

# 5th Black History Month Community Wellness Fair Confronts Racism as a Public Health Emergency

*5th Black History Month Community Wellness Fair in Portland, ME, February 26-27, addressing racism's impact on public health amid federal policy changes.*

PORTLAND, ME, UNITED STATES, February 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Five years ago, the first Black History Month Community Wellness Fair emerged in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, when Black Mainers bore one of the highest infection rates in the nation. A small but determined team

organized workshops and check-ins to protect and uplift communities most impacted by the health emergency. Today, Cross Cultural Community Services (CCCS) is proud to announce a dramatically expanded 5th Black History Month Community Wellness Fair, taking place on February 26 and 27, 2025, to address how racism continues to shape public health—even as federal policy changes shift the national landscape.

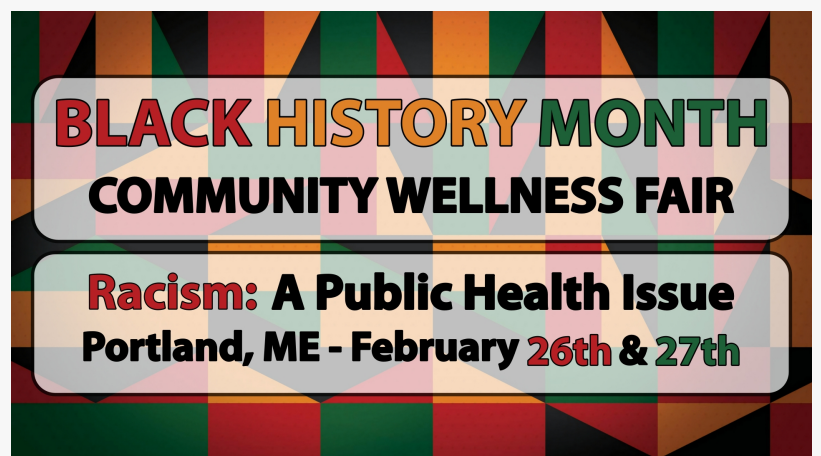
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We're seeing how vulnerable communities can be when protections fluctuate at the national level. In this event, we aim to convert that heightened awareness into tangible, community-driven progress.”

*Regina Phillips, DSW*

What began as an urgent response to COVID-19—once limited to smaller sessions—has evolved into a two-day forum drawing healthcare providers, policy experts, and community leaders across Maine. In the half-decade since the fair's inception, public awareness of systemic racism has intensified, especially following high-profile cases of police violence and widespread calls for equity, diversity, and inclusion. With the pandemic still casting a long shadow, CCCS aims to harness that energy and channel it into sustainable changes in how care is accessed and

delivered.



Logo for 5th Black History Month Community Wellness Fair

Day One, scheduled for February 26 (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM) at Glickman Family Library, University of Southern Maine, will focus on systemic barriers in healthcare, persistent health inequities, and storytelling from those directly affected. A keynote by public health advocate Melissa Hue will lead into reproductive justice and policy change panels featuring organizations such as the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP) and the Maine Human Rights Commission. Day Two, taking place on February 27 (12:00 PM – 7:00 PM) at the Equality Community Center, will discuss policy reforms and solutions to barriers to accessing care alongside interactive resource sessions featuring informational tables.

Nearly two dozen organizations are exhibiting at the fair, including Maine Health, Maine Family Planning, Gateway Community Services, USM Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, Frannie Peabody Center, Market Decisions Research, Health for Mankind, Quality Housing Coalition, Portland Public Health & Cities Readiness Initiative, Cumberland District Public Health Council, Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine, Prosperity Maine, and Southern Maine Agency on Aging. CCCS extends gratitude to these exhibitors, as well as the many sponsors and partners—among them Equality Community Center, Portland Public Health, Coffee By Design, Susie Bock, Maine Health Access Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, Forage Market, Wild Oats, and Flat Bread—who make this event possible.

Despite medical advances and increased awareness, inequities remain deeply embedded in healthcare structures. CCCS believes that recent shifts in civil rights, immigration, and public health policy illustrate the need for sustained, community-focused action to safeguard vulnerable populations. The organization aims to transform heightened awareness of racism's impact on public health into lasting improvements in healthcare delivery and access.

#### About Cross Cultural Community Services (CCCS)

CCCS is a Maine-based nonprofit committed to dismantling systemic inequities that disproportionately affect BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities. Through advocacy, education, and direct collaboration with healthcare institutions, CCCS transforms political momentum into tangible efforts that improve health outcomes for all.

Registration for members of the media is not required.

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