

Health in Color

By Alexis Green

Welcome back to Health in Color, a newsletter that hopes to bring light to stories affecting the black community that are often left in the dark. From the lack of diversity at your doctor's office to how hair products and that delicious peach cobbler are hurting African Americans, here are some headlines you may have missed between September and October.

More diversity could help decrease death rates

Black male patients are more likely to discuss their medical problems with and receive medical testing from black doctors, according to the [Washington Post](#). Despite this, there's a lack of black medical school students and practicing physicians. With black men having the shortest life expectancies of any other major demographic group, researchers say an increase in black doctors may decrease the number of deaths caused by chronic diseases.

Black woman are receiving less breast cancer treatment



Photo courtesy of NPR

Although black women are less likely to have breast cancer, they are 40 percent more likely to die from the disease than white women. According to [NPR](#), the lack of healthcare access, bothersome side effects of treatment and the small amount of black physicians available to black patients is contributing to this epidemic.

A new study links church with lower blood pressure

Almost half of all black adults have some type of heart disease in the United States. While churches can't provide a cure, research shows attendance does help. [Reuters](#) highlighted a study showing that black churchgoers learning about healthy lifestyles and receiving religious encouragement had lower blood pressure than people not attending.

The discomfoting truth about comfort food



Photo courtesy of Robert Manella/Getty Images

With approximately 75 percent of black men and women developing high blood pressure by their mid-50s, researchers are now turning to their dinner plates. The southern diet which includes food that is highly processed and full of sugar or fat is one of the main causes of hypertension among black people, according to [Texas Public Radio](#).

What's in your hair care products?

As the black hair business remains a million-dollar industry, researchers are now questioning how harmful the haircare products are. Black women are potentially exposed to dozens of dangerous chemicals with the usage of these products as reported in the [Philadelphia Tribune](#). While the extent of damage is still unknown, this research may be the first step in figuring out the link between black women and early puberty and high rates of hormone-related problems

Four black Georgia break national health trend



Photo courtesy of Joshua Rashaad McFadden for USN&WR

Despite the national trend of health problems affecting African-Americans more than white people, four predominantly black counties in Georgia remain “signs of progress and hope.” Cobb, Columbia, Fayette and Paulding were named some of the nation’s healthiest communities. A [U.S. News and World Report](#) took a look at each county to figure out what keeps them thriving.

Local van is making health house calls in minority neighborhoods

A mobile doctor’s office is hoping to bring awareness and access to health to minority neighborhoods, as described by [KXAN](#). As part of Austin’s Public Equity Unit, the van is placed in places upon request or in areas where the population has a high risk for health issues. Offering everything from HIV to blood pressure testing, the van has performed 6,000 medical tests and helped thousands of people.

That’s it for this month’s Health in Color, but remember this is just a starter. Keep looking for untold stories because there are often important things left in the dark.