



# Black History Month 2021

## Special Edition Newsletter

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## Striving for Quality Care for All

Racial and ethnic disparities in health care continue to be problematic in 2021. With a large portion of our patients (about 45%) identifying as “Black or African American”, the Corner’s work is critical to improving access to affordable and quality health care to Washtenaw County’s underserved communities.

Barriers include, but are not limited to:

- Cost & Access
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (D.E.I.)
- Clinic Experience
- Fear & Medical Mistrust

**Cost & Access** — The Corner is located in the heart of Ypsilanti near the Ypsilanti Transit Center. Our location provides convenience and accessibility for patients who have transportation challenges. Further, our partnership with the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority provides additional support to help mitigate the expense for patients who ride the bus.

The Corner accepts most insurances, including Medicaid. In addition, we provide health care services to the uninsured and underinsured; we never turn anyone away regardless of their inability to pay.

**D.E.I. & Clinic Experience** — The Corner is committed to supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion. For 40 years the Corner has provided judgment-free services to young adults and adolescents. From the cheerful greeting at the door by our receptionist, to the interaction with our providers—the clinic experience for our patients and staff is warm, welcoming, and supportive. Our staff is diverse, and receives ongoing training to enhance and improve their cultural competency.

**Fear & Medical Mistrust** — When we explore the history of racism in medicine—from experimental surgeries and psychosurgery to forced sterilization—the reasons for mistrust, fear and avoidance of the healthcare system among African Americans become clear. Consequently, an essential requirement for working at the Corner is for staff to be conscious of the traumatic impact of systemic racism, and be mindful of the need to advocate for our patient’s comfort, wellness and health care rights.

Our credo is to treat others as we wish to be treated, and to make those we serve our highest priority.

**“My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.”**

**- Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH****Preventing COVID-19 Deaths**

by Dr. Jessie Kimbrough Marshall

Black History Month began as a way to celebrate the contributions of African Americans/Blacks and recognize significant events. Years from now, future school children will read history books about the COVID-19 Pandemic and how it took the lives of so many people. They will also read that in the U.S., African Americans/Blacks died at higher rates than others—due to multiple causes (including racism and health inequities).

In honor of Black History-365 days per year, let's claim our power and re-direct our history! **Let's prevent the COVID-19 Pandemic from taking more Black lives**, because we do matter. Let's each follow public health guidance:

- Wear a face mask
- Wash hands frequently
- Stay 6 feet from others
- Avoid crowds
- Get vaccinated when it's your turn
- Get your information from trusted sources (e.g. local health department website or primary care provider)
- Encourage your loved ones to do all of the above

Together, we can stay safe and prevent deaths due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**"Truth is powerful and it prevails."**

**-Sojourner Truth**

Get vaccinated.



Wear a mask.



Stay 6 feet from others,  
and avoid crowds.



Wash  
hands often.



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[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines)

## BECAUSE OF THEM...

### Honoring Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller



Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller (1872-1953)

Solomon Carter Fuller was a physician, psychiatrist, pathologist, and professor. His paternal grandparents were slaves in Virginia and bought their freedom before emigrating from Virginia to Liberia in 1852, just 20 years before Fuller was born. His maternal grandparents were medical missionaries in Liberia which sparked an interest in medicine for Fuller at an early age. Being the son of a coffee planter and school teacher, Dr. Fuller knew the importance of hard work and education. He moved to Salisbury, North Carolina in 1889 at age 17 to begin his undergraduate studies at Livingston College. He later attended Boston University Medical School, graduating in 1894 (age 22) and began an internship at Westborough State Hospital (mental hospital). Two years later Dr. Fuller was promoted to pathologist.

In 1903, Dr. Fuller was one of five foreign students chosen by Alois Alzheimer to go to Germany to research and study neuropathology at the Royal Psychiatric Hospital at University of Munich. After his studies abroad, he returned to Westborough State Hospital and continued performing innovative research on degenerative diseases of the brain. **Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller became the first**

**African American psychiatrist and is known for his work and research on the physical changes in the brains of patients with Alzheimer's disease.** Dr. Fuller spent many years at Westborough State Hospital before moving on to become an educator at Boston University Medical School where he climbed to attain an associate professor position. In the medical field, Dr. Fuller faced discrimination in the form of unequal salaries and underemployment. After leaving the medical school he continued his private practice as a physician, neurologist, and psychiatrist for many years. Prior to the infamous Tuskegee experiments, Dr. Fuller also trained young doctors to correctly diagnose the side effects of syphilis. This training helped to prevent black war veterans from getting misdiagnosed, discharged, and found ineligible for military benefits.

Dr. Fuller married Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, an international sculptor, poet, and painter. The couple had three children, Solomon, William, and Perry Fuller. Dr. Fuller began struggling with diabetes, such that he completely lost his eyesight at age 72. In 1953 at age 81, Fuller died due to diabetes and gastrointestinal cancer. In 1974 the Solomon Carter Fuller Program was created for black aspiring psychiatrists to complete their residency. Additionally, the Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health Center in Boston is also named after Dr. Fuller. Despite the hurdles and discrimination he faced, Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller paved the way for future African Americans with a passion in health and wellness care.



## Get to Know a Corner Therapist: Jonathan Edwards, LMSW (He/Him)

### Brief Bio

Jonathan Edwards is a behavioral health therapist who grew up in Brooklyn, NY and Washington D.C. Jonathan specializes in treating depression, anxiety, anger, stress, and trauma for adolescents and young adults. By using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Jonathan assists his clients in cognitive restructuring and dismantling cognitive distortions. Jonathan's clinical interests include LGBTQIA+, multicultural concerns, self-esteem and identity, and relationship issues.



### Jonathan's Journey

Jonathan chose to become a therapist due to his profound interest in mental health and a commitment to community engagement. Jonathan's father, who was an urban church planter, pastor, and educator, instilled in him at an early age the importance of giving back to his community. These influences led Jonathan to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Masters of Social Work from Morehouse College.

### Passion

Jonathan is passionate about social justice and equity. He is in constant pursuit of increasing his knowledge of systemic structures and how they impact the mental health of historically marginalized and oppressed populations. As a cartoonist, Edwards incorporates art and creative expression into his practice. This innovative approach always resonates with our patient population.

### Goals and Growth Projects

Jonathan states, **"In general, I focus on helping to establish the Corner as the mental health provider of choice for young people in Ypsi."** Presently, Jonathan is developing a Young Black Males Brotherhood group in collaboration with the Washtenaw County Youth Center (Juvenile Detention Program). The Corner is anticipating a program launch this spring!



**BECAUSE OF THEM...****Celebrating Local Black Heroes in Healthcare****DR. WILLIAM HENRY FITZBUTLER**  
**(1842-1901)**

Dr. William Henry Fitzbutler was the first African American male to graduate from the prestigious institutions of Detroit Medical College (1869) and University of Michigan Medical School (1872). He founded Louisville National Medical College in 1888 with the mission of training African American doctors in the area.

**DR. SOPHIA BETHENA JONES**  
**(1857-1932)**

Dr. Sophia Bethena Jones was the first African American woman to graduate from The University of Michigan Medical School (1885). After graduation, she established the nursing program at Spelman College and became the first African American to join the faculty of Spelman College.

**DR. KATHERINE CRAWFORD**  
**(1859-1943)**

Dr. Katherine Crawford graduated from The University of Michigan Medical School and opened a medical practice in Ann Arbor on Fuller Street (1898). At the time, Dr. Crawford was one of only 150 licensed African American female physicians in the country.

**DR. ALBERT WHEELER, Ph.D**  
**(1915-1994)**

Dr. Albert Wheeler was The University of Michigan's first African American tenured professor (1952) as well as the City of Ann Arbor's first African American mayor, serving in office from 1975-1978. He established the Human Services Department and a

Fair Rental Practices Commission which dealt with housing discrimination.



## **Racism: Urgent Public Health Threat**

In its November 2020 Newsletter, the American Medical Association declared racism to be an “urgent public health threat”. The following excerpt describes the AMA’s position, and reflects the understanding the historical barriers to community and individual health the Corner is working to mitigate.

“The AMA recognizes that racism negatively impacts and exacerbates health inequities among historically marginalized communities. Without systemic and structural-level change, health inequities will continue to exist, and the overall health of the nation will suffer,” said AMA Board Member Willarda V. Edwards, MD, MBA.

“As physicians and leaders in medicine, we are committed to optimal health for all, and are working to ensure all people and communities reach their full health potential,” Dr. Edwards said. “Declaring racism as an urgent public health threat is a step in the right direction toward advancing equity in medicine and public health, while creating pathways for truth, healing, and reconciliation.”

To that end, the AMA House of Delegates (HOD) adopted a new policy to:

- Acknowledge that, although the primary drivers of racial health inequity are systemic and structural racism, racism and unconscious bias within medical research and health care delivery have caused and continue to cause harm to marginalized communities and society as a whole.
- Recognize racism, in its systemic, cultural, interpersonal and other forms, as a serious threat to public health, to the advancement of health equity and a barrier to appropriate medical care.
- Support the development of policy to combat racism and its effects.
- Encourage governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations to increase funding for research into the epidemiology of risks and damages related to racism and how to prevent or repair them.
- Encourage the development, implementation and evaluation of undergraduate, graduate and continuing medical education programs and curricula that engender greater understanding of the causes, influences, and effects of systemic, cultural, institutional and interpersonal racism, as well as how to prevent and ameliorate the health effects of racism.

**“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and the most inhumane.”**

**-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**



## BLACK HISTORY IS AMERICAN HISTORY

American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week in 1926. The week was expanded into Black History Month in 1976. Black History Month celebrates the contributions African Americans have made to this country. While this celebration has been an important part of recognizing Black history as American history, much more needs to be done on systemic, community and individual, levels. In that spirit, the Corner offers a few resources for getting started on your personal exploration of inclusive American History:

### Facebook:

*Black Scroll Network History & Tours* <https://blackscrollnetwork.weebly.com/> (Detroit)

*Mathew Siegfried, Historian* <https://mattsiegfriedhistory.com/> (Ypsilanti)

### Podcasts:

*Into America* Trymaine Lee, Host

*Buried Truths* Hank Klibanoff, Host

*Code Switch* Shereen Marisol Meraji & Gene Demby

*Notes from an Aspiring Humanitarian* Relando Thompkins-Jones, Host

### Written:

*The Warmth of Other Suns* Isabel Wilkerson

*The 1619 Project* Nikole Hannah-Jones, et al. The New York Times Magazine

### Ann Arbor Public Library:

*Black Lives Matter: Addressing Black Racism in Our Community*, Ongoing Initiatives

*AACHM: Living Oral History* <https://aadl.org/aachmvideos>

### Ypsilanti Public Library:

*Black Lives Matter: Race Relations* <https://www.ypsilibrary.org/interests/race-relations/>

*A.P. Marshall Oral History Archive* <http://history.ypsilibrary.org>

The mission of the Corner Health Center is to inspire 12- to 25-year-olds (and their children) to achieve and sustain healthy lives by providing judgment-free, affordable health and wellness care and education.

We cover comprehensive health care, behavioral health services, health education and youth development programs designed exclusively for teens and young adults.

**DONATE NOW**