

## **Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, Fifth District**

1221 Oak Street, Suite 536, Oakland, CA 94612

Phone: 510-272-6695 • Fax: 510-271-5151

Contact: Hannah Greene

Office: (510) 272-6768

Cell: (510) 220-3866

Email: [hannah.greene@acgov.org](mailto:hannah.greene@acgov.org)

**Press Release**

**For Immediate Release** February 26, 2014

### **Alameda County Proclaims People of African Descent Mental Health Awareness Week, February 23-28**

*Caption: Alameda County staff, providers, clients, faith leaders and community members gathered at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, February 25 to celebrate People of African Descent Mental Health Awareness Week.*

**Oakland, CA** – On Tuesday, February 26, 2014, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors proclaimed People of African Descent Mental Health Awareness Week from February 23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> and People of African Descent Mental Health Awareness Day on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

“Mental health issues are among the leading causes of disability in the United States and have not been adequately addressed for African Americans,” said Supervisor Carson, President of the Board of Supervisors.

The 1999 Surgeon General’s Report identified African Americans as one of the four major ethnic groups experiencing mental health disparities in this nation. The report cites African American mental health clients and consumers as often being served inappropriately and in the most restrictive settings with poor outcomes.

There is a need to support the recovery process of clients/consumers and family members struggling with the challenges of mental health issues through the delivery of welcoming and honoring culturally responsive services, including but not limited to community defined practices offered by African American Providers.

Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (BHCS), in an effort to respond to this issue, has been one of the pioneering counties to heed the voice of the African American community by embarking upon a utilization study to identify barriers and develop strategies. BHCS has funded a group of Community Defined Innovation Projects to explore culturally responsive approaches, resources and tools that will enhance the restoration of mental health wellness

On Friday, February 28, those projects funded through the Community Defined Strategies will be participating in a Learning Conference at Allen Temple Family Life Center.

Gigi Crowder, Ethnic Services Manager at Behavioral Health Care Services, received the Proclamation along with numerous providers, clients and members of the faith community.

###

*Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson represents the Fifth District, which includes Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, and parts of Oakland (North Oakland, Rockridge, Grand Lake, Fruitvale, and Dimond District neighborhoods). For more information about District 5 and Supervisor Keith Carson, please call (510) 272-6695 or visit*

<http://www.acgov.org/board/district5>