



## African American Behavioral Health CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Responding to the urgent need for greater equity and effectiveness in behavioral health services for African Americans, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has established a new National Center, the African American Behavioral Health Center of Excellence (AABH-COE). **[AfricanAmericanBehavioralHealth.org](https://www.AfricanAmericanBehavioralHealth.org)**

From its administrative and academic home in the National Center for Primary Care at Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) in Atlanta, the new Center of Excellence will develop and disseminate training, technical assistance (TA), and resources to help healthcare practitioners eliminate behavioral health disparities within this large and diverse population.

Founded October 1, 2020, this innovative yet deeply grounded Center has been structured to mobilize the scholarship and expertise of many distinguished voices in African American behavioral health and health equity, the knowledge and wisdom of multiple national bodies representing a broad spectrum of Black stakeholders, and the established networks of a host of strategic partners committed to marketing and disseminating the new Center's products and services. The Center will also benefit from the expertise, resources, and full collaborative efforts of the Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC) Network Coordinating Office.

### **For too long, behavioral health treatment and recovery services have been hampered by:**

- Systemic inequities that have blocked access to and engagement in behavioral health services and support for African Americans;
- The scarcity of culturally appropriate evidence-based interventions and approaches for African Americans—and insufficient dissemination of the resources that do exist; and
- Minimal workforce development on social determinants of health, health disparities, historical trauma, unconscious bias, and ways of building cross-cultural respect/trust.

Most of the challenges we must meet are long-standing, pervasive, complex, and multi-faceted. They are deeply rooted in our history as a field and as a nation; in our professional cultures and in the local, regional, and national cultures that surround the individuals, families, and communities we serve.

### **The new Center of Excellence will take a highly collaborative public health approach toward cultural and practical transformation of:**

- Behavioral health systems;
- Intervention, treatment, and recovery support practices;
- The professional and non-professional workforce; and
- The systems of education, training, and TA that prepare the field for its work.

As the African American Behavioral Health Center of Excellence continues to develop and launch its products and services, a series of updates and resources will be released. Meanwhile, for more information, please contact Ms. Pamela Lee at [plee@msm.edu](mailto:plee@msm.edu).