

COMMUNITY  
**HEALTH EQUITY**  
ALLIANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 7/29/2022

CONTACT: Jewell H Gooding, Silence the Shame Executive Director [jg@silencetheshame.com](mailto:jg@silencetheshame.com)

**GEORGIA ADVOCATES CONVENE TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH FOR BLACK ADULTS**

*July is **Bebe Moore Campbell** National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month*

*The Community Health Equity Alliance seeks to reduce health disparities and improve access to mental health services for Black communities*

**Georgia** – In May 2008, the US House of Representatives announced July as **Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month** (referred to also as BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month). This month brings awareness to the unique struggles that underrepresented groups face regarding mental illness in the United States. Unfortunately, due to historic systemic disparities, Black Americans are likely to have less access to culturally appropriate care and are more likely to receive poorer quality care when treated.<sup>1,2</sup> In 2021, Georgia ranked 10th in the adult prevalence of mental illness, 47th in mental health workforce availability, 48th in adults with mental illness who did not receive treatment, and 51st in access to care.<sup>3</sup> In response to these challenges, the **Community Health Equity Alliance** was established by Janssen Neuroscience to prioritize community-informed solutions to effectively and meaningfully advance serious mental illness (SMI) care for Black adults based on community needs.

The Community Health Equity Alliance in Georgia is a collaboration of mental health stakeholders, including [Silence the Shame](#), [Association of Black Health Systems Pharmacists \(ABHSP\) Foundation](#), [Black Psychiatrists of America](#), [Mental Health America of Georgia](#), [NAMI Georgia](#), [Satcher Health Leadership Institute](#), and Janssen Neuroscience, who is:

- Hosting convenings with community leaders to address the healthcare inequities of urban and rural counties
- Sharing pharmacy-based resources foster equitable mental health practices and improve treatment adherence and therapeutic management.
- Advancing policies that address state equity solutions in mental health guidance to networks, including advancing the role of Black pharmacists as a core care team equity partners

Since December 2021, the Community Health Equity Alliance in Georgia has engaged with over 50 organizations throughout Georgia to discuss racial health disparities and expand the continuum of care to include community leaders, like faith leaders and local pharmacists. For example, the ABHSP Foundation facilitated a [Role of Pharmacist as a Mental Health Partner presentation](#) to discuss the pharmacy's role in the mental health continuum of care. In addition, the Community Health Equity Alliance in Georgia hosted a [Fireside Chat Podcast](#) with Silence the Shame Founder and CEO Shanti Das and Pastor Eddie Bridgeman, during which they discussed strategies to reduce mental health stigma, including how faith communities can help.

For Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, we encourage individuals with mental illness, community members, and decision-makers to get involved, get educated, and learn strategies to reduce health disparities and improve access in Black and Brown communities. For more information on the Community Health Equity Alliance in Georgia, contact Jewell H Gooding at [jg@silencetheshame.com](mailto:jg@silencetheshame.com).

<sup>1</sup> Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. 2019 National Healthcare Quality & Disparities Report. Accessed February 2022. <https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/research/findings/nhqdr/2019qdr.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Mental Health Disparities: African Americans. Accessed February 18, 2022. <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/cultural-competency/education/mental-health-facts>

<sup>3</sup> Mental Health America. 2021 The State of Mental Health in America. Accessed February 2022. <https://mhanational.org/issues/2021/mental-health-america-all-data>

## **About the Community Health Equity Alliance**

The Community Health Equity Alliance, established by Janssen Neuroscience, prioritizes community-informed solutions to meaningfully advance serious mental illness care based on community needs. By activating diverse community networks, the Community Health Equity Alliance seeks to increase mental health awareness, education, and pursuit of serious mental illness care by Black adults and caregivers; reduce racial bias and improve culturally appropriate care provided by healthcare professionals; and educate decision-makers on key issues impacting serious mental illness care, including disparities, criminal justice diversion, and crisis mitigation.

As part of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson, Janssen Neuroscience is supporting the mission of the Johnson & Johnson health equity initiative, [Our Race to Health Equity](#). This initiative aims to help close the racial health gap by supporting solutions that increase racial health equity and anchoring it into our business. The Community Health Equity Alliance is one of many ways in which Janssen is working to ensure that the color of your skin is not a determinant of access to care, quality of care, or health outcomes.

## **About the Association of Black Health-System Pharmacists (ABHP)**

The Association of Black Health-System Pharmacists (ABHP) is a non-profit organization. ABHP strives to represent black and minority health-system pharmacists and is dedicated to the growth and development of their pharmacy practice in healthcare facilities. The association provides up-to-date educational programs on minority health issues to help members improve their professional skills and the quality of care that they provide in their areas of pharmacy practice. ABHP serves as a liaison and facilitates communication with other pharmacy associations and organizations concerned with healthcare.

## **About the Black Psychiatrists of America**

The mission of the Black Psychiatrists of America is to address issues affecting the mental health of African people worldwide, with special emphasis on people of African descent in the Americas, and to provide a forum for continuing educations for those who provide psychiatric care to these underserved population groups.

## **About Mental Health America of Georgia**

Since its establishment over 40 years ago, Mental Health America of Georgia (MHA of GA) is a top education, training, and advocacy organization for mental health and substance use disorders. MHA of GA represents a growing movement of Georgians who promote mental wellness for the health and wellbeing of everyone in Georgia, emphasizing mental health as a critical component of a healthy lifestyle.

## **About National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Georgia**

NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. The mission of NAMI Georgia is to empower affiliates to create communities where all affected by mental illness find hope, help and acceptance through support, education and advocacy. Across the State of Georgia, hundreds of trained volunteer leaders and more than 18 local affiliates work together to provide education programs, support groups, presentations and trainings to a variety of communities and groups. NAMI Georgia programs are provided at no-cost to participants.

## **About Satcher Health Leadership Institute**

The Satcher Health Leadership Institute (SHLI) aims to be the leading transformational force for health equity in policy, leadership development and research. Rooted in the legacy of its founder, the 16th U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. David Satcher, SHLI's mission is to create systemic change at the intersection of policy and equity by focusing on three priority areas: the political determinants of health, health system transformation, and mental and behavioral health. In conjunction with key strategic partners, SHLI enhances leadership among diverse learners, conducts forward-thinking research on the drivers of health inequities and advances evidence-based policies, all in an effort to contribute to the achievement of health equity for all population groups.

## **About Silence the Shame**

Silence the Shame, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded by music executive veteran Atlanta, Georgia native Shanti Das, dedicated to eliminating mental health stigma, reducing health disparities, and improving suicide rates among vulnerable populations. Our mission is to empower and educate communities on mental health and wellness. We are committed to sustaining global programs to promote mental well-being using lived experiences, education, and strategic professional partnerships. In addition, we promote mental health and recovery awareness and education to increase access to behavioral health services and support for vulnerable populations.

## **About the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson**

At Janssen, we're creating a future where the disease is a thing of the past. We're the Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson, working tirelessly to make that future a reality for patients everywhere by fighting sickness with science, improving access with ingenuity, and healing hopelessness with heart. We focus on areas of medicine where we can make the biggest difference: Cardiovascular & Metabolism, Immunology, Infectious Diseases & Vaccines, Neuroscience, Oncology, and Pulmonary Hypertension.

Learn more at [www.janssen.com](http://www.janssen.com). Follow us at [www.twitter.com/JanssenUS](https://www.twitter.com/JanssenUS) and [www.twitter.com/JanssenGlobal](https://www.twitter.com/JanssenGlobal). Janssen Research & Development, LLC is part of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson.