



COMMON
GROUND



African-American Male Summit
A Call to Action: Collaboration, Coordination, Consolidation
Preliminary Evidence

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Health and Human Services
Planning and Evaluation Division

Introduction and Purpose

Existence of racial discrimination is a fact that can never be erased from U.S. history. The widespread harm and injustice that resulted cannot be ignored nor should ever be forgotten. Civil rights legislation and judicial rulings such as *Brown vs. the Board of Education* are other historical legal markers reflecting a change in overall societal attitude towards greater consensus and understanding that racial discrimination shall not be tolerated.

While notable strides towards assuring civil rights equality among all citizens, regardless of the shade of his or her skin, have been achieved over the last forty years, disparities in health status, education levels, income, and other life quality-related indicators remain alarmingly evident to the present day. Variables and demographic characteristics shown to be associated with socioeconomic status appear to interact to play a role in these continued disparities. There are without a doubt several segments of the U.S. population that continue to be affected negatively by these disparities and are deserving of attention. A complete and accurate portrayal of all these groups, however, is beyond the scope of this report. For reasons to be subsequently stated further, African-American males are the subject of focus in this document.

African-American males are over-represented in the criminal and juvenile justice systems, experience higher rates of unemployment, and suffer from disproportionately higher levels of sickness and untimely death, compared to the overall population. Various citizen stakeholders and representatives have engaged in efforts to direct public attention towards understanding these issues with hopes to generate committed support towards organizing resources to design and implement successful solutions impacting the lives of African-American males and their families. The U.S. Congressional Joint Economic Committee held a hearing in March 8, 2007 to discuss the “growing crisis of joblessness for young African American men” and move towards obtaining better solutions to the problem (U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee, March 2007).

Joint Economic Committee Chairman Senator Schumer highlighted the difficulties faced by the African-American male population segment and urged that a national plan based upon programs with demonstrated success be developed and adopted (U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee, March 2007). Senator Schumer stated in his opening remarks: “The crisis is profound, persistent and perplexing. Both across the country and particularly in my home state of New York, far too many black men are facing difficulty finding and keeping work. The numbers are staggering and getting worse, particularly for young black men.” The Chairman provided the committee with the following statistics:

- “In 1999, 65% of black male high school dropouts in their 20's were jobless - in other words not looking or unable to find work - and by 2004, the share had grown to 72% jobless...This compares to 29% of white and 19% of Hispanic dropouts.”
- “In the inner cities, more than half of all black men do not finish high school.”
- “Even when you consider high school graduates, half of black men in their 20's were jobless in 2004.”
- “A black man with only a high school diploma has a 30 percent chance of having served time in prison by the time he turns thirty. Without a high school diploma, his likelihood of having been incarcerated jumps to 60 percent. In fact, a black male in his late twenties without a high school diploma is more likely to be in jail than to be working.”

A higher percentage of Blacks (especially males) than Whites continue to be convicted and receive longer sentences, raising the question of bias in the U.S. Justice system. As a percentage of the population, seven times as many African Americans than Whites are in prison. Black men have an incarceration rate that is over 20 times that of Black women (The State of Black America, 2007, Portrait of the Black Male, National Urban League).

Fulton County Board of Commission Chairman John Eaves has expressed concerns that are in direct alignment with those expressed by Congressional Joint Economic Committee Chairman Schumer. Chairman Eaves has indicated a desire to promote understanding among stakeholders of the current state of affairs specifically affecting African-American males in Fulton County. Increased understanding of the issues that continue to pose a threat to African-American males' chances to live a healthy and productive life may facilitate meaningful discussion around more effective collaborative interventions and potential solutions. Subsequent planning and decision-making around strategies to improve current circumstances faced by African-American males will require exchange of knowledge gained from specific areas of expertise among the various stakeholders.

Concerns around the challenges and dismal circumstances faced by many African-American males in Fulton County are based upon evidence of problematic outcomes. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey, African-American males represent approximately 21% (198,737) of Fulton County's population, while White males account for approximately 27% (261,637) of the county population. Even though African-American males represent only approximately 21% of Fulton County's population, they are disproportionately overrepresented in data reflective of local school dropout rates, numbers of incarcerated males, and rates of homelessness. Additionally, African-American males are typically unemployed at a higher rate than their White male counterparts, and have shorter life expectancies due to disease and other external factors.

Health

The following sections outline some of the major health disparities negatively impacting African-American males throughout various developmental stages.

Infant and Child Deaths

African-American males appear to be affected disproportionately by various health-related risks throughout their lives. Some of these risks become tragically evident before their first birthday. Data indicate African-American infants, with male African-American infants in particular, to be overrepresented among Fulton County infant deaths.

Deaths among Fulton County Infants Ages under One Year during 1999-2004

Age Group	Cause of Death	White Male	White Female	Black Male	Black Female	Other Race Male	Other Race Female	Total Deaths by Cause
Infant	Homicide	0	1	6	5	0	0	12
Infant	Medical	78	79	212	141	4	0	514
Infant	Motor Vehicle	1	0	2	1	0	6	10
Infant	Other Injury	1	0	2	0	0	0	3
Infant	SIDS	6	5	46	30	1	0	88
Infant	Suffocation	1	0	3	6	0	0	10
Infant	Unknown Intent	0	0	3	1	0	0	4
Infant	Unknown	1	0	3	3	0	0	7
Infant	Total	88	85	277	187	5	6	648

Source: Georgia Office of Child Fatality Review

Of the 648 Fulton County infant deaths documented during 1999-2004, 72% (n=464) were African-American infants. Of those 464 African-American infant deaths, 60% (n=277) were male and 40% (n=187) were female.

Medical (n=514), Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (n=88), and Homicide (n=12) were the three causes associated with the greatest number of infant deaths in Fulton County during the period from 1999-2004. Infant deaths due to these causes occurred in greater numbers among African American infants, with greatest numbers evident among male African-American infants. The following data provide evidence of disparities in infant death across the three most frequently occurring causes of infant death in Fulton County:

- 69% (n=353) of infant deaths due to medical reasons were among African-American infants, 212 of whom were male and 141 of whom were female.
- 86% (n=76) of infant deaths due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome were among African-American infants, 46 of whom were male and 30 of whom were female.
- 92% (n=11) of infant deaths due to homicide were among African-American infants, six of whom were male and five of whom were female.

Young African-American male children continue to be affected disproportionately by medical-related problems and homicide during early childhood preschool years. Medical-related (n=42), homicide (n=16), and drowning (n=8) were the most frequently occurring causes of death among young children ages one to four years in Fulton County during 1999-2004. Racial disparities remain evident in medical-related and drowning deaths among children ages one to four years, with African-American male children comprising the greatest number of fatalities within all of the top three cause of death categories.

Deaths among Fulton County Children Ages 1-4 Years during 1999-2004

Age Group	Cause of Death	White Male	White Female	Black Male	Black Female	Other Race Male	Other Race Female	Total Deaths by Cause
1 to 4 years	Drowning	3	2	2	1	0	0	8
1 to 4 years	Fall	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
1 to 4 years	Fire	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
1 to 4 years	Homicide	1	0	8	7	0	0	16
1 to 4 years	Medical	5	2	21	13	1	0	42
1 to 4 years	Motor Vehicle	1	1	3	0	0	0	5
1 to 4 years	Other Injury	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
1 to 4 years	Poison	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
1 to 4 years	Suffocation	1	0	1	2	0	0	4
1 to 4 years	Unknown	1	0	2	0	0	1	4
1 to 4 years	Total	13	5	43	24	1	1	87

Source: Georgia Office of Child Fatality Review

The three most frequently occurring causes of death among Fulton County children ages five to 14 years during 1999-2004 were medical-related (n=52), motor vehicle (n=21), and homicide (n=16). While racial disparities are smaller among this age group compared to younger age groups for medical-related deaths, racial disparities remain evident for motor vehicle and homicide-related deaths, with African-American male children again comprising the greatest number of child deaths in the top three cause of death categories.

Deaths among Fulton County Children Ages 5-14 Years during 1999-2004

Age Group	Cause of Death	White Male	White Female	Black Male	Black Female	Other Race Male	Other Race Female	Total Deaths by Cause
5 to 14 years	Drowning	2	1	2	2	0	0	7
5 to 14 years	Fire	0	0	7	4	0	0	11
5 to 14 years	Firearm	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
5 to 14 years	Homicide	2	0	10	4	0	0	16
5 to 14 years	Medical	15	5	17	15	0	0	52
5 to 14 years	Motor Vehicle	1	4	10	6	0	0	21
5 to 14 years	Other Injury	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
5 to 14 years	Suffocation	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
5 to 14 years	Suicide	1	0	2	1	0	0	4
5 to 14 years	Unknown Intent	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
5 to 14 years	Unknown	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total		24	11	51	33	0	0	119

Source: Georgia Office of Child Fatality Review

Cause of death categories associated with the three greatest numbers of deaths among Fulton County youth age 15 to 17 years during 1999-2004 were motor vehicle (n=35), homicide (n=32), and medical (n=30). Racial disparities are not evident for motor vehicle-related deaths, but males are clearly more affected. Males comprised 89% (n=31) of motor vehicle-related deaths among the 15-17 year age group during 1999-2004. Racial disparities are disturbingly evident for homicide-related deaths among this age group, with 91% of all deaths being among Black youth. Black males comprised 75% of all homicide-related deaths among 15-17 year-olds during

1999-2004. The greatest number of medical-related deaths for this age group also occurred among Black males.

Deaths among Fulton County Youth Ages 15-17 Years during 1999-2004

Age Group	Cause of Death	White Male	White Female	Black Male	Black Female	Other Race Male	Other Race Female	Total Deaths by Cause
15 to 17 years	Drowning	0	1	3	0	0	0	4
15 to 17 years	Fire	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
15 to 17 years	Homicide	2	1	24	5	0	0	32
15 to 17 years	Medical	7	4	12	7	0	0	30
15 to 17 years	Motor Vehicle	15	2	16	2	0	0	35
15 to 17 years	Other Injury	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
15 to 17 years	Poison	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
15 to 17 years	Suicide	5	1	3	2	0	0	11
15 to 17 years	Unknown Intent	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
15 to 17 years	Total	30	10	60	16	0	0	116

Source: Georgia Office of Child Fatality Review

Childhood Behavioral Health

According to the Fulton County Human Services Department's Transforming the Lives of Children (TLC) Program, since the program's inception in 2005, 78% of the children from birth to five years old that were referred to TLC for behavioral evaluations were boys, the majority of whom were African-American.

Fulton County's Department of Behavioral Health and Addictive Diseases reports that there is a disproportionate number of African-American males referred to the Oak Hill Child, Adolescent and Family Center for behavioral health counseling. Girls are referred to Oak Hill at a rate of 35% for counseling compared to 65% for their male counterparts.

Adult Health

According to the Georgia Department of Community Health's 2009 Men's Health Report: A Comprehensive Look at Men's Health in Georgia, heart disease, stroke and cancer account for more than 50% of all male deaths in the state. Prostate cancer is the leading cause of cancer incidence among males in Georgia, and Fulton County was identified by the Georgia Department of Community Health as having significantly higher prostate cancer incidence rates than the state average. It has been reported that African-American men are nearly three times more likely to die from prostate cancer than their white counterparts. Among Fulton County seniors age 60-74, death rates due to major cardiovascular disease are highest for African-American males.

HIV and AIDS

In Fulton County, 174 people died as a result of HIV/AIDS in 2007, and African-American males represented 58% (101) of that total, compared to White males, who represented approximately 13% (22) of the total. Georgia Division of Public Health morbidity data indicate 1,217 hospital discharges due to HIV/AIDS in 2007. Approximately 87% (n=1,054) of these hospital discharges were African American persons. Sixty-four percent (n=670) of African-American persons discharged from a hospital with a primary diagnosis of HIV/AIDS were male.

The Georgia Department of Community Health reports that in 2007, homicide was the cause of death for 92 African-American males in Fulton County, compared to 19 White males. The number of African-American males that died as a result of homicide represented 66% of the total number of homicides in Fulton County during this reporting period.

Crime and Delinquency

The following excerpts from an Annie E. Casey Foundation document entitled “Reducing Racial Disparities in Juvenile Detention: Pathways to Juvenile Detention Reform” describe evidence of racial disparities in the juvenile justice system across the nation:

- “In 1997–98, African American youth represented 15% of the total youth population, but 26% of the youth arrested, 31% of the youth referred to juvenile court, and 44% of the youth detained.”
- “By 1997, in 30 out of 50 states (which contain 83% of the U.S. population) youth of color represented the majority of youth in detention. Even in states with tiny ethnic and racial minority populations (like Minnesota, where the general population is 90% White, and Pennsylvania, where the general population is 85% White), more than half of the detention population are youth of color. In 1997, OJJDP found that in every state in the country (with the exception of Vermont), the minority population of detained youth exceeded their proportion in the general population.”
- “Both aggregate national and individual state data show that racial disparities increase at every stage of the juvenile justice process. For example, when White youth and African American youth with no prior admissions to public facilities were charged with the same offenses, African American youth were six times more likely to be incarcerated than White youth.”
- “Current detention practices disproportionately affect young people of color. Between 1983 and 1997, juvenile detention rates for minorities grew 76 percent, while rates for Whites actually declined. Throughout this period, four of every five newly-detained youths were minorities.”
(Hinton Hoytt et al., 2002)

The situation in Fulton County is unfortunately no different. African-American male youth are severely overrepresented in the Fulton County juvenile justice system. In 2008, Fulton County Juvenile Court reported a total number of 1,423 adjudicated cases, 84% of which involved males, many of whom reside in predominantly African-American communities within Fulton County. Racial disparities are profoundly evident among Fulton County juveniles involved with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. Approximately 95% (n=2,533) of all Fulton County juveniles involved with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice during FY 2008 were African-American. Males comprised 77% of the Fulton County juvenile justice population during FY 2008.

Fulton County's Educational Advocacy Initiative (EA) is an interagency collaboration designed to address the educational needs of court-involved youth who have disabilities and other educational concerns. In a presentation to the Vinson Institute Child and Family Policy Initiative, Judge Edwards and Dr. Mills reported that 79% of youth enrolled in Fulton County's Juvenile Court's EA Initiative were male. Of all males enrolled in EA, 96% were African

American. (*Judge Belinda Edwards and Kimberly Mills, Ph.D. Stemming the Flow From Schoolhouses to Jailhouses, presentation before the University of Georgia, Vinson Institute's Child and Family Policy Initiative*). A Georgia Public Policy Foundation report indicates that “as many as 75% of Georgia’s juvenile offenders eventually become involved in the adult corrections system” (Light, 1999). Racial disparities remain evident in the adult criminal justice system.

At the time of this report, data from the Fulton County Jail indicated that African-American males represent 81% of the jail population, which equates to 2,459 African-American males within the total jail population of 3,031, compared to 177 White males, who represent 6% of the jail population. There are presently over 54,000 adult inmates serving prison time in the Georgia Department of Corrections (DOC). Data obtained from FY 2008 Georgia DOC monthly and annual reports describe characteristics of race, sex, and age of these inmates:

- Approximately 64% of male Georgia DOC inmates currently serving time are African-American. Of the active Georgia inmate population currently serving prison sentences reporting information about race and/or sex characteristics, 59% are African American males.
- Approximately 63% of the male Georgia DOC inmates who were admitted during fiscal year 2008 are African-American. African American males comprise approximately 55% of total FY 2008 Georgia prison admissions.
- Approximately 55% of Georgia male probationers who began a term of probation during FY 2008 are African-American. African American males comprise approximately 44% of total FY2008 probation admissions.
- Approximately 88 males who were juveniles sentenced as adults at the time of their sentencing are currently serving time in Georgia DOC. 94% of these males are African-American. African-American males comprise 89% of all juveniles who were sentenced as adults currently serving time in Georgia DOC.
- 75% of males sentenced to a term of Life without Parole are African-American. African-American males comprise 73% of all Georgia DOC who were sentenced to Life without Parole currently serving time.

Average prison operating costs per offender across all security levels combined for Georgia’s adult state prisons are estimated at \$46.27 per day (GDOC, FY2007 Costs of Adult Offender Sanctions). Per-prison bed capital outlay/ construction costs (state funds only) are estimated at:

- \$28,936 for one minimum security prison dormitory
- \$61,341 for one medium security prison dormitory
- \$80,046 for one close security prison dormitory
- \$110,512 for two maximum security prison cellblocks

Although African American males are 46% of the African-American population in Fulton County (2007 American Community Survey), nearly 2,500 African American men are inmates of Fulton County on any given day. In 2007 the Average Daily Population of Fulton County jail was 2,859. (*Fulton County Backlog Reduction Report-Final*) Today, on average nearly 88% of the African Americans serving as inmates of the Fulton County jail are male. This also represents 89% of all male inmates of Fulton County jail and 81% of all persons serving as inmates in Fulton County. (Statistics from the August 12, 2009 Daily Report Fulton County Jail).

This comes to an average high daily cost of \$175,000, including inmates housed at non-Fulton facilities. (Fulton County Board of Commissioners Agenda Item 09-0593, June 17, 2009). This does not account for the losses in taxes and personal income for those inmates that were employed prior to going to jail. The Administrative Offices of the Courts of Georgia estimated that on average prior to arrests, 49% of inmates had incomes of more than \$1,000 per month and 14% had incomes over \$2,000 per month. Together this represents nearly 63% of the inmate population. Almost 20% received incomes ranging from \$600- \$1,000 per month. Finally, 17% had incomes less than \$600.00 per month.

(www.georgiacourts.org/aoc/press/idc/indigentfactsheet.pdf)

Operational costs of running a jail (staffing, equipment, maintenance, etc. can be roughly calculated as a mounting to at least ten times the construction costs over the life of the facility. (*Fulton County Case Management and Backlog Reduction Report-Final*). Given the county's current daily jail population, the average daily cost, including inmates housed at non-Fulton facilities can be estimated at \$175,000 (*Fulton County Board of Commissioners Agenda Item 09-0593, June 17, 2009*). Currently the cost of outsourcing is 10 million per year. Over a three year period this amounts to \$30 million... (*Making Lasting Changes: Fulton County's system Under Renovation*).

The financial costs continues in the losses in taxes and personal income for those inmates that were employed prior to going to jail. A one-day snapshot conducted in 2007 as part of the Jail Feasibility Study showed that approximately 1/3 of the inmate population had been in jail for over three months. (*Fulton County Case Management and Backlog Reduction Report-Final*). The Administrative Offices of the Courts of Georgia estimated that on average prior to arrests, 49% of inmates had incomes of more than \$1,000 per month and 14% had incomes over \$2,000 per month. Together this represents nearly 63% of the inmate population. Almost 20% received incomes ranging from \$600- \$1,000 per month. Finally, 17% had incomes less than \$600.00 per month. (www.georgiacourts.org/aoc/press/idc/indigentfactsheet.pdf)

The cost associated with African-American male imprisonment extends beyond the housing of inmates. In 2005, the Fulton county justice system budget totaled \$ 196.8 million, 31% of the 2005 budget. In 2006, the proposed budget marked an increase to 32% of the budget, \$199.2 million. (*Blue Ribbon Commission on Fulton County Governance, January 31, 2006 p.9*). The 2009 budget for the Office of the District Attorney alone was \$20,9111,797 (*Overview of the Fulton County District Attorney's Complaint Room, Feb. 2009, Office of the County Manager, p.9*). Although the average time from arrest to indictment has decreased 77% from 1996 to 2008 but; the average cost per case processed has fluctuated sine inception of the Complaint room, from a low of \$206.90 in 2004 to a high of \$274.52 in 2008. (*Overview of the Fulton County District Attorney's Complaint Room, Feb. 2009, Office of the County Manager, p. 31*)

Average Cost Per Case Since Inception of Complaint Room

Fiscal Year	Average Cost Per Case Processed
2003	\$ 252.70
2004	\$ 206.90
2005	\$ 226.80
2006	\$ 217.98
2007	\$ 238.77
2008	\$ 274.52

Education

High School Dropout Rates

In the U.S., the high school dropout rate has long been a concern amongst all races and ethnicities. In recent times, an emphasis has been put on the races and genders who have fallen behind their peers. One of these large groups are African American males. By 2050, the United States Census Bureau projects that about 50% of the U.S. population will be African American, Hispanic, or Asian. Given these steep demographics shifts, the performance of students of color and the characteristics of the schools they attend are important factors that must concern all Americans. (Alliance for Excellent Education, September 2008.) When a student drops out of high school, the effect is long range and effects more than the individual student who drops out.

The Georgia Office of Student Achievement reported that in 2008, 222 African-American males in the Fulton County School System between grades 7-12 were counted in their dropout rate, compared to 96 White males during the same reporting period. Data received directly from Atlanta Public Schools indicates 807 African-American males (16% of all African-American males enrolled in the school system) between grades 9-12 dropped out during the 2007-2008 school year, compared to 23 White males (9% of all White males enrolled in the school system) during the same reporting period.

Reading and Standardized Test Scores

There are many reasons that students drop out of school. Those reasons are outside the focus of this report. But, it should take notice that there is a disparity in reading and standardized test scores for African American males. The SAT's is of particular importance because those scores affect directly what college the student goes to if any, as well as being tied towards some scholarships. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, on average:

African American and Hispanic twelve graders read at approximately the same level as White eighth graders and the twelve grade reading scores of African American males were significantly lower than those for men and women across every other racial and ethnic group. Standardized tests scores also were lower amongst African Americans for the class of 2007. They scored lower than any other racial or ethnic groups on all three parts of the SAT's.

Financial Costs to the Student & the Nation

The income for high school dropouts is less than someone who graduates from high school. In 2005, the average annual income of a high school dropout was \$17,299 compared to \$26,933 for a high school graduate. In 2005, the average annual income of a high school dropout was \$17,299 compared to \$26,933 for a high school graduate (Alliance for Excellent Education, June

2008). This affects how much spending power the individual has at both a local and national level.

Nationally and financially, high school dropouts have a large impact. Some examples from: "The High Cost of High School Dropouts: What the Nation Pays for Inadequate High Schools" from the Alliance for Education in 2008:

- "If students who dropped out of the class of 2008 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefited from an additional \$319 billion in income over their lifetimes."
- A high school dropout contributes about \$60,000 less in taxes over a lifetime. (Rouse, 2005)
- Each dropout over their lifetime costs the nation \$260,000 according to Cecilia Rouse, a professor of economics and public affairs at Princeton University. (2005)
- The United States could save between 7.9 and 10.8 billion annually by improving educational attainment among all recipients of temporary assistance to needy families, food stamps, and housing assistance. (Garfinkel et al, 2005)

Some of the costs and savings that are felt at the local and state level are below. The financial aspects are then drilled down to the counties and the cities because of the services that the local governments are mandated to provide. And with budgets getting tighter and tighter, more consumers are going to need assistance. Being as productive as possible is the best way to address issues such as an increase in high school dropouts among a given population because if we don't, costs to society and social services will continue to spiral out of control in all different arenas.

Georgia Costs according to, "Healthier and Wealthier: Decreasing Health Care Costs by Increasing Educational Attainment (Alliance for Excellence in Education):

- Projected number of nongraduates in class of 2008: 59,510. Total lifetime additional income if dropouts graduated \$15,472,691,406.
- Medicaid Savings per Additional Graduate \$12,150 (2005-2006)
- Uninsured Savings per additional graduate \$834 (2005-2006)

Education Level and Health

High school graduates are more likely to live longer, because they have the educational knowledge of what is a healthy and a non-healthy way of life. Now, not all individuals use their knowledge, but if they were to, then it could potentially help them with their health. The old adage that says knowledge is power, is truly the case for high school graduates. High school graduates are more likely to live longer, less likely to be teen parents (Haverman et al., 2001 as stated by the Alliance for Educational Excellence, June 2008), and are more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children.

"There is a well known large and persistent association between education and health. This relationship has been observed in many countries and time periods, and for a wide variety of health measures. The differences between the more and the less educated are significant: in 1999, the age-adjusted mortality rate of high school dropouts ages 25 to 64 was more than twice as large as the mortality rate of those with some college." (Table 26, National Vital Statistics Reports, 2001) An article entitled "*Healthier and Wealthier...*" states that "The consequences of educational disparities are striking: adults with low educational attainment are more likely to die

precipitately from cardiovascular disease, cancer, infection, lung disease, and diabetes, for example (Muenning, 2005). On average, high school graduates lives six to nine years longer than a dropout” (Wong et al., 2002).

In looking at the overall picture, the trade-off is far from being equal. Six to nine years of increased life expectancy as opposed to 1-2 years of education in a classroom during an individuals younger years. It is astonishing that the lack of a high school diploma can affect one’s health in such a depilating manner.

America could save more than \$17 billion in Medicaid and expenditures for health care for the uninsured by graduating all students (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006).

- Total Health Savings per additional graduate \$12,985 (2005-2006 Georgia)
- Total Lifetime Health Savings if all students in the class of 2005-2006 graduated \$746,414,155 (Georgia)

School Climate and Safety

Data indicate concern among middle and high school students regarding their personal safety while at school. One study produced findings indicating that approximately “36% of White teenagers and 54% of Black teenagers spend at least some time worrying about being the victim of crime.” The findings of this study further indicated 31% of White teenagers and 70% of Black teenagers know someone who was shot within the past five years” (Malcolm, 1996).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2005 Youth Behavioral Risk Surveillance Survey (YBRSS) data indicate that a greater percentage of white male high school students, compared to black male high school students, reported having carried a weapon on school property. Ten percent of white males reported carrying a weapon on school property while 6.8% of black males reported carrying a weapon on school property. These data also indicate that a greater percentage of high school freshman, compared to other high school grade levels, report having felt too unsafe to go to school. A greater percentage of high school freshman, compared to other high school grade levels, also reported having carried a weapon to school.

2005 Youth Behavioral Risk Surveillance Survey- National

	Felt too unsafe to go to school	
	Female	Male
Race/Ethnicity		
White	4.9%	3.9%
Black	9.2%	8.2%
Hispanic	9.7%	10.7%

	Carried a weapon on school property	
	Female	Male
Race/Ethnicity		
White	2.0%	10.1%
Black	3.3%	6.8%
Hispanic	2.6%	13.7%

	Felt too unsafe to go to school	
	Female	Male
Grade		
9th	8.1%	7.3%
10th	7.3%	5.3%
11th	4.9%	4.5%
12th	4.5%	5.1%

	Carried a weapon on school property	
	Female	Male
Grade		
9th	8.8%	12.1%
10th	6.5%	11.0%
11th	3.9%	7.1%
12th	4.2%	7.3%

The above charts illustrate that fewer black males reported carrying a weapon on school property (6.8%) than reported feeling too unsafe to go to school (8.2%). The opposite is true for both Hispanic and white males. More Hispanic and white males reported carrying a weapon to school than reported feeling too unsafe to go to school. Nearly fourteen percent of Hispanic males reported that they carried a weapon on school property while 10.7% reported feeling too unsafe to go to school. Ten percent of white males reported that they carried a weapon on school property while only 3.9% reported feeling too unsafe to go to school.

Disciplinary Action

An early predictor of one's criminal future can be of the trouble the student gets into at school. Data indicate that the percentage of African-American students expelled or suspended is more than double that of their non-African-American classmates. According to *African American Students and the U.S. High Schools*, "In 1999, 35% of African American students in the seventh through twelve grade received the above type of disciplinary action, compared to 13% of Asians, and 15% of Whites.

Crime and High School Drop-Outs

According to a report entitled "*High Cost of High School Dropouts*," high school graduates are less likely to commit crimes (Raphael, 2004), rely on government health care (Muenning, 2005), or use public services such as food stamps or housing assistance (Garfinkel et al., 2005).

According to the National High School Alliance, "**An African American male born today is twice as likely to go to prison than to college.**"

Crime-related costs include a variety of expenditures from jail and prisons, to court costs, to police, fire, and medical personnel. There are also financial and emotional costs to crime victims and their families. One study estimated that if the male graduation rate were increased by only five percent, the nation would see an annual savings of 4.9 billion in crime related costs (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006).

An article entitled "Saving Futures, Saving Dollars: The Impact of Education on Crime Reduction and Earnings" published by the Alliance for Excellent Education states that:

- Research indicates that about 75% of America's state prison inmates, almost 59% of federal inmates, and 69% of jail inmates did not complete high school.
- Of Black males who graduated from high school and went on to attend some college, only 5% were incarcerated in 2000. (Raphael, 2004)
- Annual Crime Related Savings for Georgia if there were a 5% increase in male high school graduation rates: \$185,633,644
 - Additional annual earnings: \$90,744,324
 - Total Benefit to State Economy \$276,277,968

Employment

U.S. Census Bureau estimates indicate that 11,684 African-American/Black male Fulton County residents age 16 and older in the labor force are unemployed. Among all Black male Fulton County residents in the labor force age 16 and older, eight percent (n=11,684) are unemployed. Among all White males in the labor force age 16 and older, three percent (n=6,051) are unemployed (American Community Survey, 2007).

Programs and strategies to deter high school dropout and increase employment among Fulton County residents yield value for Fulton County taxpayers through avoidance of potential financial and social costs associated with unemployment, lost wages and productivity. Some of the more difficult to quantify personal costs such as losses of pride and self-worth are lessened as well with increased employment.

Homelessness

The numbers of homeless African-American males are disproportionately higher than that of Caucasian males. Typically, 95% or more of the Fulton County Jefferson Place Emergency Shelter census is represented by African-American males, many of whom attribute their homelessness to job loss or family break-up. A 2007 Pathways survey of homeless individuals revealed that 47% indicated their homelessness was due to drug or alcohol use, and 42% indicated job loss or unemployment as the cause of their homelessness. The survey respondents were overwhelmingly male, African American and middle aged.

Benchmarked African American Male Summits and Programs

The idea of an African American Summit is not a new or novel idea. Other governments, university systems, etc. have embarked on bringing together multiple stakeholders to address the issue. Below is a quick overview of a few summits and initiatives that have taken place.

Jackson Community College in south central Michigan released its report on their African American Male Summit in the summer of 2008. For their summit, they had three objectives: Education K-16, Family Role, and the Penal System. For each objective, corrective measures were created. Alongside with the measures, barriers and solutions were also identified, so it was clear to everyone what the big picture has been and what it will be. Below is a summary of the corrective measures for their target areas.

Corrective Measures for Objectives at the African American Male Summit

Education	Family Role	Penal System
Students must encourage their parents to stay involved	Develop and locate mentors in the community	Stay in school
Parents have to schedule specific homework time	Use family resources wisely	Change perception of incarceration
Schools must facilitate parent involvement	Families should develop a positive relationship with the police, so how they feel about the law will be passed down to their children	Reduce watching negative/crime related shows on tv
Schools should hire	Families need to promote	Develop community

more African American teachers and staff	and focus academics ahead of sports	associations
Colleges support and promote successes through college	Families have to turn negatives into positives	Community should own up to problems in their neighborhood
Churches should showcase educational achievement	Government leaders should support efforts in the community	

Source: Jackson Community College African American Male Summit Report 2008

In Columbus, Ohio the Urban League started an African American Male Initiative. This initiative was created because there was a disproportionate number of homicides amongst African American males in 2005. The following year, the summit was hosted and an African American Male Empowerment Commission was created. The following were strategies that were set forth:

- Advisory Board was created
- Public awareness campaign
- Redefining public policy to ensure AA males received fair treatment
- Strengthen efforts to keep AA males in school
- Create partnerships for employment and training
- Assist AA males in enrolling and completing post-secondary education
- Educate the public on hip hop culture

Below is a listing of programs that were created.

Program Name	Goal	Target Audience
Fatherhood Program	To help, support, and encourage African American men in their roles as fathers.	African American males
Young Warriors Program	To help reduce the involvement of young men in criminal activity.	African American youth in middle and high school.
Media Literacy	To empower young men to interpret, understand, and avoid negative messages of some popular media.	African American youth in middle and high school.

Source: Columbus Urban League, African American Male Initiative website.

Hennepin County Minnesota created an African American Men Project in 1999. One of the recommendations from the report completed in 2001, was to start the African American Men Advisory Commission (AAMC). The Commission consists of individuals throughout the community, including business, faith, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations that impact African American men. Nine committees were also formed: community and civic involvement, communications, criminal justice, education, economic empowerment, family structure, health,

housing, and fundraising. The County Commission earmarked contingency funds of \$500,000 for recommendations that came out of the report. The recommendations are as follows:

- Create an African American Men Commission
- Create partnerships to provide training and employment opportunities
- Strengthen efforts to keep boys in school
- Assist men in enrolling and completing post-secondary education
- Coordinate adult and community education and job training
- Public Policy to ensure African American males have access to healthcare
- Coordinate health education initiatives
- Public campaign to raise awareness of contributions of African American males
- Coordinate efforts for affordable housing
- Reduce involvement in the criminal justice system
- Engage African American males in the community

Source: Crossroads: Choosing a New Direction Final Report, Hennepin Office of Planning and Development, 2002

In addition to the recommendations of the report, AAMC created their own initiatives.

Initiative	Details
African American Men Asset Bank	Thousands of African American men of all ages are surveyed by phone, by mail, and in person to identify skill sets and the information is contained in a database. This is an additional way for employers to hire workers.
Increase incomes of young African American men and create more stable families	Different groups have their own undertaking on how to address these issues. There is a huge marketing campaign to get the workshop, service information etc. to the public.
Business development in heavily African American communities	Private sector leaders take the role in creating new businesses.
Creation of learning communities	<p>Focuses on a specific set of skills needed by the community or organization. The male decides which “community” suites his need.</p> <p>Each participant creates a careers and life plan.</p> <p>Initially, the communities are set up by businesses seeking to train skilled and committed workers.</p>

Help with buying a home	Partnering with other agencies to offer mortgages and various home-buying and ownership courses.

Source: Crossroads: Choosing a New Direction Final Report, Hennepin Office of Planning and Development, 2002

One may ask what the county's role is with regards to the African American Men Project if the Commission consists of individuals from the community? The county's role is to support and assist efforts that are made, whether it be out in the community or within their governmental structure. Hennepin County believes that lasting change should come from within their community, so they want to make sure individuals at the ground level and front lines are actively making the necessary strides to get the community moving in the direction that it needs to. It is for this reason that community engagement will be encouraged and pushed. County services related to this area of need will be coordinated and aligned with whatever is going on in the community and be evaluated. It is important that the program's cost of the activity has an equal or greater value to the resident who will be a recipient of the program.

Some of the counties initiatives/services are as follows:

- Supportive employment
- Helping young African American men build more political capital
- Advocating for the health of young African American men
- Spreading the word about the value of families and the difficulties that come with out-of-wedlock birthday and single parenthood
- Keeping young African American men out of jail
- Creating initiatives that encourage those who have already committed crimes to remain part of society rather than commit new crimes
- Sponsoring public forums on all of the above issues at libraries, schools, and community centers

Source: Crossroads: Choosing a New Direction Final Report, Hennepin Office of Planning and Development, 2002

Locally, the University System of Georgia (USG) created an African American Male Initiative in 2001. Their initiative "started to increase the recruitment retention and graduation of young black men within the USG through strategic intervention at both the K-12 level and higher education." (Kennesaw State University Magazine, Fall 2007) This program has received national attention and Arthlethia Perry-Johnson, the program director, has spoken at a conference in Hennepin County.

Since the creation of the program, the USG has seen a 10% increase in African American males graduating during the school years of 2003-2007. In addition to the upswing in graduation rates, enrollment has also increased by 24.5% from 17,068 students in the fall of 2002 to 21,249 students in the fall of 2007. (Kennesaw State University Magazine, Fall 2007) The numbers clearly show that the program has been beneficial, but currently those numbers are not separated out by Georgia or Fulton County residents.

Conclusion and Summary

In 2007 the National Urban League highlighted the African-American male in its Annual **State of Black America**. It is apparent that the African-American male condition in Fulton County mirrors the dire circumstances of African American men in other counties, as evidenced from Hennepin, South Central Michigan, and Columbus Ohio to name a few of the national, state, local and community groups that have risen to the occasion and designed ways to mitigate these problems. Fulton County should lend its voice to this chorus by examining its specific roadblocks to African American male youth development, and the paths that hinder full adult potentials, so all of its citizens can live full, productive lives.

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