

# Health Disparities Advisory Meeting |MINUTES

August 22, 2024, | 1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. | Location: Microsoft Teams

Meeting called by:	Division of Health Disparities Elimination	Approximately: 49 ppl.
Type of meeting:	Weekly Health Disparities Advisory Group Meeting	
Facilitator:	LaShan Dixon Office of Faith-Based and Community Engagement	

**Motivational Quote:** (LaShan Dixon) This week’s inspirational quote “Let’s stop, think, and remember, you can heal and still hurt. You can love and not judge, and you can have tough love and still be there.” – Samone Frazier

## (LaShan Dixon)

- **Contact Lens Health Week** is observed the third week of August. Today, eye health and our ability to see are greatly taken for granted; due to the rise in technology and medical science which means that most people should have the use of their eyes until the day they die. Contact lenses is a call to action for everyone who need assistance.

The creation of contact lenses is widely used and the need to draw attention to the proper use of and care for contact lenses is essential. Contact lenses come with two very important details: a replacement schedule, and a wear schedule. The most advanced contact lenses can be worn for a maximum of 30 days and nights, then they need to be replaced with fresh lenses. The nature of the lenses makes it that little oxygen penetrates the lens, but while wearing contact lenses over extended periods of time can cause further deterioration of your vision. If you’re interested in contacts, you should schedule an appointment with an [eye care specialist](#), please click the link in the chat.

- **National Eye Exam Month** has been observed since 1989, it’s a reminder to prioritize your vision and schedule routine examinations to catch potential issues early on. Did you know regularly scheduled eye exams can help doctors identify other health issues in their early stages? What is an eye exam? An eye exam is a thorough evaluation of the health and function of the eyes. An optometrist can spot, early onset signs of diabetes, high blood pressure, glaucoma, and high cholesterol. It’s important to understand the connection between your eye health to your overall health, and how your quality of life is too important to be ignored.

According to a survey by the American Optometric Association (AOA), one-third of respondents don’t know how to take care of their eyes and only 54 percent get an annual comprehensive eye exam. To maintain a healthy vision, adult ages 18 to 60 should have a thorough eye exam at least every two years, children under 18 and adults over the age of 61 should have annual exams. Preventive care can go a long way toward protecting your vision at any age. Below are tips you can follow to help you keep your eyes healthy, such as:

- Get regular eye exams.
- Maintain normal blood pressure.
- Eat healthy foods such as dark leafy greens and fish.
- Wear sunglasses that block ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays.
- Wear protective gear during sports, at work and when you do household projects.

If you would like more information about the national eye exam month or like to schedule an appointment near you, please click the link in the chat: [www.manneye.com](http://www.manneye.com).

## TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

**Focus:** Understanding Sickle Cell Disease, Your Role in Making a Difference

**Presenter:** Clif Redish, Director, Community Relations & Outreach

**Summary:** What is sickle cell? Sickle cell is a group of inherited red blood cells, that develops in a sickle shape which dies early, leading to a chronic shortage. The sickle cells can clog the small blood cells which causes pain and serious health issues such as infections, chest pain and/or childhood stroke. Nearly 100,000 Americans, live with Sickle Cell disease (SCD), and more than 90% are Black / African American affected at birth.

SCD, is caused by defective gene called sickle gene, and those with the disease receive the sickle cell gene from both parents. There are those born with one sickle gene which leads them to have the sickle cell trait and that person can pass the defective gene onto their children.

People living with sickle cell disease face challenges such as chronic pain, frequent visits to the hospital and a significant impact on their quality of life and early symptoms, or detection of SCD may cause:

- painful swelling of the hands and feet
- fatigue and/or anemia
- yellowish color of the skin or
- whites of the eyes can become yellow.

The only cure for SCD is bone marrow or stem cell transplantation and both are very risky and have very serious side effects, these are only used in children with severe cases of SCD. Treatments that can prolong life and help relieve symptoms are:

- pain relievers for chronic pain.
- childhood vaccinations to prevent pain.
- blood transfusions for severe anemia and;
- antibiotics to prevent infections.

Diverse blood donors are needed, especially African American blood donors, they can provide a better health outcome for those fighting SCD and their blood cells are the most compatible for SCD patients. Please join us in fighting SCD by taking time to donate blood, your one donation can go along way and impact many lives. You can donate to Blood Assurance, which was founded in 1972, they have (1) local blood bank, (15) centers, (19) bloodmobiles and they serve in (5) states. To schedule an appointment please call **800.962.0628**, or you may go online at [www.bloodassurance.org/schedule](http://www.bloodassurance.org/schedule) or you can get more information at [www.bloodassurance.org/sickle-cell](http://www.bloodassurance.org/sickle-cell). Contact, Clif Redish Director, Community Relations and Outreach for Blood Assurance his email address [clifredish@bloodassurance.org](mailto:clifredish@bloodassurance.org) and phone number (423) 582-8752.

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### **Member Comments:** Announcements and Upcoming Events

- Recent reports from the Shelby County Health Department show a 36% rise in HIV rates in the county and

a 100% increase in syphilis rates since 2018. The most affected demographic was in people from ages 14-35, with an even sharper increase among those aged 15-19. There are fears that the new law requiring parental consent for any kind of health care may be keeping teens from seeking care.

**Resources mentioned during call:**

- TN Charitable Care Network is looking for organizations that would be interested in connecting with our members by exhibiting at our upcoming Annual Conference September 3 – 5. If you need more information, please click the link <https://www.tccnetwork.org/2024-sponsors-and-exhibitors-application.html>
- Breaking the SSickle Cell Cycle, Community Health Fair & 5K Walk/Run Event, on **Saturday, September 7, 2024, from 9:00AM -12:00PM** held at Shelby Park – Riverview Shelter
- If you need more information, please visit our website at [www.healthdisparitiestn.com](http://www.healthdisparitiestn.com).

**Chat Box – links / website / events:**

- Please get your students immunized, please click the link and see the rules and requirements. <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/immunization-program/ip/immunization-requirements.html>
  - Purpose Point Community Health, Breath Easy Lung Screening on **Saturday, September 7, 2024**, at 2800 N. Chamberlain Avenue, Chattanooga, TN 37406. Please call 423.541.5490 for more information.
  - Together Nashville Refugee Conference **September 21, 2024, at 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM** at Woodmont Hills Church, 3710 Franklin Pike, Nashville, TN 37204 - Light breakfast, coffee, snacks, lunch, and access to all exhibits are included in the \$25 cost of the conference. <https://onlytogethernashville.com/event.html>
  - This event will provide resources, education, and fun for the entire family, please come out and attend the Marion County Community Health Expo – **Saturday, September 28, 2024, from 9AM – 1PM CST** at Courthouse Square, Jasper, TN 37347
  - If you need more information, please visit our website at [www.healthdisparitiestn.com](http://www.healthdisparitiestn.com).
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**Next Meeting: September 5, 2024, from 1pm-2pm via Microsoft Teams.**

**Microsoft Teams Meeting details are as follows:**

**Join on your computer or mobile app.**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

**Or call in (audio only)**

[+1 629-209-4396, 641975577#](tel:+16292094396) United States, Nashville  
Phone Conference ID: 641 975 577#



**LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS**

**INTERNATIONAL  
OVERDOSE  
AWARENESS DAY**

**SATURDAY  
AUGUST 31, 2024  
5:30-7:30PM**

**MEMORIAL TRIBUTE  
& CANDLELIGHT VIGIL**

**222 West Seventh Street  
Columbia, TN**

*Special Thanks to:*

**FRESH START Recovery Church  
& First United Methodist Church**

