



HEALTH



On Aug. 23rd, Mom.Me hosted a Community Baby Shower at the Jackson Medical Mall to celebrate and support expecting mothers, new parents, and caregivers. Families received free baby supplies, parenting resources, lactation and birthing support, plus fun activities for kids. The event was a true celebration of parenthood and community, reminding families that they are not alone on this journey. (Advocate photos: Joshua Martin)



Metro area moms-to-be gathered at the Jackson Medical Mall on August 16 for the Baby & Beyond: A Mommy-to-Be Resource Fair. Hosted by the Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health, this event provided resources and support to help families prepare for the arrival of their little ones. The free resource fair featured interactive sessions on breastfeeding, infant CPR, car seat installation, and prenatal yoga. In addition to educational sessions, participants received free diapers, various baby essentials, and door prizes. Left: Isaura Camacho of Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance (MIRA) demonstrated how to install infant car seats properly. Right: Expectant mom Brittany Fosters talks to Latasha Rice, Maternal and Child Health Program Manager with the Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health. For more information about the Institute’s maternal and child health programs, visit [www.minority-institute.org](http://www.minority-institute.org).

Black Men’s Health Equity Conference addresses damaging effects of stigma

BY BRINDA F. WILLIS, PH.D.  
JA Contributing Writer

The Black Men’s Health Equity Conference was held on Saturday, August 23, 2025. The conference, sponsored by The Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health, was held inside the Bennie G. Thompson Academic & Civil Rights Research Center on the campus of Tougaloo College. On-air personality, Christiana Williams with Alpha Media, served as the mistress of ceremonies for the opening session, and Tougaloo College president, Dr. Donzell Lee, officially greeted all conference attendees.

Approximately 300 people attended the conference, with most attendees being Black men of varying ages. They engaged with health experts who served as panelists and vendors, exchanging information and providing free health screenings for chronic issues such as high blood pressure, kidney disease, diabetes, cancer, and mental health issues.

Panel experts conducted concurrent sessions that included:

• **Breathe Easier, Live Longer:** Advancing Black Men’s Lung Cancer Health Equity in Mississippi Through Community Collaboration. Panelists: Robert T. Lock, LPC, NTTPC, and Jimmie Wells, MSN, OCN. Moderator: Beth Dickson-Gavney.

• **Scrubs to Strategy:** The Future of Black Leadership in medicine. Panelists: Dr. Michael Jones; Patrick O. Jones, PHD; and Shelia Phicil, MPH, MS, PMP, FACHE. Moderator: Dr. Joseph White.

• **Unhealed Wounds:** Preventing Aggression and Healing Emotional Pain in Black Men. Panelists: Joshua Jones and Sherika Rimmer-Higgins. Moderator: Felicia Cameron, LCSW, SAP.

• **The Heart of the Matter:** Cardiovascular-Kidney-Metabolic Syndrome, Chronic Disease, and Health Solutions for Black Men. Panelists: Erin Vicks, Patrick Gee, Dr. Lauren Williams, Nichole Jefferson, and Curtis Warfield. Moderator: Dr. Jameshya S. Ballard.

• **Unseen, Untreated:** Black Men, Chronic Disease, and the Path to Prevention. Panelists: Dr. Stephen Farrow and Kenneth R. Butler Jr., PhD. Moderator: Dr. Carl Reddix.

• **Toxic Truths:** Unmasking Environmental Injustice,

Climate and Class, and its Power Over Black Men’s Health. Panelists: Felicia Tripp and Dr. Krystal Nicole Martin, PHD. Moderator: Mac Epps.

• **He Ain’t Heavy:** Lifting the Burden of Trauma and

spent with Black-owned entities. Stating that if Black folks don’t support our media, then eventually we will have to ask permission from white-owned media to tell our stories. He said that’s why he owns his media and doesn’t

“We men have the capacity in our groups to have personal health conversations with each other, like women do. Men are conditioned to think that talking about our health concerns is a sign of weakness.”

one street, and one household. We need to become personal change agents regarding our own health and the health of our families, taking ownership of our health.”

By doing so, Martin said Black men can change the

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Mental Health in Black Men. Panelists: Ja’Ron Brown, LCSW; Frederick Rodgers; Ruth Drake, LCSW; and Dr. Bernell L. Elzey Jr. Moderator: Kimar Cain.

• **Beyond the Chair:** Advancing Black Men’s Health Through Barbershop Initiatives. Panelists: Warren Jones and Border-ere Fiemotonghan. Moderator: Markyel Pittman.

• **Do Your Dollars Have Sense?** Practical Tools for Financial Stability and Growth. Panelists: Torey Phillips and Tamara Williams. Moderator: Lisa Gaspard.

The keynote address was delivered by political commentator Roland Martin who didn’t stutter when he said, “Black family health secrets are killing Black families because we don’t know our family health history and Black people are being targeted by the placement and marketing of fast food in our communities.”

In addressing the audience, Martin emphasized the necessity of supporting Black Media outlets because of the lack of advertising dollars

have to have permission from anyone as to what he discusses on *Roland Martin Unfiltered*.

“I didn’t want to charge for my content through subscriptions and memberships. I wanted my content to be heard worldwide by anyone who wants to hear what I got to say on any topic of my choice. Please support Black-owned media.”

Additionally, Martin asked who in the audience had invited another man to the conference. Then, the men in the audience were challenged to write down 10 names of Black men with whom they would have conversations about their health and follow up with them to see if they are following through with health screenings and doctor appointments. Then ask the 10 men to expand that challenge to 10 more, thereby increasing the number of Black men who are having meaningful conversations about health issues within their group versus continuing to have superficial conversations about sports, etc.



He gave an example of men not wearing sunscreen when they are playing golf, and only one man in the audience said yes, he wears sunscreen...because most Black people think we can’t get skin cancer.

“We don’t participate in clinical trials...If I hear about the Tuskegee experiment one more time! That shouldn’t prevent us from participating in clinical trials. Black men are dying early because we don’t go to the doctor even when we have insurance... It’s well known that we get better care and are listened to if we go to Black doctors and nurses.”

Martin stated the early death of Black men negatively impacts our families economically, socially, and culturally for generations. “We don’t take advantage of free health fairs and information. Black men are suffering in silence about our health issues. We are not being honest about our health problems. We can and need to make micro changes at the local level, in one city, one neighborhood, one block,

health awareness of their family and drive positive change. “We can develop proactive health habits such as walking, drinking more water, and moving more and being less sedentary. Let’s extend our lives, stop making money for funeral homes, and stop being GOOGLE Doctors.

“Be an active patient when we go to the doctor. Ask questions of the doctor, such as what each prescription does and why it’s being given to you. Black men can lead a health REVOLUTION!”

In conclusion, Martin asked Dr. Sandra Melvin, CEO/ Founding President of the Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health, to conduct an assessment as a follow-up to evaluate the impact of this conference on Black Men’s Health.

Roland Martin’s keynote conversation at the Black Men’s Health Equity Conference can be seen on *Roland Martin Unfiltered* live at Tougaloo College (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juiAQBQkPFs>).

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