Chronic Health Inequities in Berrien County, Michigan

**THE PROBLEM**

Significant and persistent health inequities exist in Berrien County.

- **Berrien County’s 2016 population was 79.8% white and 15.1% black.**
- However, black people bore a disproportionate burden of many health problems, such as mental illness, obesity, and diabetes.

**THE FACTS**

- **26.7%**
  - Blacks were 26.7% more likely to report signs of severe psychological distress compared to whites*

- **24.1%**
  - The obesity rate was 24.1% higher for blacks than for whites*

- **23.1%**
  - Diabetes was 23.1% more prevalent in blacks than whites*

*According to the Berrien County Health Department’s Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFS) for 2014. These gaps have widened significantly compared to the 2008 BRFS data, indicating the widening health disparities between blacks and whites in our region. **To make meaningful improvements in population health, these inequities must be eliminated.**

**THE SOLUTION**

Join the conversation that aims to find meaningful solutions to these inequities. Start with an educational series – Community Grand Rounds – that explores the latest science on the links between racism and the health of individuals and communities of color.

In this series, we aim to:
- **Reframe** the problem
- **Relocate** the focus of intervention
- **Redistribute** the responsibility
- **Reform** policies, procedures, and practices

**THE CAUSES**

Medical, social, and other scientific studies show a relationship between experiences/perceptions of bias and discrimination and health status.

- Epigenetics, social epigenetics, and social genomics are new scientific fields that are helping us better understand how our social experiences impact our genes and our mental and physical health.

**COMMUNITY GRAND ROUNDS**

For information, contact Lynn Todman, PhD at ltodman@lakelandhealth.org

Presented by Lakeland Health in partnership with the Michael and Lynn Todman Foundation.