

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

On the
"Front Line"
with Artist
Terrance Osborne

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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Save Black Lives from COVID-19



“We know that there’s a disproportionate rate of infections and death nationwide,” Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Chair Karen Bass (D-Calif .) stated in a recent conference call with the Black Press of America represented by the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA).

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior Correspondent

With evidence growing that shows African Americans disproportionately affected by the novel coronavirus, just nine states and the District of Columbia have released a racial breakdown of those diagnosed with the disease.

Concerned health experts, members of the U.S. Congress, and Civil Rights Organizations have ramped up their call for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to provide a detailed report.

“We know that there’s a disproportionate rate of infections and death nationwide,” Congressional Black

Caucus (CBC) Chair Karen Bass (D-Calif.) stated in a recent conference call with the Black Press of America represented by the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA).

“It’s happening in all of our [African American] communities nationwide. We feel that it’s an emergency that needs to be addressed right away, and, importantly, we need data, and the CDC is not compiling data,”

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

Bass added.

Rep. Robin Kelly (D-Ill.), the Chair of the CBC's Health Brain-trust, agreed that statistics along racial lines are vital.

"The data already released shows troubling trends for African Americans that must be addressed to ensure public health," Kelly stated.

African Americans makeup about 18 percent of the population in Michigan but account for approximately 40 percent of coronavirus-related deaths, according to Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D-Michigan).

"I am speaking as just one part of the major piece of concern, and that's the alarming way in how this pandemic is having an impact on our Black community," Lawrence said.

"We are the number one target for this disease. We have pre-existing conditions, and yet we're told to go home when we visit the emergency room. We know that there must be some form of regulation in place for testing and getting testing sites and equipment into the community," Lawrence added.

A recent published report noted that the Louisiana Department of Health revealed that 70 percent of coronavirus deaths in the state are African American, despite Black people making up just 32 percent of the population.

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, African Americans reportedly accounted for nearly half of coronavirus cases and more than 80 percent of deaths related to the disease.

"I have seen in my waiting room mostly Black and Brown patients who are essential workers and service workers who can't afford to stay home," Uche Blackstone, the CEO of Advancing Health Equity, told The Hill.

"These are the ones that I see presenting to the clinic with COVID-19 symptoms," Blackstone stated.

Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.) led a group from congress recently in demanding that the federal government release data about racial disparities in America's response to the pandemic.

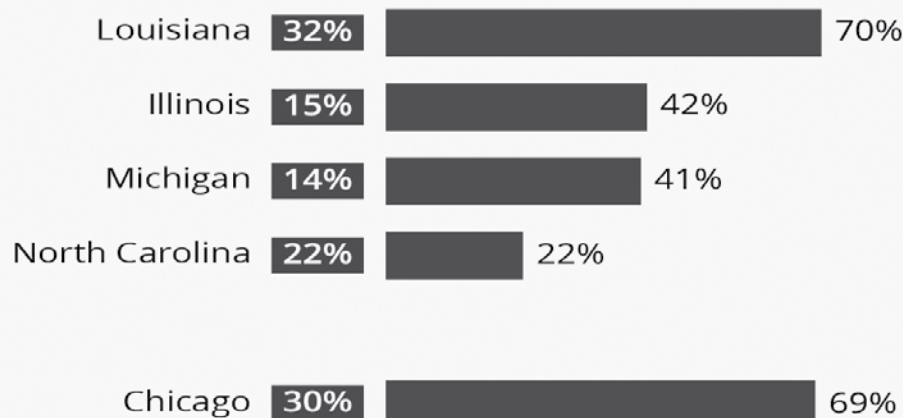
Pressley said she and her colleagues made clear in the letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar that the government is failing to collect and publicly report on the racial and ethnic demographic information for coronavirus tests and patients.

"Without demographic data, policymakers and researchers will have no way to identify and address ongoing disparities and health inequities that risk accelerating the impact of the novel coronavirus and the respiratory disease it causes," the letter said.

COVID-19's Devastating Impact On African Americans

African American share of state/city populations and COVID-19 deaths (as of Apr 06, 2020)

■ Share of state/city's population ■ Share of COVID-19 deaths



Sources: 2010 Census, respective state/city health departments



statista

A recent published report noted that the Louisiana Department of Health revealed that 70 percent of coronavirus deaths in the state are African American, despite Black people making up just 32 percent of the population.

"Although COVID-19 does not discriminate along racial or ethnic lines, existing racial disparities and inequities in health outcomes and health care access may mean that the nation's response to preventing and mitigating its harms will not be felt equally in every community."

Dr. Ebony Hilton and Dr. Taison Bell, of the Virginia Medical School, have publicly demanded the release of racial data surrounding the virus.

"Release the data," stated Dr. Hilton, who continuously posts that message on social media sites like Twitter.

"We see in states that aren't reporting on racial demographics that there's been a surge in patients dying from respiratory distress and respiratory failure," Dr. Bell stated.

The NNPA and its Coronavirus Task Force was the first media related entity in the U.S. to declare a "State of Emergency for Black America" as the fatalities among Black Americans continue to rise across the nation.

Using social media to increase public awareness about COVID-19, the NNPA is encouraging the use of the following hashtags: #Save-BlackLives and #NNPACoronavirusTaskForce.

AdoptUSKids



His first football season, Isaiah told us, 'Wear a jersey with my name on it. I want everyone to know you're here for me.'

Darnell and Denna, adopted 16-year-old Isaiah



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ADOPTUSKIDS.ORG

NOLA Stay at Home

Part 4

Fleur De Lis Data News Weekly Columnist

We are in week four of the new normal living in the age of the CO-VID-19 (Coronavirus) something that is changing the way we live.

Using social media platforms people are posting their activities as well as things that are important to them such as family, friends and loved ones.

Data News Weekly is shining the light on some of these people with the hope to inspire our citizens that our best days are ahead of us.

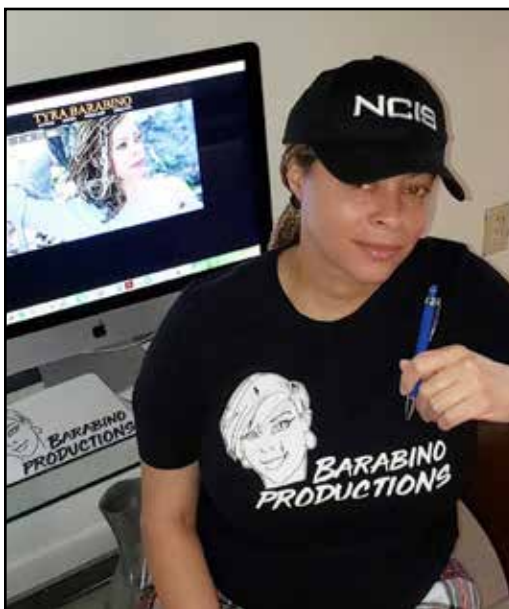
So, we are asking all to stay safe and stay informed!!!



Timolynn Sams



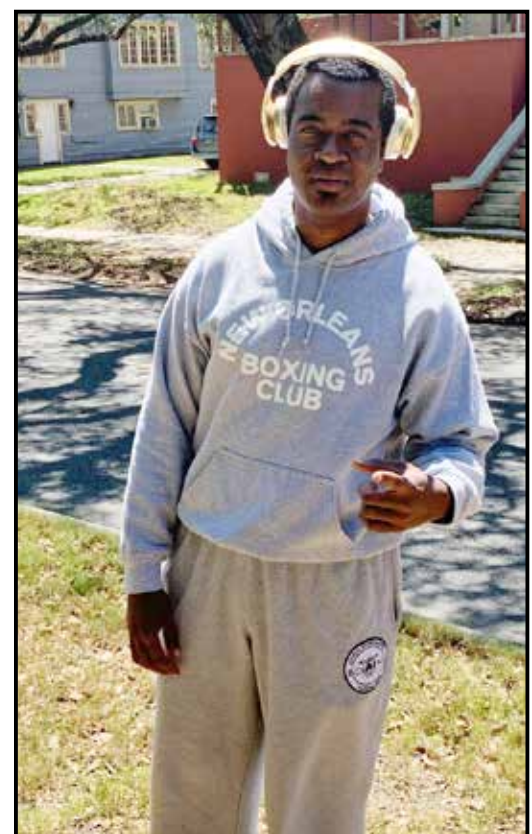
Horns of Hope



Tyra Barabino



Jamie Jones and son Jamie Jones Jr.



Eusi Phillips



Natasha Jackson

On the “Front Line” with Artist Terrance Osborne

Edwin Buggage
Data News Weekly Editor-In-Chief

Terrance Osborne is a New Orleans native whose rich, colorful, and vibrant paintings capturing the spirit of New Orleans' rich heritage and culture has made him one of the most renowned artists of his generation.

Throughout his illustrious career he has broken down barriers, achieving both critical and commercial success and amassing legions of fans admiring his work. In his latest paintings he's taken on the relevant and poignant subject of the COVID-19 Pandemic, creating a series called “Front Line.”

Describing his first piece of the series he says, “I wanted to do a something honoring the heroes and sheroes in the medical field based on the iconic ‘Rosie

the Riveter’ from World War II, called Front Line.” Continuing he says, “A friend of mine gave me the idea; his wife is a nurse and we talked about how hard they work and didn't have enough masks and other equipment they needed, and I thought I could honor their hard work and dedication in fighting to keep us well in the face of this pandemic.”

Not surprisingly, the responses have evoked heartfelt emotions. “I want the country to use this image to inspire the best that's in us as humans and that is serving others. I have had people call me crying, saying how much it touched them.”

Osborne is giving away 1,000 posters to hospitals in New Orleans and the surrounding area. He is also giving away the wallpaper image for cell phones and the print is for sale online



New Orleans native Terrance Osborne, whose rich, colorful and vibrant paintings capturing the spirit of New Orleans' rich heritage and culture have made him one of the most renowned artists of his generation.

at his website, Terranceosborne.com

Ever the optimist, Osborne speaks of how this moment is bringing people together and hopes that this can continue once the City is re-opened. “This is a tragedy that's like no other in most of our lifetimes. What is important in this is when it is over what we have learned to slow down and re-set our priorities of what is important. During this time, we have seen so many gestures of goodwill and kindness in communities across New Orleans and beyond. It is this common thread showing that we are all human and we are working together in the fight against COVID-19, and while my piece is about those in the medical field; we are all on the front-line and it is our responsibility to make all our communities better by looking out for each other.”



If I could do one thing, I'd have a daycare closer to work.

If you could do one thing for your community, what would it be? More daycare centers? More funding for Head Start? Completing the 2020 Census is a safe and easy way to inform how billions of dollars in funding flow into your community for hundreds of services. **Respond online, by phone, or by mail.**

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Surviving COVID-19

Part II



Renetta Burrell Perry
Data News Weekly Contributor

Excerpt from Part I: As I watched my oldest daughter's fears converge with mine, I decided in the third week that I must be tested. One week before having to be admitted into the hospital I arrived there after a doctor suggested I had the virus through a tele medic interview. He was blunt. "You probably have the Coronavirus and you shouldn't be around your family, or anyone for that matter. You need to self-quarantine."

One week later after experiencing the worst pain and sickness that I have ever felt in my entire life, I

wound up at Ochsner Medical Center on Jefferson Highway. The St. Bernard Hospital's nurse's words reverberated in my mind for nearly seven days. I did not want to expose myself to the virus at a hospital, but in reality, it was killing me at home. I was at a terrible crossroads. I had taken the test at the Mahalia Jackson drive-thru site at least a week prior. As I sat by my cell phone every day waiting on my test results, I was still hoping to get that call saying, "you tested negative for the virus." I could then, somehow feel better and go on with my life. But that was not my fate. I had to make a decision. At my worst, I asked God to please allow me to die. I woke my daughter from her sleep at 4:00 a.m. on that fateful Saturday morning, March 29th (later that day she drove me to the hospital). I asked her to pray for me and to let me go. I had been taking Extra Strength Tylenol every six hours, around the clock, for over two weeks straight,

Perry's Major Symptoms in Chronological Order

- Sharp, Constant Headache
- Chest Pain
- Loss of smell and taste
- Cough
- Chills and Fever (100.4 and above)
- Lethargy/weakness
- Diarrhea
- Dehydration
- Overheating

If you have any of these symptoms, seek the care of a medical professional as soon as possible. If you experience shortness of breath, call 911 or get the nearest emergency room immediately.

trying to chase a fever that had finally begun consuming my body. I felt so overwhelmed by heat in that moment I was sure I would burn to death right there on my bed. I have since heard other survivors say they felt the same way. That the disease is so brutal and unrelenting,

it makes you feel utterly defeated. But my daughter refused to give up on me. My mother refused to give up on me. My youngest daughter refused to give up on me. I was so sick; I just could not see past that moment.

When I gave up trying to fight

on my own, it was because of God's voice. He said, "get to the hospital. You can't catch what you already have." Of course, He was right. The ER doctor took one look at me, having known my symptoms, and said, "Sweetheart, you have the Coronavirus, but we're going to do everything we can do to help you get better." She consequently ordered an in-house test for the virus and the positive results came two days later, during my hospital stay.

From the moment the ER doctor spoke those words to me through her clear face visor and protective mask, I've gotten better - notwithstanding the terrifying experience of being in the hospital, stricken with a disease that could potentially kill every doctor, nurse, cleaning person, and food deliverer that entered my room; nor the rollercoaster ride of emotional and physical pain the disease causes; nor the fact that physical contact with my loved was prohibited. Despite all of this, I relied on my faith and on the love of my family and friends to pull me through.

By day two of my hospital stay, the same voice that spoke and said, "you can't catch what you already have" assured me that I would live. My lips, trembling from my physical weakness, formed, and said, "I speak life into my body." My phone lit up with FaceTime sessions with my daughters, my mom, and my sister. My mom was safe in my sister's home and my husband was taking care of our daughters. I focused on my faith and my rehabilitation. My lungs worked and my fevers ceased. I was 15 pounds lighter and visibly weakened, but I had been one of the blessed ones who survived COVID-19.

When my family arrived on River Road to pick me up from the back side of Ochsner Hospital, the sight of them made me cry "happy tears" as my 11-year-old would call them. I also cried for those who were left behind who may not have had the same fate as I did. For those whose families would not pick them up and bring them home. Survivor's remorse kicked in, but my faith again helped me to realize that I was still here for a reason. My job now is to find out exactly what that reason will be and to embrace and fulfill it. I am excited and thankful to God for allowing me to be here to do just that.

Commentary

Eviction Moratoriums aren't Enough, to get Through COVID-19, We Need to Guarantee Housing for All



Andreanecia Morris
Executive Director,
HousingNOLA

Next Friday will be May 1st, and thousands of New Orleanians will continue to grapple with how they can pay for housing in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic. While the city and state have put forward eviction moratoriums to protect renters, there is real concern about what happens after the stay at home orders are lifted. Adding to that, the moratoriums require that the tenants stand their ground with no guarantee that they will be able to pay rent in the coming months.

Earlier this week, Eviction Lab issued a COVID-19 Housing Policy Scorecard and assessed Louisiana's with a .38 out of 5 stars. That is less than a half a star. Matthew Desmond founded the Eviction Lab in 2017 with the conviction that stable, affordable housing can be an effective platform to promote economic mobility, health, and community vitality. Desmond started studying housing, poverty, and eviction in 2008—summarizing his work in the Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. Desmond advocates for a "Universal Housing Voucher Program from the U.S. government for families below a certain income threshold so that they pay no more than 30 percent of their income on housing."

New Orleans and the State of Louisiana must use funds from all available sources, including CARES

Act Supplemental Community Development Block Grants and Emergency Services Grants, for immediate rental assistance so landlords can continue to provide housing for renters and to secure occupiable hotel rooms and short term rentals for the housing insecure as shelter-in-place and social distancing policies tighten. The rental assistance should have renter protections, such just cause eviction protections, a 14-day right to cure, anti-retaliation policies, and fair criminal background screening procedures, to secure the city's investment in each unit of affordable housing and ensure stability and long-term tenancy for the renter. While hotel rooms would be appropriate for individuals, we believe that homes and apartments would be more conducive to families—particularly those with children. This program should also include an allocation for case workers, for those in need of

social services, and property managers and maintenance personnel who will be working tirelessly to ensure the habitability of homes during this crisis.

HousingNOLA and its advocacy partner, the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance (GNOHA) have called on the Governor and Mayor to lead by example and use their executive powers to finally align resources and direct local and state agencies to #PutHousingFirst and guarantee sustainable housing solutions. We must provide real relief, follow through with impactful programs and connect people with the thousand's empty homes, apartments and hotel rooms that are available right now. The pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus calls for people to shelter at home—this crisis demands that our leaders address the Affordable Housing Crisis that has crippled this community for years.

Councilmember Jason Williams Issues Statement in Response to U.S. Supreme Court Decision Abolishing Split Juries



U.S. Supreme Court ruling says criminal convictions require unanimous juries, a win for Civil Rights advocates.



City Councilmember-at-Large Jason Williams.

NEW ORLEANS - City Council Vice President Jason Williams has released the following statement in response to news of today's U.S. Supreme Court Decision Abolishing Split Juries:

"The result of today's decision by the U.S. Supreme Court is truly momentous, as it creates a more equitable opportunity to achieve justice in a historically slanted system. Even very conservative judges weighed in strongly, noting 'evidence that the racism that spawned the split verdict law 120 years ago in Louisiana remains embedded within it today.' The decision is also a reminder that we should not blindly rely on old, broken policies and systems to achieve the goal of real public safety.

Over a year ago, local innovators in Criminal Justice System

Reform, such as Senator JP Morrell, Unanimous Jury Coalition, and the Promise of Justice Initiative, devoted their time and energy to building a movement that pushed the needle forward nationally. I am proud to have supported this effort on the municipal level, along with my colleagues and other local public servants.

Strong leadership at our statehouse listened to the testimonies and policy recommendations of the formerly incarcerated and exonerated who are now on the front lines of the fight for full restoration of rights. National entities and organizations got involved in creative ways. Suddenly, Louisiana's racist past was front and center, and the reality of countless lives taken and irreversible changed was unavoidable.

That movement pushed a reform package through a conservative statehouse, and the waves it created ultimately resulted in this important decision.

Regrettably, our own local prosecutorial system has not embodied the sort of transformative foresight that its counterparts around the country have exhibited. For years we have worked with many of these same organizations to push reform in New Orleans. Predictably, when efforts to reform bail, reduce jail population, and welfare releases for COVID-19 vulnerable pre-trial detainees are proposed, Leon Cannizzaro launches opposition. While 80% of Orleans Parish overwhelmingly shouted their support for abolishing non-unanimous juries, DA Cannizzaro stood on the wrong

side of history - even fast-tracking some cases so they could be tried under a system rooted in White supremacy.

This decision is a reminder that we need to seriously reexamine how we have dispensed justice for generations of Louisianans and Americans. The judicial process is hardwired to seek punishment of the already marginalized as opposed to genuine justice for victims and the accused alike. We have a wealth of interdisciplinary research about the far-reaching ill effects of these inequitable systems and procedures that got us here. We will be doomed to find ourselves on the wrong side of history yet again if we don't take action to remove similar disparities from our Criminal Legal System."

DATA CLASSIFIED

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Job Opportunity

Freelance Writers Wanted

Data News Weekly, "The People's Paper," is looking for freelance writers to join our team print and digital team. We want to hear from you if you are a working journalist, or an aspiring journalist who has 2 years or more of newspaper or PR writing experience. We need writers who can cover New Orleans news stories, ranging from local high school sports, community events, City Hall and entertainment. Experience in print is necessary, experience in digital and social media are encouraged.

Compensation is competitive and great story ideas will be appreciated.

If you are interested, please email your resume and 3 writing samples to: terrybjones@bellsouth.net and datanewseditor@bellsouth.net.

We can't wait to hear from you!

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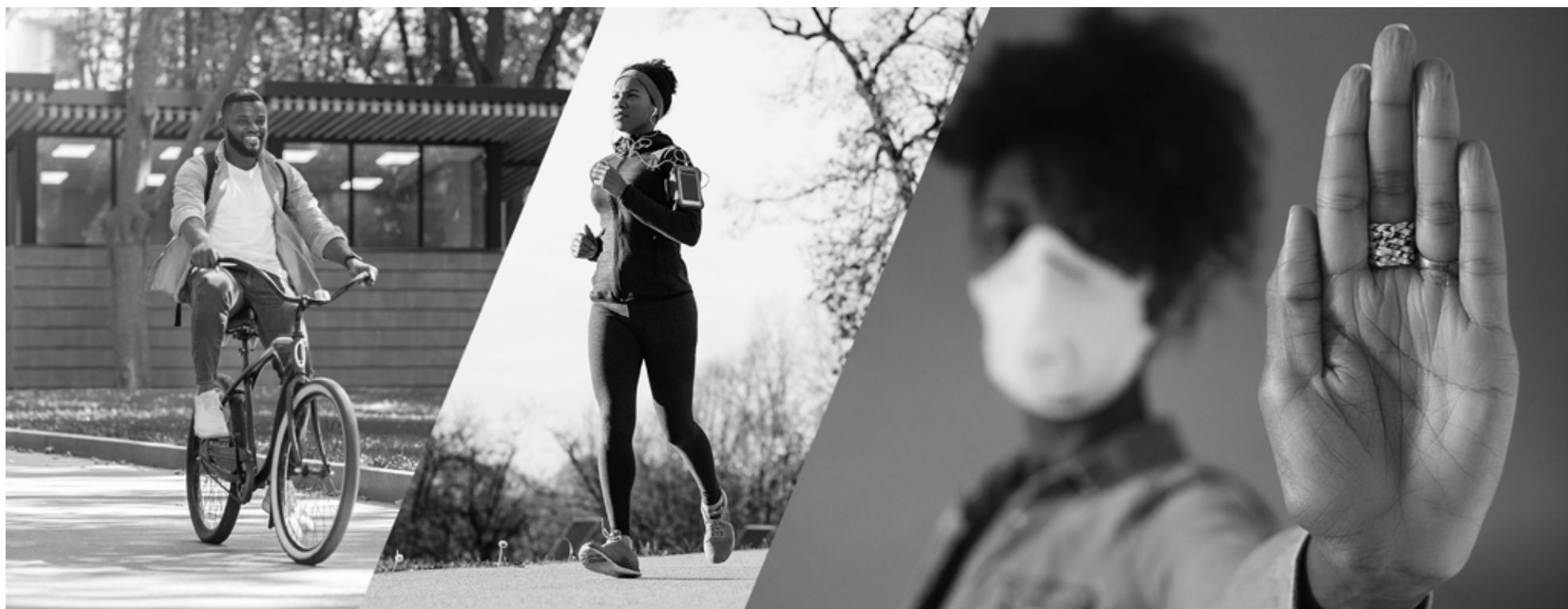
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