



National Black Nurses Foundation, Inc.
Serving to Lead-Leading to Serve

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OUR MISSION is to convene alliances and develop programs around clinical, and policy measures to improve the quality of life for underserved, underprivileged, and underrepresented at-risk populations. We achieve our mission through education, research, and policy implications as these programs highlight the impact of the nursing shortage and leadership in the United States and its territories.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Foundation Launches National Initiative Addressing Mental Health Stigma

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (*July 19, 2010*) – The National Black Nurses Foundation (NBNF) announces the launch of the community-based initiative, “*Minding the Gap: Improving Mental Health Access – Eliminating Stigma.*” This Initiative examines the Clinical, Faith-Based, and Policy implications associated with mental illness, such as schizophrenia and mood disorders like major depressive and bipolar disorder, while connecting communities with leaders in each field, to address the issues. This launch will take place in Philadelphia, in collaboration with the Temple University School of Medicine Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities, the Temple University Health System, and the Pennsylvania Department of Health Office of Health Equity. This collaborative endeavor takes place on September 23, 2010 at 5:30 pm at the Temple University School of Medicine – Wendy and Solomon Luo, MD Auditorium (Medical Education and Research Building, 3500 N Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19140).

Dr. Robin L. Smith, licensed psychologist, ordained minister, bestselling author, and national television personality, will serve as the Keynote Speaker for this event. Along with her appearance, Philadelphia health leaders, Calvin B. Johnson, MD, MPH (Vice President and Chief Medical Officer – Temple University Health System; Former Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Health) and Donald B. Parks, MD (Associate Professor of Medicine, Assistant Dean, Minority Affairs & Director, Center for Minority Health Studies – Temple University School of Medicine) will serve as the local hosts.

The *Minding the Gap* initiative is timely, and builds upon a model designed to bring together policy makers, academic experts, faith- and community-based leaders, and clinical professionals to discuss the improvement of mental health outcomes. NBNF launched this colloquium series concept in 2009 surrounding mental health, and is confident in the development of the Initiative to further the cause of eliminating the stigma related to mental health. Cities targeted in the 2009 pilot colloquium series included Atlanta, Georgia; Houston, Texas; New Orleans, Louisiana; and New York, New York. As stated by Dr. David Satcher, 16th Surgeon General of the United States, keynote speaker in the pilot series, “mental health is all of our problem.” It is significant to bring the communities together to enhance mental health related services, i.e. counseling and treatment. This mental health program was developed to:

- define mental illness and distinguish it from ordinary worry and unhappiness;
- describe the partnership between the faith-based community, academia, clinical communities, and policy makers in providing an improved safety net to enhance mental health and its related services;
- discuss the role of health policy in improving equality for mental health services; and
- provide resource information about mental health services.

The purpose of this program is not to provide a cure for this issue, but to aid in changing the mindset of needing, seeking, encouraging, and providing help. To this regard, the NBNF looks to expand this Initiative to include cities such as Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, Oakland, St. Louis, and Washington, DC. The Philadelphia program is supported by AstraZeneca. For more information, please visit <http://nbnfoundation.us/>.

Should you have questions, please call the 1Joshua Group at 404.559.6191.

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About the National Black Nurses Foundation

The National Black Nurses Foundation, Inc. (NBNF) undertakes the responsibility of improving the state of nurses, particularly African-American nurses through cooperative relationship with other similar international nursing organizations across ethnic nurse populations. The Foundation is engaged in activities that include health literacy, health authority models to increase access to care, nurse leadership development, reforming healthcare workforce regulations and the decrease of cardiovascular disease and related risk factors in underserved, under represented and at risk populations. For more information, visit <http://nbnfoundation.us>.