

Beta Sigma Boulé to Host Black Men's Health Forum

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Beta Sigma Boulé, with major sponsorship from Baystate Health, will host its first **William A. Darity, Sr. Black Men's Health Forum** on Saturday, October 22, at 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the UMass Center at Springfield. The health forum is part of Beta Sigma Boulé's W.E.B. Du Bois Public Policy Series which was established in 2010 to address issues of significance to the black community.

The health forum is named in honor of the late Dr. William A. Darity, Sr., founding dean for the School of Public Health and Health Sciences at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The theme, "Bridging the Gaps," reflects Dr. Darity's strong focus on eliminating health care and human service disparities and creating equitable opportunities for all people, particularly those in black and brown communities, to live healthy lives. Dr. Darity was also a long-time member of Beta Sigma Boulé.

The forum will highlight health disparities and address several health issues among black men, including prostate cancer, heart disease, mental health, and diabetes. Activities will include an opening plenary session, panel discussions featuring subject matter experts and persons affected by the above health issues, and other on-site activities to drive engagement and post-event health screenings and checkups.

Michael Weekes, Sire Archon of Beta Sigma Boulé said, "This *Bridging the Gaps* forum is aligned with our commitment to advance social action initiatives by stimulating greater community dialogue and actively coalescing resources toward improving health outcomes. It is our intent that this inaugural health seminar, in honor of the late Dr. William Darity, Sr. and in support of our W.E.B. Du Bois Public Policy Series, will serve as a catalyst for creating more community health partnerships and deeper engagements across community interests."

The opening plenary session will feature Dr. Christopher Lathan, Chief Clinical Access and Equity Officer at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Dr. Lathan's primary research interests are centered on the effects of race, class, and access to care in cancer outcomes, including racial disparities in lung cancer treatment, differences in access to precision medicine by race and social class, and equitable distribution of new treatment across historically marginalized populations. Dr. Lathan is also a clinical oncologist who focuses on lung cancer patients.

The idea for the forum was conceived and organized by Frank Robinson, Vice President of Public Health at Baystate Health and a member of Beta Sigma Boulé. “It’s time to prioritize investments that promote the collective health of Black men,” stated Robinson. “Baystate Health’s strategic community partnership with Beta Sigma Boulé’s Black Men’s Health Forum was created to call attention to the health crisis confronting African American men, gather valuable data and insights, and identify strategies to combat the racial disparities in health that negatively impact Black men across the region, the Commonwealth, and the nation.”

The Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts (PHIWM) and Baystate Health will be releasing the inaugural edition of “Bridging the Gaps: Racial Health Equity Gaps for Black Men in the Commonwealth and Western Massachusetts.” This research will put the spotlight on gaps in health care and track changes toward equity goals. Sponsors and supporters of this research project include: Beta Sigma Boulé, Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center and its Center for Cancer Equity & Engagement, American International College, UMass Amherst at Springfield, UMass Amherst School of Public Health and Health Sciences, and Westfield State University.

The Black Men’s Health Forum is free and open to the public. However, space is limited, so we encourage you to register early to guarantee your spot. Visit www.BetaSigmaBoule.org/BlackMensHealthForum to register.

About Beta Sigma Boulé of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity: Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, known as the Boulé, was founded in 1904 and is the oldest black Greek-letter organization for professional men. The Boule has over 5,000 members and 142 member boulés across the country and in The Bahamas and United Kingdom. Its founders were six exceptional men – four medical doctors, one dentist, and one pharmacist. Beta Sigma Boulé is the member boulé based in Springfield, Massachusetts and was founded on June 24, 1983. For additional information, please visit betasigmaboule.org or contact Vince Jackson at 972-489-7191.

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