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## Outcry over racial data grows as virus slams black Americans; Trump, Republicans Destroying Obamacare, Medicaid Refusal Makes Matters Worse

(AP) As the coronavirus tightens its grip across the country, it is cutting a particularly devastating swath through an already vulnerable population - black Americans.

Democratic lawmakers and community leaders in cities hard-hit by the pandemic have been sounding the alarm over what they see as a disturbing trend of the virus killing African Americans at a higher rate, along with a lack of overall information about the race of victims as the nation's death toll mounts.

Among the cities where black residents have been hard-hit: New York, Detroit, New Orleans, Chicago and Milwaukee.

"Everywhere we look, the coronavirus is devastating our communities," said Derrick Johnson, president and CEO of the NAACP.

Of the victims whose demographic data was publicly shared by officials - nearly 3,300 of the nation's 13,000 deaths thus far - about 42% were black, according to an Associated Press analysis. African Americans account for roughly 21% of the total population in the areas covered by the analysis.

The AP's analysis is one of the first attempts to examine the racial disparities of COVID-19 cases and deaths nationwide. It involved examining more than 4,450 deaths and 52,000 COVID-19 cases from across the country, relying on the handful of state and local governments that have released victims' race.

A history of systemic racism and inequity in access to health care and economic opportunity has made many African Americans far more vulnerable to the virus. Black adults suffer from higher rates of obesity, diabetes and asthma, which make them more susceptible, and also are more likely to be uninsured. They also often report that medical professionals take their ailments less seriously when they seek treatment.

"The rate at which black people are dying, compared to whites, is really just astounding," said Courtney Cogburn, an associate professor at the Columbia University School of Social Work. "There are patterns at this intersection of race and socioeconomic status that make it very clear this

is just not a story about poverty."

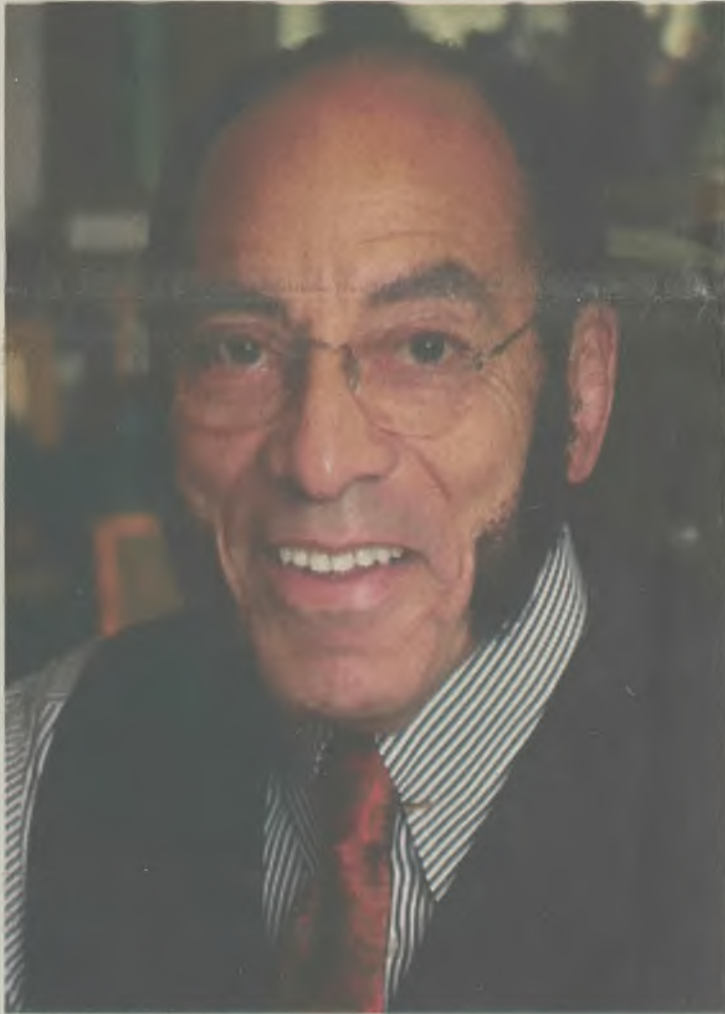
President Donald Trump and the government's top infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, acknowledged the higher death rate among African Americans during Tuesday's (April 9) White House briefing. The president called it a "tremendous challenge," and suggested that federal health officials could release national racial and ethnic COVID-19 data within days.

For its analysis, the AP

made requests of COVID-19 racial breakdowns in states, cities and counties nationwide, ultimately gathering data from eight states, six major U.S. cities, including New York City and the District of Columbia, and six of Florida's largest counties.

The data collected ranges from New York to Illinois to Alabama to San Diego, and covers an area that represents 82 million Americans, nearly 43% of whom are nonwhite. Other

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Earl Graves Sr. Courtesy Black Enterprise Website

## Earl Graves Sr., founder of Black Enterprise magazine, dies at 85

NEW YORK (AP) - Earl Graves Sr., who championed black businesses as the founder of the first African American-owned magazine focusing on black entrepreneurs, has died. He was 85.

Graves died April 6 after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease, his son, Earl "Butch" Graves Jr, said in a post on Twitter.

Graves launched his magazine, Black Enterprise, in 1970. He later said his aim was to educate, inspire and uplift his readers.

"My goal was to show them how to thrive professionally, economically and as proactive, empowered

citizens," Graves wrote in his 1997 book "How To Succeed In Business Without Being White."

According to an obituary published by Black Enterprise, Graves grew up in Brooklyn and gained an economics degree from Morgan State University. He held jobs in law enforcement and real estate before working on Sen. Robert F. Kennedy's staff.

After Kennedy's assassination in 1968, he moved to found the magazine, which is now headed by his son.

He served on the boards of several major corporations, including American Airlines, Daimler Chrysler and Rohm & Hass and backed the presidential bids of Jesse Jackson and Barack Obama, Black Enterprise wrote.

In addition to Black Enterprise, Graves also ran Pepsi-Cola of Washington, D.C., one of the nation's largest soft-drink distributors owned by African Americans. He sold his stake in the bottler to PepsiCo in 1998.



Masked shoppers walk through the Target parking lot in northeast Jackson, Miss., Wednesday, April 8, 2020. African Americans in Mississippi are being disproportionately affected by the new coronavirus, and many have underlying health problems that make them more vulnerable to it, the state epidemiologist said Tuesday. (AP Photo/Rogelio V. Solis)

## Legislative candidate Alston moving now to N. Carolina House

(AP) - A Durham City Council member will join the North Carolina House now after the death of the legislator she had been likely expected to succeed early next year.

Durham County Democratic activists meeting online April 9 chose Vernetta Alston unanimously to fill the seat left vacant when Rep. MaryAnn Black died on March 25. Gov. Roy Cooper is obligated by state law to appoint Alston to the seat, to serve through December.

The General Assembly scheduled its annual session to begin April 28.

Alston was the only candidate running in 2020 for a two-year term that begins in January for the seat covering Black's heavily Democratic 29th House District. Black announced late last year that she wouldn't seek reelection.

Alston is an attorney who has worked at the Center for Death Penalty Litigation. Her appointment to the legislature will create a vacancy on the Durham council.

## Over 50 new coronavirus cases confirmed at nursing home

PITTSBORO (AP) - Testing confirmed just over 50 additional cases of COVID-19 at a North Carolina nursing home with a coronavirus outbreak, health officials said April 12, as the number of cases around the state continued to rise.

All residents and staff of The Laurels of Chatham were tested for COVID-19 after six people associated with the facility had previously tested positive, Chatham County said in a news release April 12. The results showed an additional 51 individuals had the virus, bringing the total to 57.

"We anticipated that universal testing at the facility would reveal more positive cases, and we remain concerned for the staff, residents and their families affected by this outbreak," Chatham County Public Health Director Layton Long said in a statement. "While COVID-19 is highly infectious, especially in congregate living facilities, we remain focused on limiting the spread of the virus."

Data released April 12 by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services showed an increase in confirmed cases to just over 4,500, up by about 200 from the day before. The death toll increased by one to 81.

Both figures are almost certainly an undercount due to a lack of widespread testing and the likelihood that many people without symptoms could be spreading the highly contagious virus.

State data show there are 28 ongoing outbreaks in nursing homes across the state. An outbreak is defined as two or more laboratory confirmed cases.

Among those outbreaks is one at PruittHealth-Carolina Point in Durham, where a fourth person died over the weekend, The News & Observer reported.

In Concord, at least 14 people in a skilled nursing and rehabilitation center have tested positive, with around 200 tests still pending, health officials told local media.

Nationwide, the U.S. has over a half million confirmed cases, with deaths surpassing 21,000 on April 12, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

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