Is Inequality Making Black Women Sick?

Eleanor Hinton Hoytt
President and CEO
Esmin Elizabeth Green, 49
Someone Is Hurt, In Need of Compassion.
Is It Human Instinct to Do Nothing?

5:32 a.m.

5:32 a.m.

5:47 a.m.

5:53 a.m.

6:35 a.m.

6:36 a.m.

After collapsing in a Brooklyn psychiatric ward, a woman lies on the floor for more than an hour before help arrives. These surveillance stills show people coming into - and leaving - the room. One hospital employee nudges the woman with her foot but offers no aid.

The Washington Post, July 16, 2008; C01
INHUMANE TREATMENT

• Esmin Elizabeth Green died alone after 24 hours of waiting for care

• Pregnant women in prisons being shackled during labor and delivery
INVISIBILITY OF BLACK WOMEN AND GIRLS

- Ignoring patient
- Contact avoidance
- Internal silence
SHIFTING DISEASE BURDEN

- HIV/AIDS is the second leading cause of death for young Black women
- Breast cancer among young Black women
INEQUITABLE ACCESS

- Uninsured and underinsured AT 37%
- Inequitable distribution of health resources
- Separate and unequal
CHALLENGES OF POVERTY

• One in four Black girls drops out of high school
• 1 in 2 Black teenage girls has at least one STD
• Highest rate of unintended pregnancies (98% vs. 345)
• Median income of $27,000
THE IMPERATIVES

• Promote patient education and health literacy
• Promote the use of lay health navigators
• Promote community-based health care planning
• Strengthen community safety nets and resources
• Make Black women’s health a priority