Health Disparities: Be aware and take ACTION!

- Have you ever been kept waiting for more than two hours at a clinic or doctor’s office?
- Have you ever been told that there was no translator at the clinic or hospital?
- Have you ever felt that your health care provider was treating you with disrespect?
- Have you ever been referred to a clinic to see a specialist instead of being referred to a specialist in his private office?

Chances are, you answered yes to one or more of these questions. These are examples of health disparities, which are differences in the way people of color and whites are given health care. Health disparities mean that people of color live sicker and die younger than they should. People of color do not always get high quality health care.

Don’t let health disparity affect your RIGHT to live a long, healthy life. Educate yourself about these disparities and take control of your health!
What can you do in your neighborhood?

- Talk to your neighborhood bodega and grocery store owners. Are they offering healthy options for your kids when they get out of school? Do they have low-fat milk, fruits and vegetables? Ask them to stock these items.

- Make smarter choices in restaurants. Choose grilled instead of fried, veggies over fries and don’t forget to control your portion sizes.

- Does your school have healthy lunch options? Give children healthy snacks like carrots, yogurt, and fruit. Ask your school for the recommended snack list and choose only items from the list.

- Make physical activity a priority for your family and community:
  * Organize a walking group with your church
  * Have your children play outside instead of watching television
  * Get off the bus or subway one stop earlier and walk
  * Go for a walk with your spouse or child after dinner
  * Take the stairs instead of the elevator

- Be an advocate for health equality. Talk to your pastor, your city council member and other elected officials.

What can you do in your doctor’s office?

- Schedule regular appointments with a doctor

- Be Prepared! Make use of limited time with the doctor by writing down questions beforehand, making a list of symptoms you have, and medications you are currently taking.

- Speak up! Tell your doctor your worries and questions. Do not be shy or afraid.

- Do not withhold information

- Bring someone with you for support, and to remind you of questions, and other things you might forget, while you are with the doctor.

- After each visit, follow up with prescription renewals, and schedule your next appointment