Written by Al McFarlane, Editor-In-Chief Friday, 30 August 2013 12:24



"We get the misery, they get the money," said one elder, describing the frustration being voiced in the Black community at the lack of genuine engagement of Black legacy institutions in connecting Black Minnesotans to the new insurance exchange created by the Obama administration for the purpose of improving access to healthcare.

In Minnesota, the exchange, called MNsure, is being rolled out this week at Minnesota State Fair in a promotional blitz that, in theory at least, would get Minnesotans excited to learn about and purchase health insurance. One of the target markets for health insurance is Black people. Almost 20% of Black Minnesotans don't have health insurance, compared to only 7% of whites.

The purpose of the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA), or ObamaCare, as supporters and detractors call it, is to create a pathway to affordable health insurance by bringing more people into the health insurance system.

Minnesota, like other states taking of federal funds to enact ACA, is on a mission to explain what MNsure is and how MNsure works. Public forums have been held to explore how groups can effectively connect people to MNsure, especially communities with the highest rates of health disparities and uninsured people. Forums allow people to learn about the challenges and barriers to increasing health equity in Minnesota communities and how MNsure may be able to help.

MNsure could provide health insurance for the 300,000 Minnesotans who don't currently have it. Open enrollment for MNsure begins October 1.

But it looks like Minnesota is bypassing Black people once again by failing to engage initiatives originating from legacy Black institutions. In the recent round of projects awarded contract grants to support

getting the word out and community buy-in about MNsure, legacy Black institutions were conspicuously absent. (see chart)

General	Outstate	Latino	Asian	Native	Refugees	Somali	Women	A
Accountability MN	Communicating for America, Inc	Centro Chicano	Hmong American Partnership	MN Chippewa Tribe	International Inst. Of Minnesota	Somali Health Solutions	Planned Parenthood	
MN Teen Challenge	Central MN Jobs & Training	CLUES			MN Council of Churches		Women Venture	
MN AIDS Project	Generations Health Care Initiative							
Portico Healthnet ResourceWest, Inc.	Small Business Minnesota							
Springboard for the Arts	Community Resource Connections, Inc.							
MN Health Access Network	Healthfinders Collaborative, Inc.							
Lyon-Dugin associates	Women's Health Center of Duluth, P.A.							

Clinics	Community Action	County Entities	
Health Center of Duluth	MN Community Action Partnership	Dakota County	
Northpoint Health & Wellness	Western Community Action, Inc.		
Southside Community Health Services, Inc.			