

Becoming Antiracist

February 2022



February is Black History Month in the U.S. and Canada. This observance provides a reminder to take stock of where systemic racism exists. Black History Month was first created in February 1926 by Carter G. Woodson, a historian, who helped establish the field of African American Studies. His organization, The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, aimed to encourage people of all ethnic and social backgrounds to discuss the Black experience. - Alem Tedenek, Feb. 2021, World Economic Forum. www.weforum.org

Scripture: Proverbs 21: 2-3 “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart. To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.”

Some History: The theme for 2022 for Black History Month is Black Health and Wellness. In order to foster good health and wellness, Black people have built hospitals, medical and nursing schools, and community clinics. Clinics were established to provide spaces for Black people to counter the economic and health disparities and discrimination that are found at mainstream institutions. These disparities and anti-Blackness led to communities developing phrases such as “When white folks catch a cold, Black folks get pneumonia.” – www.asalh.org (Association for the Study of African American Life and History, EST. 1915)

Institutional racism impacts health care accessibility within non-white minority communities by creating health disparities among racial groups. For example, from 1865 to 1906, many black veterans were unfairly denied disability pension by the union army disability pension system. - *40 Days of Prayer for the Liberation of American Descendants of Slavery*, Simmons College of Kentucky, 2019

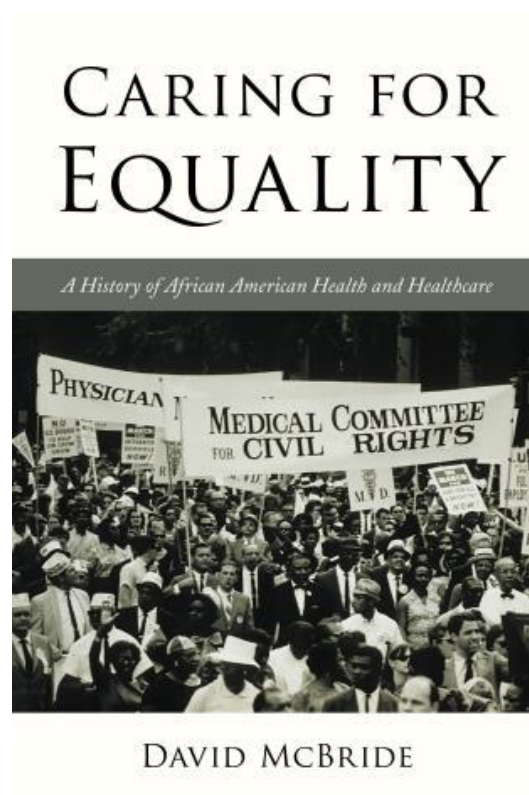
From 1932 through 1972, the US Public Health Service used 399 African American men who were suffering from syphilis as human laboratory animals in the medical experiment known as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. More than one hundred men died during the study. Penicillin was withheld from the men in the study for 25 years. The study was halted in 1972 after a former Public Health worker blew the whistle on the project. - *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, by Dr. Joy Degruy, 2017

The poverty in which black people disproportionately live cannot account for the fact that black people are sicker and have shorter life spans than their white complements. [Some] studies have found that racial and ethnic minorities receive lower-quality health care than white people-even when insurance status, income, age, and severity of conditions are comparable .- [Implicit Bias and Racial Disparities in Health Care \(americanbar.org\)](http://americanbar.org)

For further reading:

Books:

Caring For Equality A History of African American Health and Healthcare, by David McBride



Reclaiming Our Health: A Guide to African American Wellness, by Michelle A. Gourdine

Article: *Implicit Bias and Racial Disparities in Health Care*, by Khiara M. Bridges [Implicit Bias and Racial Disparities in Health Care \(americanbar.org\)](https://americanbar.org)

Video: *Black History is American History*, TED Talk, Okalani Dawkins [Black History is American History | Okalani Dawkins | TEDxYouth@MVHS - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Prayer: Holy One, You call us beloved. We belong to you. You created us in your image; through your very breath you formed us. You taught us to call one another beloved, because in belonging to you, we belong to each other. You told us to see your image in the faces of the forgotten and the oppressed. Through you we became one family; through your Spirit, we breathe the same breath. Free us from that which keeps us from perfect love of our neighbors, because loving our neighbors is the same as loving you. Help us to recognize you're your image in the faces of others. May we unite our commitments with those working for racial justice across the country, that we may work together to participate with you in building your kingdom here on earth. Strengthen all of us, that through the power of your Spirit, we might have the courage to love you, others, and ourselves, with all of our hearts, minds, and strength. Amen. (JustFaith Ministries 2021)