



# Baptist General Convention of Virginia

HEALTH EQUITY

TOOLKIT





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# BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF VIRGINIA

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Dear BGC Family:

Greetings to you with Jesus' joy!

As we continue to navigate through these challenging times, it is essential that we prioritize our health and well-being. One way to do this is by ensuring we are up to date on our vaccinations.

As you may know, vaccines are a crucial tool in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. They are a safe and effective way to prevent illness and have been proven to save lives. This is especially important in our current climate as we continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic. I encourage all of you to get vaccinated and discuss any concerns or questions with your healthcare provider.

It is also important that we address issues of health equity in the African American community. Unfortunately, there are disparities in access to healthcare, education, and resources, which have led to lower vaccination rates and poorer health outcomes for our community. There is also a long-standing history of mistrust between the African American community and the healthcare system. However, it is crucial that we work to address these issues and ensure that everyone has equal access to the healthcare services they need, including vaccinations.

It has been our mission as the Baptist General Convention of Virginia to promote health equity and to work towards eliminating the disparities that exist in our communities. We will continue to achieve this through education, advocacy, and outreach efforts. Our goal is for everyone to have an equal opportunity to live a healthy life.

Let us take proactive steps to prioritize our health and to advocate for health equity in our community. Together, we can create a brighter and healthier future for all.

May God forever bless you and keep you in God's care.

For Kingdom of GOD, We Are,

*M. P. Bunting*

Rev. Milton P. Bunting  
President

*Leo Whitaker*

Dr. Leo Whitaker  
Executive Minister

We are BGC...Bringing People Together, Growing Churches, and Changing Communities!

~ Act 1:8; Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 10:13-16



## **Vaccinate for Others**

The idea of caring for others extends across all religious traditions; it centers how Christians approach one another. When Jesus was challenged by an expert of the law asking him of the greatest commandment, Jesus answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37 – 40 NIV). When we consider how we worship God, we classify the spirit of these two commandments as central to our thinking, living, and doing. Our love for God extends beyond our vertical relationship with the Godhead and goes into our horizontal relationships with one another.

God assesses our love for God not just on how we sing, pray, preach, teach, and worship, but more on how we treat one another. Jesus’ words point to a moral push for us to regard the humanity of one another as much as we regard our own. What some religious traditions call “The Golden Rule” is what we call the foundation of caring for one another. Many people push against the idea of vaccinations for misleading reasons, but the critical thing about vaccinations is that even if one rejects the idea of vaccination for themselves, at least vaccinate to protect others. It is a moral obligation, as noted in Matthew 22:39, to care for others as we would ourselves. God is calling us to consider the health and well-being of others in how we live and love. I affirm the message here that our moral obligation in executing Matthew 22:39 is threefold. First, we must affirm the love we have for ourselves in honoring the presence of God in our own bodies. This love is a mandate to understand Matthew 27:39. Second, we must affirm the love we have for others in how we view their humanity. Loving one another is more than a verbal gesture and greater than a confessed belief; it must be a lived action and move into a practiced belief. Our love for one another is how we both recognize and honor their humanity. We protect others from all that could harm them, even if that harm is within ourselves. Third, we must affirm the love we have for God in how we love ourselves and love others. God calls us to a greater space of love and that love is a moral mandate for us to care for one another by ensuring we #VaccinateForOthers.

In Service,

*Linwood T. Blizzard, II*

Rev. Dr. Linwood T. Blizzard, II  
Baptist General Convention of Virginia, Inc.  
Coordinator of Social Justice and Health Equity

# Health Inequities in the Black Community

## More Likely to be Uninsured

Reduced access to medical care increases the likelihood of a person having underlying untreated conditions. Also, not having a primary care physician you trust means you may not go to ER in time.

## Racism in Healthcare

Unfortunately, there exists unconscious bias in healthcare that inclines all doctors towards undertreating Black patients.

## Pre-Existing Conditions

“Weathering”, a concept first introduced by Arline Geronimus, explains that the constant stress of living in an unjust world takes a physical toll on people. This, along with lifestyle factors, explains why obesity, high blood pressure, asthma, diabetes, and stroke disproportionately impact Black communities. Notably, these conditions make you particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 hospitalization and death.

## Environment – Air Pollution

We are more likely to live in areas with high air pollution levels and this causes higher susceptibility to COVID-19.

## Vaccine Hesitancy

Reluctance, stemming from historically justifiable distrust of our healthcare system, the government, the media, and of people in general, caused slower and delayed vaccination uptake rates.

## Black Elders (Senior citizens)

More than 2x as likely as whites to suffer from Alzheimer's and other kinds of dementia. Also, our elders are less likely to have their chronic illness sufficiently managed than their white counterparts and therefore are more likely to die from chronic illness



## Black children

Black children are more likely to be food insecure, have higher amounts of lead in their blood, and have higher rates of asthma. Black children also die more frequently in infancy and are more likely to die in surgery..



**“When America sneezes, the Black community gets pneumonia.”**

# Health Inequities of Black Men

The health of Black men continues to be worse than that of nearly all other groups in the United States.

On average, Black men die more than 7 years earlier than do US women of all races, and black men die younger than all other groups of men, except Native Americans.



## Leading causes of death:

1. **Heart disease**
2. **Cancer**
3. **Respiratory diseases**
4. **Stroke**
5. **HOMICIDE\***
6. **Diabetes**
7. **Kidney disease**
8. **HIV/AIDS\*\***



**\*The only race by gender group for which homicide is a top-five cause of death is for Black males between the ages of 15 and 44!**

**\*\*AIDS is seven times more prevalent in black men than in white men, and black men are more than nine times more likely to die from AIDS and HIV-related illness.**



Gilbert KL, Ray R, Siddiqi A, Shetty S, Baker EA, Elder K, Griffith DM. Visible and Invisible Trends in Black Men's Health: Pitfalls and Promises for Addressing Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Inequities in Health. *Annu Rev Public Health*. 2016;37:295-311.

# Health Inequities of Black Women

Black women are more likely than other racial and ethnic groups to die from cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke, lupus, and several cancers.



## Reproductive health

- Black women are 3X more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than White women.

## Middle Age

- 2X more likely than white women to develop diabetes over age 55 or to have uncontrolled blood pressure
- At risk of Heart disease and stroke



## Queen-age (Seniors)

- Higher incidence of Alzheimer's disease

Studies have shown that high levels of stress due to socioeconomic status (gender and racial discrimination) and community violence can contribute to the early onset of health problems and partially explains high maternal death rates.

**Plus, the HIV infection rate among Black women is the highest compared to women of all other races and ethnicities.**

Sources:

<https://aidsvu.org/resources/deeper-look-hiv-in-black-communities/>

[Black Maternal Health and Disparities in Birth Outcomes” OFF THE CHARTS podcast, Examining the health equity emergency 7/4/22](#)

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/features/maternal-mortality/index.html>



# Health Inequities of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBTQ+) Individuals

- Higher rates of cancer, with emphasis on human papilloma virus infection (HPV) and cervical cancer, for lesbian and bisexual women
- Higher incidence of HIV/AIDS in gay and bisexual men
- Higher rates of suicide and suicidal thoughts
- Greater presence of eating disorders and substance abuse
- Less likely to have health insurance
- More likely to use the Emergency Room or delay care
- LGBT people are more frequently the targets of stigma, discrimination, and violence
- Experience a three to four time higher rate of violence that requires medical care



Source: <https://www.cigna.com/health-care-providers/resources/lgbt-disparities>





## Baptist General Convention of Virginia, Inc. Physical Health Scorecard

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Score for Question
Time in physical activity <b>per week</b>	Less than 30 minutes	At least 30 minutes but less than 1 hour	At least 1 hour but less than 1.5 hours	At least 1.5 hours but less than 2 hours	More than 2 hours	
Visiting the doctor at each year for primary or preventative care	Not Likely	Somewhat Not Likely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	
Getting the latest vaccinations for COVID-19 and the Flu	Not Likely	Somewhat Not Likely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	
Willingness to get screenings appropriate for your age and gender (mammogram, prostate, etc.)	Not Likely	Somewhat Not Likely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	
Frequency of Smoking in the past 2 months	More than 10 cigarettes per day	5 to 9 cigarettes per day	2 to 4 cigarettes per day	1 cigarette per day	No smoking	
How would you classify your diet?	Mostly Unhealthy	Somewhat Unhealthy	Neutral	Somewhat Healthy	Mostly Healthy	
<b>Total</b>						

### Instructions

1. Answer the questions with complete honesty to self. When you select your choice, place the corresponding score in the box to the right.
2. After answering all questions, please add up all of the values to determine your total score and see considerations below.

**Score of 23 – 30:** Your healthy lifestyle will have long-term benefits. It may not be perfect, but you should strive to remain consistent in the work you are doing.

**Score of 14 – 22:** Your somewhat healthy lifestyle has space for improvements. Your health risks are moderate, but the ability to get to a healthy lifestyle requires increasing the frequency of your healthy habits.

**Score of 6 – 13:** Your lifestyle is not the healthiest. You are at risk for future health challenges or are experiencing health challenges presently. Consider your lower scores and create an action plan to increase those first to get to a somewhat healthy lifestyle.

Disclaimer: Use of this form is solely informational to improve lifestyle. For more information, please email [equity@bgcva.org](mailto:equity@bgcva.org).



## Baptist General Convention of Virginia, Inc. Mental Health Scorecard

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Score for question
Average amount of sleep per night	Less than 4 hours or more than 10 hours	About 5 hours	About 6 hours	About 7 hours	8-10 hours	
Frequency of using a substance (food, nicotine, alcohol, prescribed or non-prescribed medications) to cope with overwhelming emotions (such as anger, frustration, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, regret).	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at All	
Frequency of feeling socially isolated or lonely	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at All	
Willingness to forgive myself and others for making mistakes, feeling pain, guilt or other valid emotions	Not at all	Sometimes	Neutral	Usually	Always	
Feeling the need to escape everything that is going on by detaching yourself from others or situations	Often	Sometimes	Neutral	Rarely	Not at all	
Likelihood to access resources on mental health?	Not at all	Somewhat Likely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely	

### Instructions

1. Answer the questions with complete honesty to yourself. When you select your choice, place the corresponding score in the box to the right.
2. After answering all questions, please add up all of the values to determine your total score and see considerations below.

**Score of 23 – 30:** Your mental health is generally good. Keep doing what you're doing and consult a mental health professional if anything changes.

**Score of 14 – 22:** Your mental health is fair/average. Though not experiencing a crisis, continue to monitor your habits and improve those habits.

**Score of 6 – 13:** You are experiencing some difficulties. Please seek guidance on how to improve your overall mental health.

Disclaimer: Use of this form is solely informational to improve lifestyle. For more information, please email equity@bgcva.org.



## Baptist General Convention of Virginia, Inc. Life-Planning Scorecard

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Score for Question
An Advanced Care Plan	Has Not Started or considered	In the Early Stages	In-Progress	Near Completion	Completed	
A Will or Trust in place	Has Not Started or considered	In the Early Stages	In-Progress	Near Completion	Completed	
A comprehensive list of your assets	Has Not Started or considered	In the Early Stages	In-Progress	Near Completion	Completed	
A plan for long-term care	Has Not Started or considered	In the Early Stages	In-Progress	Near Completion	Completed	
Written communication of funeral and burial plans	Has Not Started or considered	In the Early Stages	In-Progress	Near Completion	Completed	
Creation of an obituary and/or death notice	Has Not Started or considered	In the Early Stages	In-Progress	Near Completion	Completed	
<b>Total</b>						

### Instructions

1. Answer the questions with complete honesty to self. When you select your choice, place the corresponding score in the box to the right.
2. After answering all questions, please add up all of the values to determine your total score and see considerations below.

**Score of 23 – 30:** You have a good plan in place and have thought about what is needed. Be sure to continue to communicate these plans to members of your family.

**Score of 14 – 22:** You have thoughts about the plans and have begun working. Determine what is necessary to bring the plans to completion. Bring members of your family into the process as you build the plans both to build the plans and solicit input. They will help you bring it to completion.

**Score of 6 – 13:** You may or may not have thought about making end of life plans or have just begun the process. It may seem overwhelming to think about death, but it is best to plan for this phase of our life right now. Speak with your family about this to let them know you are thinking about planning these areas. It is important to have plans made now rather than having your family make decisions for you rather than knowing what you desire.

Disclaimer: Use of this form is solely informational to improve lifestyle. For more information, please email [equity@bgcva.org](mailto:equity@bgcva.org).

# Health Knowledge for You

Before You Share...

## GIVE IT THE SIDE-EYE

### Ask these questions :

1. Is the conversation full OR is one side completely omitted?
2. What techniques are used to convey the message?
3. Do they want a specific action from you?



WHY THIS MESSAGE?

WHO CREATED THIS MESSAGE?

IS IT TRIGGERING or DO THEY USE SHOCK TACTICS?

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

WHAT IS INCLUDED and WHAT IS MISSING?

### Take these 4 Actions:

1. **Lateral reading**- Open multiple tabs, check sources mentioned in the article, use Google
2. **Reverse Image Searching** – use Google’s image option to see where the photo originated, including 1st use.
3. **Reading upstream**: actively searching for the date of publication, reading past the headline, finding original source
4. **Exercise Click Restraint** – Don’t click indiscriminately; hesitate and think first



Truth Check is an e-course and campaign of The Center for Black Health & Equity.

# *The Bridge Access Program*

## **What is it?**

The Bridge Access Program is program from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) that provides COVID-19 vaccines free of charge to adults without health insurance coverage or whose coverage does not cover all costs. No-cost COVID-19 vaccines will be available until December 31, 2024.

## **How does it work?**

- Only adults 18 years and older who are uninsured or whose insurance does not cover the full cost of the vaccine are eligible for the Bridge Access Program, but children are covered by the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program.
- The Bridge Access Program was created to remove barriers to receiving COVID-19 vaccines. Therefore, there is no enrollment process nor any burden to prove eligibility put on the person requesting the vaccine. Vaccine providers will simply ask whether you have insurance.
- Visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find locations that are participating in the Bridge Access Program. Walgreens and CVS are participating, for example.
- All CDC-recommended COVID-19 vaccines will be covered. Moderna, Pfizer and Novavax.

## **What happens after December 31, 2024?**

President Biden's Vaccines for Adults (VFA) program was proposed in the FY 2023 and 2024 Presidential Budget and would be a long-term solution to ensure all adults have access to recommended vaccinations, at no cost to them.

# **#VaccinateForOthers**

# Health Knowledge for Others

Many think of an influencer as being a celebrity or superstar, but an **EVERYDAY INFLUENCER** can also inform, influence, and persuade.

**YOU ARE AN EVERYDAY INFLUENCER!**



*To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.*

*1 Corinthians 9:22-23 NIV*



## Talking to Others about Health

- **Present vaccination, or the desired health behavior, as the norm**
- **Practice Active Listening**
- **Give your undivided attention**
- **Put your audience at ease**
- **Ask questions, meet them where they are, allow them to voice their concerns**
- **Debunk myths and give the facts**



Source: How to talk to vaccine doubters: 5 tips for parent 'ambassadors', JANUARY 22, 2022 7:45 AM ET ,By [Anya Kamenetz](https://www.npr.org/) <https://www.npr.org/>

# Knowing Your Power

**POWER is “The ability to act; the ability to make a difference.”**

**Your ability to influence others is your power. You make change by knowing your power. You have more than you may realize.**

***You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)***

- God has all the power
- God has given you more power than you realize
- God has given you grace and protection to go out into the world and be agents of change.

**“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.” - Alice Walker**

- Building power is a decision.
- No one builds power by accident.
- Power is not complicated.

**“Power concedes nothing without a Demand” - Frederick Douglass**

Power in the public arena means to have a vision for the way you want the world to operate, and to have the ability to make that vision real.

Our vision is of Health Equity and Social Justice for All.





## Partnering Organizations



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