

The Phenomenal Women Empowerment Alliance's 25th Anniversary, January 14, 2023



*The Phenomenal Women
Empowerment Alliance's
25th Anniversary
Saturday, January 14, 2023 at
Eleven O'Clock in the Afternoon
At The Fiesta Banquet Hall
The Empower Queen, Sabrina Martinez, Founder*



Dr. Laverne Reid

FIVE DECADES OF HEALTH EQUITY WORK

La Verne Reid, PhD, MPH is a recently retired administrator/professor at North Carolina Central University (NCCU) in Durham, North Carolina. Reid has partnered with health promoting agencies in several states and internationally to design training programs aimed at increasing cultural competency of health care providers in their service to marginalized and disenfranchised patients and populations at greatest risk for chronic and infectious diseases.

She is a native of North Carolina and began her career in local and state health departments in several states. Early in her career, she was known for her work in women's health particularly designing programs to address the spiraling teen pregnancy rates. She designed programs for the parenting teens to support their role as parent while enabling them to continue to master the stages of adolescence.

While working for the **Commissioner of Health and Hospitals for the City of Boston**, she was called upon to assist the city to move the needle on infant mortality. First it was important to examine the elements that contribute to racial and ethnic difference in birth outcomes. Why is it that middle class Black women have higher rates of infant mortality than their white counterparts? We worked to change public perceptions that served to blame the victim for their outcome. What is known is that remnants of slavery still impact health outcomes in some groups and are a major determinant for health outcomes.

The **New York City Department of Health** was one of twelve states and one city to receive funding from CDC to address and advance injury control as a public health issue. Dr. Reid and her team in the Division of Injury Control examined the citywide data and then designed programs to address injury from the perspective of each of the five boroughs. In Queens, for example, pedestrian injuries were of concern. The team made reports to the department of transportation to determine the length of traffic signals that would allow the frail elderly to cross major arteries like Queens Boulevard. In East Harlem, they adopted a AAA approach to safe routes to school. If you ride down 3rd Avenue, the MacGruff - the crime fighting dog symbol - is still visible in some store fronts.

When we talk about health equity today, we hope to move the needle with regard to access to health care (the Affordable Care Act), poverty (advancing a livable wage agenda), the school-to-prison pipeline, and other social justice concerns. She worked with groups of people who never had access to health insurance by virtue of their employment industry. She and her students at NCCU worked to get cosmetologists, taxidrivers, restaurant employees and many other groups registered for the Affordable Care Act. Each Fall, Reid and her students assess, design and implement public forums to inform the campus and the community on pressing issues such as Environmental injustice.

After 30 years at NCCU, she takes off her academic regalia to chart new adventures in health equity. Food insecurity and universal health care are aspects of her career that she will continue to explore. She was recently appointed to Board of Directors for the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. She will undoubtedly continue to be a voice for the disenfranchised and will continue to empower the next generation of public health, STEM, health care, and social science workers. Though (semi) retired, she will continue to recruit students to explore careers that are underrepresented by people of color, women, and the marginalized.

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