

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR SANTANA



## **CITY OF BOSTON**

**IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX**

### **RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ENDING HEALTH DISPARITIES IMPACTING THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN BOSTON**

**WHEREAS**, The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC)'s recent Black Life Expectancy Report has found that Black residents have the lowest life expectancy amongst all races and ethnicities in Boston, with an average lifespan of 77.8 years compared to 80.5 years among other residents; *and*

**WHEREAS**, Black males, in particular, have the lowest life expectancy compared to all other groups by race and gender, 9.3 years fewer than other males in Boston, and Black females have the lowest life expectancy compared to all other races, living 6.4 fewer years than other females in Boston; *and*

**WHEREAS**, Boston has one of the highest overall life expectancies in the country at over eighty years of age, yet this varies significantly depending on the neighborhood in which an individual lives; a 33-year age gap was recorded in 2007 between the census tracts in Roxbury and Back Bay— notably, 73.6% of Back Bay residents are white, 28.3% more than the City's average, while Roxbury's population is 55.6% Black and 6.5% white; *and*

**WHEREAS**, The BPHC's report, "Closing the Gap: An Examination of Life Expectancy Among Black Residents in Boston" has revealed that life expectancy gaps are driven in large part by preventable deaths among Black people before the age of 65, with the three leading causes of premature death among Boston's Black male community being unintentional overdoses, heart diseases, and cancers, together accounting for 42% of the life expectancy gap between Black men and other men in Boston, while the three leading causes of premature death among Black females in Boston are cancer, heart disease, and cerebrovascular disease, accounting for 40% of the life expectancy gap— deaths which the report identifies as preventable; *and*

**WHEREAS**, Subsections of the Black community experience these disparities differently, with Haitian residents experiencing higher mortality rates than Cabo Verdean and Jamaican residents, while Cabo Verdean residents experience lower overall mortality but face elevated risks from accidental overdose, highlighting the need for community-specific strategies for promoting public health; *and*

**WHEREAS**, Overdose prevention initiatives have made great strides in reducing these disparities in recent years, with 2024 marking a steep decline in overdose deaths

among Black residents from 100 deaths per 100,000 residents in 2023 to 32.2 per 100,000 residents in 2024; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Projections show that these life expectancy disparities can continue or worsen absent mitigating efforts, highlighting the need for urgent and continued action, particularly in early screening and preventative care for cancer and other diseases and overdose prevention initiatives; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Each of these statistics represent human lives– neighbors, friends, family members, and loved ones who deserve to life long, healthy, and fulfilling lives free from preventable suffering inflicted by barriers to access to healthcare; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The preventable suffering or death of any of our community members due to barriers to medical care is a stain on our collective moral consciousness; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The findings in the BPHC’s report display the need for continued investments in access to healthcare for Boston’s Black community; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

**RESOLVED:** That the Boston City Council commends the Boston Public Health Commission’s \$1,000,000 investment in organizations working to improve Black men’s health; their new partnership with the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute investing \$1,000,000 in cancer prevention, treatment, and other community-based initiatives that tackle the key drivers of premature mortality; the February 27 Black Life Expectancy Report Press Conference; and the upcoming Black Men’s Health Activation Summit to discuss challenges facing Black men and make recommendations for BPHC investment priorities.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Boston City Council supports meaningful action ending health disparities disproportionately impacting the Black community, working towards eliminating the gap in life expectancy between Black residents and non-Black residents, and advancing health justice for all communities in Boston.

Filed on: March 4, 2026