

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

c/o Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
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MCAAE Retreat Summary

February 16, 2024

Members Present: Rita Howard; Paul Mitchell, Pamela Williams

Members Absent: Omara Abe; Sheila Mary; Paula Williams, Charlotte Antoine; Claudette Thomas

HSD/ADS Staff: Michael Adusah, Mary Mitchell; Irene Stewart, Karen Winston, Andrea Yip

Program Panelists: Margaret Boddie, AAEP, Nacala Ayele, Tubman Center for Health & Freedom, Nathan Yamane, Heart'n Soul Hospice

Members and Guests Total: 33

The MCAAE chair, Rita Howard, welcomed everyone to the Black History Month panel presentation. The MCAAE is a City of Seattle commission. We advocate for accessible, culturally appropriate, comprehensive services with a focus on people of African descent who are isolated, frail, low-income, and 55 years of age or older and reside in Seattle or in King County. Periodically, we conduct public forums on issues impacting older adults; we solicit public input; and we provide formal and informal comments and recommendations to the Mayor. We currently have four vacancies and are looking for new members! If you or someone you know is interested in being appointed to the commission, please let us know. Meetings are every 3rd Friday of the month, and everyone are welcome.

Black History Month Panel Presentation

In honor of Black History Month, MCAAE members invited community members to join for a panel discussion with organizations that serve African Americans in King County. The featured organizations included: The African American Elders Program; Tubman Center for Health & Freedom, and Heart'n Soul Hospice. Mary Mitchell, Director of Aging and Disability Services, was the panel moderator.

African American Elders Program

Margaret Boddie is the Program Manager for the African American Elders Program. Margaret was one of the cofounders of the AAEP and has managed the program for 19 years. Prior to that, she was a Case Management Supervisor at Aging and Disability Services. Margaret is a warrior of social justice and a relentless advocate for the whole community. She has been a tireless and concise voice for bringing resources to the community, particularly when it comes to the well-being of older adults.

The African American Elders Program (AAEP) serves older adults in Central and Southeast Seattle and South King County. The AAEP serves older adults and adults with disabilities, veterans, and family caregivers. The program identifies frail, isolated and hard-to-serve African Americans and assists them in accessing and receiving needed social and health services

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through ongoing case management, support and referrals. The program has four case managers, a PEARLS counselor for veterans, and a registered nurse. The program is in the Randolph Carter Family Learning Center at 23rd and Yesler Way, in Seattle.

Tubman Center for Health and Freedom

Nacala Ayele is the Board Chair Tubman Center for Health and Freedom. She was born and raised in the Occupied Territory of the Duwamish Tribe, also known as Seattle Washington. She has decades of experience of activism, community building, and direct service work in local shelters. Nacala is most excited about bringing her understanding of systemic inequity to collaborate and build a revolutionary healthcare center that centers the people who are most neglected and underserved in healthcare in a way that is loving, respectful and of the highest quality.

The Tubman Center for Health and Freedom is a community organization committed to the principles of healing and people's liberation from systems that make us unwell. They work to advance health justice, culturally appropriate care and integrative medicine. Tubman Health is designing an innovative community health clinic that specializes in meeting the needs of marginalized communities in Seattle's Puget Sound region.

The center is named after the heroine Harriet Tubman, who concentrated on both freeing people from systems of oppression that threatened their health as well as providing clinical care for patients as a nurse in the Union army. They follow the same methodology of addressing health and wellness from both systemic and clinical approaches.

The Tubman Center for Health & Freedom is slated to open its doors as a community health center in 2025, offering comprehensive Integrative Family Medicine and community programs. Tubman Health is a multifaceted health care system designed specifically to meet the health needs of communities of color and other marginalized groups.

Tubman Health's design process over the next three years will include events such as Community Visioning, Design Labs, and Simulations. Community members will come together to examine the built environment, soft arrangements such as systems and protocols, accessibility, navigation, affordability, policy, and measures of quality. The Tubman Center for Health & Freedom will utilize this data in the development of a transformative community health clinic designed for those who have experienced the greatest barriers to health.

Heart'n Soul Hospice

Nathan Yamane, Founder & Executive Director of Heart'n Soul Hospice. Nathan has been a licensed medical social worker since 2013. During that time, he's seen many of the ways racism manifests in the medical system. It's one of the reasons why he opened King County's first Black-owned hospice care service. He was also inspired by his father, Yemane Berhan Gebremichael, who, before passing in 2020, advocated for immigrants and youth. His father helped found Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs and advocated for raising the minimum wage in SeaTac.

Heart'n Soul Hospice is a Black-owned hospice organization that focuses on the needs of individuals and families. Heart'n Soul provides culturally relevant comfort care, end-of-life care, and respite services. The program received the Washington state Certificate of Need in 2022.

Through Medicare, hospice is typically offered to provide care for those who have six months or less to live, although many people who are on hospice care live for longer. No patient is turned away, as hospice care is a benefit for those who have insurance.

Heart'n Soul Hospice services includes a care team that works with the entire family. The interdisciplinary care team includes the medical director, a nurse, a certified nurse assistant, a social worker, a chaplain, a bereavement specialist, and a volunteer.

National data shows Black Medicare patients and their families do not utilize comfort care compared to white patients. In 2019, about 41% died with the help of hospice, compared to white patients for whom the figure is 54% and climbing each year, according to data from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. Lack of knowledge about hospice is a battle that Heart'n Soul constantly addresses. Many people do not realize that just like social security, hospice care is an entitlement for all people.

Heart'n Soul Hospice is currently located at 15 So. Grady Way, Suite 522, Renton, WA 98057.
Phone: 206-659-9998

Following the question-and-answer segment, the program ended at 3:30 p.m.