

- Connect with nature. Go birding, take canyon hikes with your dog, go shelling at the beach, go kayaking on the lake, paint

See LIFE, Page 5



## Ed Bell Construction Company

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February 23, 2016

Ed Bell Construction is a Dallas based heavy highway contractor doing business in the North Texas market since 1963. With clients such as TxDOT, Dallas County Public Works, and the Cities of Dallas, Fort Worth, Richardson and Mansfield (plus many others), we have a strong backlog of work in the highway market locally.

We are currently hiring for the following positions:

- ◆ Laborers (Earthworks, Underground, Paving)
- ◆ Fuel Truck Helper
- ◆ Form Setters (Paving, Structures)
- ◆ Finishers (Paving, Paving/Straightedge)
- ◆ Pipelayers
- ◆ Flagger
- ◆ Work Zone Barricade Servicer
- ◆ RT Crane Operator
- ◆ Dozer Operators
- ◆ Trackhoe Operators
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# Easter weekend activities offered at Dallas Arboretum

To celebrate the Easter holiday, the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden has planned a weekend full of exciting activities including music, festive treats, children's activities and a garden full of floral backdrops perfect for Easter photos.

New this year is renowned sculptor Gary Lee Price's Great Contributors Bronze Statues Exhibit, which features eight life-size sculptures of Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Claude Monet, Albert Einstein, William Shakespeare, Mark Twain and the Wright Brothers. These "Greats" are on display among more than 100 kinds of spring bulbs and are a must-see. Easter weekend is sponsored by Dave Perry-Miller Real Estate.

Mary Brinegar, Dallas Arboretum president, said, "Families have made visiting Easter weekend a tradition because it's during Dallas Blooms, one of the most glorious moments in the garden. The last weeks of March usher in the blossoming of the 150 cherry trees, and the first weeks of April showcase the 3,000 azaleas, so it's a beautiful time to visit." The largest floral festival in the South-



west, Dallas Blooms runs through April 10.

## DallasChild's Good Friday Children's Concert

Friday, March 25 | 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. | Martin Rutchik Concert Stage and Lawn

Celebrate Good Friday with family-friendly concerts by Eddie Coker.

## United States Air Force Band of the West

Friday, March 25 | noon to 1 p.m. | Martin Rutchik Concert Stage and Lawn

Mission Winds Clarinet Quartet Concert.

## Easter Portraits

Friday, March 25 | 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. | Jonsson Color Garden

Saturday & Sunday March 26-27 | noon to 4 p.m. | Jonsson Color Garden

Ivey Photography will be in the

garden Easter weekend to take family portraits with a live bunny. Portraits will be available for purchase from the photographer.

## Easter Bunny

Saturday & Sunday, March 26-27 | noon to 4 p.m.

A roving bunny rabbit in costume will be making rounds in the garden for family photo opportunities.

## Easter Brunch

Sunday, March 27 | 10:30 a.m. or 12:30 p.m. | Restaurant DeGolyer

Celebrate Easter with your family and take a seat at brunch on the Loggia of the DeGolyer House. Come enjoy bountiful selections from farm fresh scrambled eggs, apple smoked bacon, to a chef carving station with assorted proteins. While you enjoy your meal, our pianist will play quiet

melodies in the background. Seating is limited. Contact 214-515-6511 to reserve your spot today.

Adults: \$68, Children ages 5-12: \$30, Children 4 and under: Free

## Children's Activities

Friday, March 25 | 10 a.m.-2 p.m. | Saturday & Sunday, March

26-27 | noon to 4 p.m.

Pecan Grove - Petting zoo, face painting and Kindermusik.

On Saturday at 11 a.m., guests can relax on the lawn near the Martin Rutchik Concert Stage and Lawn, listen to the music being played and enjoy a picnic with family and friends.

## Dallas County to name jail medical facility after minority leaders

Dallas County officials have announced it will name the county jail's medical facility after two Dallas minority leaders, both of whom made history and broke molds in their community.

The \$39 million facility will now bear the names of Jesse Everett Gill and Dr. Onesimo Hernandez and be known as the Gill - Dr. Hernandez Medical Facility.

This is the first time in the 170 year history of Dallas County that a county government facility will be named in honor of a Latino. It will also become the only Dallas County government facility named after both an African-American and a Latino.

"I am very proud that we are recognizing the contributions of these

two men, Dr. Hernandez in particular," said Dallas County Commissioner Elba Garcia. "Dr. Hernandez committed himself to helping our community, like so many other Latino leaders of his generation. It is important for us and for future generations to remember and recognize their achievements."

Dr. Onesimo Hernandez and Jesse Everett Gill were both born and raised in Dallas and graduated from DISD high schools. Both men achieved important firsts in the Dallas area and both dedicated their adult lives to public service and the betterment of their communities.

Dr. Hernandez was the first Latino to attend Southwestern Medical School. He then served as an intern at Parkland Hospital and later

became the first Mexican-American physician on the staff of St. Paul's Hospital. Jesse Everett Gill was the first African-American to hold the position of deputy sheriff in Dallas County. He later taught for 20 years at Clara Oliver Elementary in Oak Cliff. A scholarship was named in his honor by the Dallas Co. Peace Officers Association.

The Gill - Dr. Hernandez Medical Facility was completed in March 2015. The 139,000 sq. ft. stand-alone, centralized medical and mental health services facility includes medical clinic space, a full service pharmacy, and medical staff offices. This state-of-the-art infirmary has improved the delivery of medical and mental health to Dallas County Jail patients

## LIFE, continued from Page 4

outdoors, see the bigger picture and look at the sky. "The world is full of wonders to de-stress and bless us," Stoerzinger says.

• Give back. Consider how you can be a servant in your community without donating money. Who has needs you can meet? Think about

your true passions in life. Who can benefit from your skills?

"We can continue complaining about money, stress and schedules," Stoerzinger says. "Or we can admit that we need to step back, define what's important to us and live our lives with dedication to those

things."

*Lee Stoerzinger, CFP, has practiced wealth management since 1993. Graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in 1992 with a bachelor of arts in cumulative finance, Lee began his career as an independent financial representative at his firm, Lee Stoerzinger, Inc.*

## You Can Help With Three Simple Words

1 in 5 Americans are impacted by mental illness. Chances are someone in your social network is, too. Let them know you're there for them by saying

# #IWILLLISTEN

Share on Facebook, Twitter, Google+ or Instagram to make a difference.

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