



Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage
658 Cedar Street, Suite G57
St. Paul MN 55155

April 10, 2020

To the African Heritage Community,

On behalf of the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, I felt compelled to voice our concern about COVID-19 and the impact that it currently has on our community. Our African heritage community has been in a state of emergency before the pandemic and we are openly seeing how this pandemic has brought to light how the health, education, economic, and workforce inequities are growing in the midst of our current crisis. I urge you to seek out resources within your community during this time of need. Lean on one another for help and guidance. Now is not the time to be divided but we need to uphold the African Nguni Bantu term, *"Ubuntu"* which means *"I am because we are"*. We need to lean in on the African proverb, *"It takes a village"*. Now is the time for us as a community to operate in unity that is not divided.

If you have the capability to work from home, you are now trying to balance your work and home life where you have to educate your children. We are in the midst of our African Heritage-owned businesses making life changing decisions to potentially dissipate their business due to the stay at home executive order that had a direct impact on them (physically, mentally, and financially). Furthermore, for some they unfortunately no longer have the bandwidth to sustain and maintain their business and this has created a hardship. **In addition, please know there are resources that are available for business owners.**

According to the Kaiser family foundation, the data suggests that communities of color are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Our communities have been impacted by health disparities for years and unfortunately, we are seeing the challenges that our communities will face from testing to treatment. The racism that some of our neighboring races have experienced are unacceptable, we must stand together and protect each other. This virus does not have a name, race, ethnicity, or religion to it, everyone is susceptible to it.

Here is what our communities can do as a precaution:

1. Practice social distancing
2. Practice proper hygiene (wash your hands often, wear a mask, wear gloves)
3. Schedule regular annual visits with your doctor
4. Seek our help when needed, you do not have to endure this crisis alone (your mental health matters)
5. Staff at the Council are working to support community derived solutions and are advising state agencies, the Governors office and Legislators on their response to the current crisis. To contact staff with any questions or concerns, email Shakira.Bradshaw@state.mn.us.

We want our African heritage community to be happy, healthy, wealthy and wise.

Be well and Best regards,



Nerita Hughes
Council for Minnesotan of African Heritage, Chair

Members of the Council

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