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EMBRACING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS AND CULTIVATING UNDERSTANDING IN COLUMBUS

Every February, the United States comes together to honor the achievements and rich history of African Americans in a collective celebration known as Black History Month. This annual observance provides a valuable opportunity for reflection, pausing to acknowledge the resilience, creativity, and myriad accomplishments of the Black community.

Throughout this month, we pay homage to the trailblazers and visionaries who have left an indelible mark on history. From civil rights leaders and activists to artists, scientists, and entrepreneurs, Black individuals have played pivotal roles in shaping the fabric of our world. Their contributions span various fields and have significantly influenced the course of history.

Recognizing that education is a powerful tool for change, Black History Month encourages us to delve into the struggles, triumphs, and enduring spirit of the Black community. By actively engaging in learning, we contribute to breaking down stereotypes, dispelling myths, and building bridges of empathy and understanding.

In Columbus, a vibrant array of events, exhibitions, and activities cater to individuals of all ages, offering ample opportunities to participate in this celebration. Here are a few noteworthy events to kick start your journey of acknowledgment and appreciation:

- [Aminah Robinson Day: All Arts Day](#) - Explore Aminah Robinson's legacy through themed projects for all ages and free workshops with supplied materials ([registration required](#)) on February 17th.
- [Long Street Cultural Wall](#) - This collaboration by local artists Kojo Kamau and Larry Winston Collins features a combination of photography and block prints providing an educational walk through Columbus' Black History.
- [Columbus Metropolitan Library](#) - Columbus will have a variety of events hosted by the Columbus Metropolitan Library throughout the city.

While we dedicate this month to celebrating Black history, it is crucial to understand that the acknowledgment and appreciation of these achievements should extend beyond the month. Instead, it marks the beginning of a continuous journey of learning and appreciation. As we shine a spotlight on the remarkable achievements of the Black community, let us collectively commit to promoting equality, understanding, and unity throughout the entire year.

The events in Columbus serve as a testament to the diverse ways we can engage in this celebration. For a comprehensive list of activities around Columbus, [click here](#).



NAVIGATING HEALTH DISPARITIES

IMPACTS ON THE BLACK COMMUNITY

February 1st marked the beginning of Black History Month, celebrating the significant contributions and achievements of Black people in the United States. Despite these accomplishments, Black Americans continue to face health and healthcare disparities that impact their overall well-being.

According to the [Pew Research Center](#), there's a mixed assessment of progress in improving health outcomes for Black people over the past 20 years. While [47% believe health outcomes have improved](#), 31% say they've stayed the same, and 20% think they've worsened. Concerns about personal healthcare experiences arise, with 55% reporting at least one negative experience, including advocating for proper care and experiencing less respect than other patients.

[Disparities in health outcomes](#) persist, exacerbated by COVID-19. Black Americans are more likely to develop certain conditions or face worse outcomes, often attributed to a combination of genetic, social, and economic factors known as social determinants of health (SDOHs). These include economic stability, education access, healthcare quality, neighborhood environment, and social/community context.

Systemic racism underlies these disparities, shaped by historical racist attitudes and policies. This theme pervades various health conditions among Black Americans, such as heart disease, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, sickle cell anemia, cancer, kidney disease, asthma, HIV/AIDS, and the impact of COVID-19.

Black Americans have [higher rates](#) of major risk factors for heart disease, including hypertension, obesity, diabetes, and smoking. While genetics and SDOHs may affect control over these factors, they are modifiable, presenting an opportunity to bridge the health gap.

To address these disparities, individuals can take proactive steps:

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Heart Disease:** Maintain a moderate weight, monitor blood pressure regularly, adopt heart-healthy habits, know family history, and utilize relevant resources.
- **Obesity:** Promote balanced eating habits, access to nutritious food, and engage in regular physical activity.
- **Diabetes:** Maintain a moderate weight, adopt a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and monitor blood sugar levels if diagnosed with diabetes.
- **High Blood Pressure:** Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, limit salt and alcohol intake, manage stress, and monitor blood pressure regularly.
- **Stroke:** Adopt heart-healthy habits, reduce salt intake, [quit smoking](#), be aware of stroke symptoms, and understand the higher risk in African Americans.
- **Sickle Cell Anemia:** Understand triggers, take recommended medications, stay updated on vaccinations, and seek culturally competent healthcare.
- **Cancer:** Screen as recommended, quit smoking, receive relevant vaccinations, and make lifestyle adjustments to reduce cancer risk.
- **Kidney Disease:** Consider eGFR testing, choose kidney-friendly diets, stay active, and seek early detection and treatment.
- **Asthma:** Avoid smoking and secondhand smoke, develop an action plan to keep symptoms under control, and explore asthma education programs.
- **HIV/AIDS:** HIV diagnosis rates are declining in most populations in the United States. However, the [CDC](#) reported that new diagnoses increased from 2014 to 2018 in Black men who have sex with men (MSM) ages 25 to 34. Use protection, consider PreP if you're at risk of HIV exposure, and adhere to treatment plans.
- **COVID-19:** Stay updated on vaccinations, consider mask-wearing in indoor group settings, manage underlying conditions, and be informed about the impact on Black communities.

As a member of the Franklin County Cooperative, you have access to a range of confidential and free resources designed to support your well-being in various aspects of your daily life. This comprehensive support includes private consultations with Franklin County's dedicated [Health Engagement Nurses](#),

Therese Lentz and Carmen Long. They are available to assist you in navigating chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, asthma, or help you find a healthcare provider nearby.

Additionally, you can benefit from cancer support services provided by [CancerBridge](#), a confidential navigation service offered by experts from The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center - James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute (OSUCCC - James). This resource is tailored to provide assistance and guidance in dealing with cancer-related concerns.



TAXES FOR BEGINNERS

TOP 10 MUST-KNOW TERMS FROM ENRICH

Navigating the complexities of the U.S. tax system can be a daunting task. However, there is no need to approach your taxes with fear. By equipping yourself with some basic knowledge from Enrich, you'll have the tools to better understand and manage your tax obligations.

- 1. Filing Status:** Filing status is a categorization that the IRS uses to determine a variety of tax-related factors. These include your filing requirements, standard deduction, qualification for certain tax credits, and your total tax. Your filing status is determined with certain information like your marital status and number of dependents. The different categories of filing status include Single, Married Filing Jointly, Married Filing Separately, Head of Household, and Qualifying Widow(er).
- 2. Dependent:** A qualifying child or relative of a taxpayer, subject to IRS tests considering relationship, age, and financial support.
- 3. Deductions (Standard and Itemized):** Deductions reduce the amount of your income that will be subject to tax. This means that deductions can help lower the amount of tax that you'll pay. The

standard deduction is a set amount based on your filing status. Itemized deductions can be taken for things like state and local taxes paid, home mortgage interest paid, unreimbursed medical and dental expenses, and charitable gifts. Taxpayers can choose to either take the standard deduction or itemize their deductions—whichever will give them the biggest tax benefit.

- 4. Credits:** Tax credits subtract directly from total taxes, providing a dollar-for-dollar reduction in tax liability. Examples include child care, education, and clean energy credits, which can be refundable or nonrefundable.
- 5. Adjusted Gross Income (AGI):** AGI is your total income from all sources, such as salary, wages and tips, interest and dividends, Social Security benefits subject to tax, and capital gains. Your AGI helps determine your eligibility for different deductions and credits.
- 6. Taxable Income:** Your taxable income is the amount on which your total tax is calculated. Taxable income is calculated by subtracting either the standard deduction or itemized deductions from your AGI.
- 7. Total Tax:** Your total tax is a calculation based on your taxable income and the tax bracket in which that income falls. The total tax also varies by filing status.
- 8. Tax Bracket:** A range of income subject to a specific tax rate, varying by filing status and updated annually for inflation.
- 9. Withholding:** Taxes withheld by employers or entities when income is earned, affecting potential tax refunds or amounts owed to the IRS.
- 10. Progressive Tax System:** The U.S. tax system, where tax rates increase with income, reflected in [annual IRS tax brackets](#).

Approach tax season this year with confidence. Monday, Jan. 29 was the official start date of tax season with returns to be filed by the April 15th tax deadline. [MetLife Legal Plan](#) has partnered with TurboTax® to offer tax preparation and filing services to members enrolled in the benefit. Prepare and file one individual or joint federal and state tax return with any TurboTax "Do It Yourself" online product at no additional cost. If you are not enrolled in the legal plan, [file free through the IRS](#).

For more financial tips or 1:1 financial coaching, access Enrich by logging into [fccThriveOn.com](#) and click on the Wellness Hub tab at the top of the home screen.

ATTEND AN UPCOMING WEBINAR

Join us every month for a series of engaging educational webinars brought to you by Franklin County Cooperative and ThriveOn, featuring a diverse range of topics including nutrition, financial support, health-related discussions, and much more from our trusted vendors.



CancerBridge

2024 Support Series: What you Need to Know About Multi-Cancer Detection Tests

Thursday, February 15 at 11am

Currently, there is growing enthusiasm for the possibility that you could have a special type of blood screening test to help detect various kinds of cancer. This presentation will describe what this kind of testing actually does and the currently understood pros and cons to this kind of testing.

[REGISTER NOW >](#)

2024 Self Care Series: Creating Space for Self-Care

Thursday, February 22 at 11am

Define "self-care" for yourself and explore ways to create more time and energy for the things that replenish and sustain you.

[REGISTER NOW >](#)

Maven

Maven Moments: Self-advocacy throughout your reproductive health journey

Tuesday, February 27 at 12pm

Join our Maven expert as we explore empowering strategies to navigate the intricacies of reproductive wellbeing. From informed decision-making to assertive communication, discover the keys to taking charge of your health narrative.

[REGISTER NOW >](#)

WeightWatchers

Momentum: The secret to maintaining your healthy habits

Thursday, February 29 at 1pm

This webinar will introduce a new way to think about making changes: rather than relying on motivation, we should focus on building momentum. Join WeightWatchers to learn more!

[REGISTER NOW >](#)

FEBRUARY WEBINARS

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Your Health and Wellness Program