

# National Black Church Initiative

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**For Immediate Release**  
**PRESS ADVISORY**

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## The National Black Church Initiative Declared a National Health Emergency in the Black Church

[The National Black Church Initiative](#), a coalition of 34,000 African American and Latino churches across America, held a press conference in which Rev. Anthony Evans, President of the National Black Church Initiative, declared a National Health Emergency (HED) in the Black Church. The passage of the Healthcare Reform Bill passed by Congress offering universal health care for Americans is a good first step, but more is needed to close the in the areas of prevention to close the health disparity gap between African Americans and their white counterparts. Baltimore represents the first health community under HED in establishing 35 separate health communities across the country, kicking off a seven year commitment to create a healthier lifestyle for all African Americans through education, pre-screening, improved diet, physical exercise, and clinical trials. Attendants include Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Dr. Garth Graham, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health, Director, Office of Minority Health in the Office of the Secretary of HHS. Michelle Spencer, Chief of Staff, Dr. Anne Bailowitz, Acting Chief Medical Officer, and Kay Sibetta, Health Disparities Director will represent Olivia Farrow, Interim Health Commissioner for the Baltimore City Health Dept. The Right Most Rev. Harlie Walden Wilson, II, Senior Pastor at Israel Baptist Church of Baltimore City.

The press conference was held at 12:15 p.m. on March 28, 2010 at the [Israel Baptist Church of Baltimore City](#), 1220 North Chester Street, Baltimore, MD 21213.

Rev. Anthony Evans, president of the National Black Church Initiative, said, "This is a historic event in the Black Church because for the first time, the Black Church has set a course of healing their minds, bodies, and souls. In declaring this health emergency we acknowledge that our present lifestyle is not the road that will sustain our communities and reduce health disparities. The NBCI Health Emergency underscores that the African American community desperately needs help to create a healthy lifestyle that will sustain the Black Church and Black community. Over the next seven years across this country, the church will utilize its extraordinary moral authority to confront every major disease state and challenge its members to get healthy. This involves a commitment to 2.5 hours of education every week and proven, targeted health literature

coordinating with federal, state, and local health authorities to create and sustain health communities through scientific based preventive health models. We are committed to shaping up the Black Church and setting it on a course of spiritual redemption and health until the Lord comes.”

Rev. Mark McCleary, chair of NBCI Minister Alliance, says, “Rev. Evans has given us our instructions for the next seven years and we plan to organize our churches toward good, sound, health practices. We are committed to increasing water consumption, increasing sleep, increasing fruit and vegetable intake, and increasing physical exercise. We are grateful that we will have health panels to help guide us along this extraordinary path. I would personally like to thank Rev. Evans for his visionary leadership on this critical issue of health that confronts the Black Church. It is truly an emergency given our health statistics.”

### **About NBCI**

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 34,000 African American and Latino churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI’s mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches and the public. The National Black Church Initiative’s methodology is utilizing faith and sound health science. The National Black Church Initiative's purpose is to partner with major organizations and officials whose main mission is to reduce racial disparities in the variety of areas cited above. NBCI offers faith-based, out-of-the-box and cutting edge solutions to stubborn economic and social issues. NBCI’s programs are governed by credible statistical analysis, science based strategies and techniques, and methods that work.