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The state of Black women's health in Canada finally uncovered thanks to new, national, game-changing organization

The Black Women's Institute for Health will address the alarming disparities confronting Black women in Canada's healthcare and adjacent systems

TORONTO, October 22, 2024 - [Black Women's Institute for Health \(BWIH\)](#), a new non-profit advocating for the survival of Black women and girls, is launching a critical survey for Black women across Canada on October 22, 2024. This is the first time that Black women will be surveyed nationally to address the intersectional social factors, such as housing, education, and finance, that impact their mental and physical health outcomes.

BWIH's groundbreaking health survey initiative, **VOICES UNHEARD: Canada's First Vital Signs Survey For Black Women** is a response to the lack of race-based data in the Canadian healthcare landscape that is needed to combat the alarming healthcare disparities Black women face, including poorer perinatal health outcomes, higher risks of developing cardiovascular diseases and aggressive forms of cancer (Improving Black Women's Health in Canada, April 2024).

"Black women are in the midst of a health crisis. For too long we have faced dehumanization in the healthcare and adjacent systems. We've been dismissed, overlooked, and devalued," states **Kearie Daniel, Executive Director, BWIH**. "Canada has yet to prioritize the collection of race-based data that is necessary to paint a full picture of who we are and to address health inequities. The Black Women's Institute for Health was created to shed light on the realities Black women face, and our VOICES UNHEARD survey aims to uncover the hidden truths about our experiences."

According to Statistics Canada, Black Canadians are more likely to face health inequities due to systemic racism, discrimination, and economic challenges. However, the absence of comprehensive data has hindered a complete understanding of these disparities, leaving the needs of Black women underrepresented and inadequately addressed by the healthcare system. **VOICES UNHEARD**, a first-of-its-kind study, will exclusively survey Black women on their experiences navigating their health and the healthcare system. This is the first step in a transformative movement to change healthcare for current and future generations of Black women in Canada.

"As a Black woman in Canada, I've been misdiagnosed for my mental health and I developed acute post-traumatic stress following an incident of sexual assault. The multiple gaps I've encountered in navigating the healthcare system on my road to recovery only exacerbated my health concerns - namely the intersectional barriers of anti-Black racism, cultural bias, education, affordable housing, and more," shares **Siobhan, a supporter of BWIH**.

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“I quickly learned that my well-being and the standard of care I receive were largely dependent on self-advocacy. BWIH offers a space where I finally feel seen and supported.”

BWIH will leverage the survey data – including stories from across Canada – to advocate for significant policy changes that prioritize Black women and girls. This means that for the first time in Canada’s history, there will be solid data providing a fulsome picture of the experience of Black women and girls in this country.

“In 2024, it is unacceptable that the experiences of Black women remain unknown and unaddressed in Canada’s healthcare and adjacent systems. We will no longer be invisible: this is our moment to drive change for ourselves and the next generation. We are calling on Black women across the nation to make their voices heard by participating in our VOICES UNHEARD survey,” urges Daniel.

The survey is now live on the BWIH website, bwhealthinstitute.com, and will run until the end of November 2024. The findings will be published in a full-scale report scheduled to be released in 2025 and presented to all levels of government to advocate for positive change in policy and legislation.

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About Black Women's Institute for Health (BWIH)

BWIH is a registered Canadian non-profit organization, dedicated to advocating for the health and survival of Black women and girls. We focus on all social determinants of health, prioritizing support for Black women and girls and mobilizing for tangible change within policy and legislation. We believe in health for all Black women. Learn more at bwhealthinstitute.com

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