

# Health Advocates Fight Death and Disease

African American Health Coalition embarks on new campaign to improve the health of local residents



Corliss McKeever, president of the African American Health Coalition, addresses a news conference on Tuesday to announce the receipt of a \$3 million grant to make life saving changes in the local African American community.  
PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The African American Health Coalition has received a \$3 million federal grant over 3 years to reduce death and disease in the black community.

African Americans die of preventable diseases more than any other population. The grant will allow the coalition to launch a major campaign to help reverse those statistics through education, advocacy and research.

Coalition President Corliss McKeever joined Donnie Griffin, the deputy director of the Oregon Department of Human Services and State Epidemiologist Dr. Mel Kron at a news conference Tuesday to announce details of the effort.

Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of African Americans in Oregon. In fact, an African American is twice as likely as a white American to die from a stroke and almost one and a half times as

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— Corliss McKeever, president of the African American Health Coalition

likely to die from a heart attack.

The major risk factors are overweight/obesity, physical inactivity, smoking, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Statistics show 80 percent of the African American population in Oregon lives in north and northeast Portland. That means reaching the targeted people for partici-

pation and tracking this new campaign and community action plan is highly achievable.

"This is a historical breakthrough in bettering the health of the African American community," said Corliss McKeever the President of the African American Health Coalition. "We know through education and interventions we can save lives and turn the statistics on this minority population around."

A community action plan is designed to link African Americans to preventive clinical services (hypertension, dyslipidemia and diabetes screening and management) and other resources (smoking cessation, mental health services) known to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

The coalition's goal for the African American community in Oregon is to become the healthiest in the nation.

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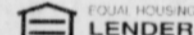
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