

# Bigger Than COVID-19: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly- Virtual Town Hall Q&A's

**Q:** Does NC have any data yet on the fatality rate from Covid-19 infection by race? Do African Americans who are infected with the virus suffer from more severe consequences, including death?

**A:** No, but those with more comorbidities experience more severe symptoms and we've seen that African Americans have more comorbidities due to systemic problems.

**Q:** How can people with no running water stay safe?

**A:**

- Hand sanitizing solutions are helpful
- Distance from others at least 6 ft.
- Wear a cloth face covering (right now NYT says that only 60% of Americans are doing so, we should increase this number)
- Avoid mass gatherings
- Get a flu vaccine if you can
- Go to the Health Department for information on testers who are doing telehealth consults and primary care referrals to providers available to see new patients
- The Health Department is helping homeless people have the ability to quarantine and tests
- Please check out [healthyguilford.com](http://healthyguilford.com)- this can help you get testing even if you don't have doctor's orders
  - Some in the African American community have reason to be tested even without showing symptoms so don't let that deter you

**Q:** Have the public school buildings been given ventilation and air filtration equipment?

**A:**

- The environmental health team has worked closely to make sure that public schools have enough information about spacing, hand sanitizing, and face masks, ventilation, and cleaning
- Additionally, there are specialized high tech HEPA filters that help prevent spread of COVID droplets in the air but unfortunately most schools have older HVAC systems that wouldn't benefit from these filters
- The need for PPE is recognized and there are sources at the state and county levels to access supply chains. However, N95s and face shields should be used for medical personnel exposed to COVID in clinical situations only

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**Q:** Is there any data on racial disparities of COVID among incarcerated individuals?

**A:** There is data about incarcerated individuals with COVID on this website: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard>.

**Q:** You all have mentioned a lot of factors pertaining to living conditions that impact individuals' risk of getting infected and getting care (housing, occupation, etc.) I'm curious why then focus on health care that may be very limited to vulnerable communities, rather than those other determinates of health? Wouldn't community centers and partners be more equipped to address those? I'm just always skeptical of the impact healthcare can have, even if it is provided effectively.

**A:** That's a great question. The Collaborative focuses specifically on intervening in the health care system, but by no means do we think that's the only place we need to put our organizing efforts. The broader work that we do definitely needs to involve efforts in housing, employment, etc. One of the other aspects of how we approach things is that we think **the systems themselves** are contributing significantly to inequities, so we believe systems change work needs to be a core part of what we do.

**A:** Thank you for this question. Yes, I agree that community centers and partners may be a closer link into communities -- able to build trust with neighbors -- to encourage them to get screened and to be monitored for health.

**Q:** I suspect that there are higher rates of chronic disease by race as well as poorer quality and access to health care. Is this true?

**A:** While this is true, it is also well documented that race and racism is an influential factor all on its own, in addition to the influence that racism has on access to health care and on overall risk for chronic disease.

See [Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Healthcare](#) by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) for more information.

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**Q:** We had community events prior to COVID - what are some things we can do to protect the community going forward with events - even those that are outdoors?

- A:**
- Stay 6 ft. apart or more
  - Dr. Bey saw an event with only wait staff wearing face masks, but everyone should wear masks, if you're unwilling to do so, don't have gatherings
  - Even if you're doing a socially distanced event, find drive-thru COVID test sites nearby beforehand so all attendees know they are COVID negative

**Q:** Does Dr. Bey have any additional advice?

- A:**
- Avoid being in crowded gatherings if you can
  - Wear your face covering
  - Sanitize your hands
  - Practice respiratory etiquette when you cough and sneeze
  - Eat healthy food, exercise, and get fresh air safely
  - Get your flu shot!
    - CDC resource to find a flu shot near you:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/flu-finder-widget.html>

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