COVID-19 disparities and police brutality

Only a unified, well-funded public health approach will prevent more tragic events

By Dr. Will Ross and Dr. Frederick Echols
For The St. Louis American

The biggest victory for women’s health in Missouri was the Planned Parenthood’s abortion license renewal in St. Louis.

As public health officials, we adhere to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance on mitigating and improving the health of all people and their communities. We do this by promoting healthy lifestyles, implementing community engagement strategies, using evidence-informed science to investigate disease, and detecting, preventing, and responding to infectious diseases.

Inherent in our approach to disease prevention is the elevation of health equity, which states that all individuals should have access to the resources they need to reach their full health potential. As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded in the St. Louis region, it became immediately apparent that a specific population, namely African Americans, were not reaching their full health potential.

By now, most are aware of the COVID-19 pandemic’s devastating, disproportional effect on the African-American community. In the City of St. Louis, as of May 31, African Americans account for 63% of COVID-19 cases (1,234 out of 1,955) and 62% of COVID-19 related deaths (61 out of 100). This is not happening by chance. As we are keenly aware of the social and structural determinants of health that place African Americans and other vulnerable populations right in the line of fire of a highly infectious and lethal viral infection.

While working to fully mitigate the COVID-19 outbreak, we are yet again dealing with another terribly familiar public health emergency: an unarmed African-American male dying at the hands of the police. In this case, George Floyd.

Missouri voters will have the chance to approve through the Amendment 2 Question in the August 4 statewide primary election. Medicaid expansion acts as an employment incentive for people with disabilities – and a needed investment in our Missouri workforce. By increasing the individual income eligibility limit up to $18,000 per year, roughly 230,000 Missourians will access coverage through Medicaid expansion. Among those with disabilities, research shows higher employment rates in Medicaid expansion states versus those in non-expansion states.

By Kendra A. Burgess
For The St. Louis American

One in four U.S. adults – 61 million Americans – have a disability that impacts major life activities, according to a 2018 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For the millions of Americans who live with disabilities, health care is a major priority. Unfortunately, the same systemic, structural forces that limits the access to health insurance coverage gap to choose between health care and food, feeding their families also impacts people with disabilities.

There is much more work to be done to ensure patients can access safe, legal abortion inside a woman’s right to privacy.

Photo by Wiley Price

Missouri Foundation for Health is a resource for the region, working with communities and nonprofits to generate and accelerate positive changes in health.

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Missouri still requires many medically unnecessary procedures to receive an abortion

By Sandra Jordan
Of The St. Louis American

A diverse group of St. Louisans braved the COVID-19 pandemic on Thursday, May 28 to protest police violence against black people in the wake of the Minneapolis Police killing of George Floyd.
License

“Taking Care of You”

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