

NAACP

"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane." Martin Luther King Jr.

Black Maternal Mortality: Pregnancy and childbirth rates of death inexplicably high

Rates of maternal mortality in the US are among the highest in the world's developed economies. African-American-Texan mortality rates are nearly double those already high rates in the US. A joint report by a state task force found although black mothers accounted for 11.4% of all Texas births in 2011 and 2012, they accounted for 28.8% of pregnancy related deaths. Doctors and researchers are struggling to make sense of the rising numbers in Texas. Problems such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity and lack of prenatal care are noted to be risk factors for maternal death. Texas also has very high numbers of uninsured women. Texas has cut funding to women's health programs that support family planning, screening for diabetes, hypertension and cervical cancer.

Meet Tehesha Stegall, Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)

Tell us about your background and education: I was born and raised in Fitchburg Massachusetts in an extended family household with cousins, other generations and many other relatives. After graduating high school I attended Liberty



Screen time related to poor health outcomes

Too much screen time has been linked to childhood obesity, irregular sleep, behavioral problems and impaired academic performance. According to the website blackhealthmatters.com, children less than 2 years old should not be allowed any screen time. Older children should be limited to 1-2 hours a day. Suggestions for parents:

- Eliminate background TV.
- Get TVs and computers out of the bedroom. Increases in irregular sleep patterns have been noted when children have TVs or computers in the bedroom
- Don't eat in front of the TV.
- Plan what your child views.
- Preview games and apps.

Kids with greater than two hours a day of TV or computer time are linked with an increased risk of attention problems. Children with TVs in their rooms tend to worse on tests than those who don't. Playing violent video games may be connected to kids becoming desensitized to violence as well as having less time for creative and active play.

University for a while, then a satellite campus of Lincoln University (a historically black university) where I earned an associate degree of nursing in 2005, a Bachelor of Science in nursing from Cox College in 2011 and then a Masters of Nursing Science from MSU in 2014.

What brought you to nursing? My aunt Suzanne was a Certified Nurses Assistant (CNA) and encouraged me to be a nurse. She was a role model for me always stressing the importance of education. In some ways, I am carrying the dreams of the family.

Tell us about your family: I live with my husband Macque and my daughter Journey. My mom and sister also live in Springfield. Things are quiet at my house, sometimes I miss the activity and closeness of a large household.

How is it working as an FNP at Jordan Valley? I love what Jordan Valley stands for. We are attempting to meet the needs of people that have no insurance or are underinsured. We offer family medicine, pediatric medicine, psychological help, women's health, dental services and even optometry. In my practice I may see patients who are babies or up to 96 years old. The hardest part of my job is managing multiple illnesses, complex disease processes with a limited amount of resources for each patient.

Tell us about the challenges you face and how you overcome them: Since Springfield is predominantly white, some people may not be used to a black health care provider. I believe in a partnership approach with patients, giving them information and options and letting them decide what approach to the problem is best. Helping black people understand health problems is made easier because it is easier for them to identify with me. Although Springfield is only about 3% black, my patient cohort is about 11% black.

What advice do you have for young people? Be persistent! You WILL encounter obstacles along your path. Use those obstacles as a chance to "re-route" (In my journey I have definitely taken the scenic route). Believe in yourself but be willing to lean on others. Surround yourself with positive people, people that buy into your dreams and will encourage you. Having a higher power (God in my case) to help when things are tough. RUN, don't walk to get your education. Be excited about learning.