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One of the Largest Surveys of African American Military and Military Connected Persons Reveals Critical Gaps in Health Information and Outreach

The PMW Foundation releases findings of its survey of over 1,000 AA military members, retirees and their families; and calls for immediate action to address health information and impact health disparities in this group of men/women who heroically have served this country.

Oxon Hill, Maryland – [July 1, 2024] – The PMW Foundation (PMWF) has released the findings of a groundbreaking survey that sheds light on the health concerns and needs of African American military members and their families. Conducted from September 1, 2023, to November 1, 2023, the survey gathered data from 1,004 validated respondents, with 91.67% identifying as African American and 8.33% as biracial (African American/White).

Of the respondents, 70% either currently serve or have served in the military, while the remaining 30% are military-connected family members. The survey encompassed individuals from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard, focusing on their health perceptions, concerns, and needs. Notably, all respondents reported having a physician or healthcare provider, with over 41% utilizing the VA Health system.

The results of this comprehensive and statistically significant survey are both revealing and alarming, highlighting critical deficiencies in health information and outreach within the African American military community. The data obtained provides a unique opportunity for targeted health awareness and outreach efforts to address the specific needs of this underrepresented population.

Key findings from the survey include:

- The majority of respondents rated their own health as fair to good, while the health of their family members was generally perceived as good to fair.
- Respondents identified a wide range of health conditions and illnesses affecting themselves and their families.
- An overwhelming 91.67% of respondents had visited a physician or healthcare provider within the last two years, underscoring the importance of regular healthcare access.
- Of those surveyed, 58.33% had seen their primary care physician for a routine check-up in the past year, emphasizing the importance of preventative care.
- A significant 75% of respondents reported taking prescription medications, highlighting the prevalence of medical treatment within the community.
- Despite a strong desire to improve their health, only 25% of respondents felt adequately equipped with the knowledge and tools to do so, indicating a need for enhanced health education and resources.

- Concerningly, all respondents expressed a lack of adequate healthcare availability for the retired military community, signaling a critical gap in healthcare services.
- While trust in healthcare information varied, 100% of respondents placed their trust in their doctor or healthcare provider, with only 16.67% expressing trust in the VA Medical system.
- Furthermore, 66.7% of respondents felt that health information was not specifically targeted towards them, indicating a need for more tailored messaging and outreach efforts.

This survey, one of the largest of its kind of African American/Black military and military-connected individuals in the United States, represents a significant step towards understanding and addressing the unique perspectives and needs of this community. Further, we believe that the information can be extrapolated to other underrepresented minority populations and the military community at large. . The insights gleaned from this research will inform targeted health initiatives and advocacy efforts aimed at bridging the existing gaps in health information and outreach. The health concerns and disparities are rampant in this segment of the military and military connected population.

Jerome Williams, Colonel USAF Retired, serving as the Executive Director of the PMW Foundation, has issued a powerful call to action in response to the concerning findings revealed by one of the largest surveys of African American military and military-connected individuals.

"This survey illuminates the persistent trust barriers that exist within the veteran community, particularly in relation to the Veteran's Administration," Mr. Williams stressed the importance of conscientious steps to address the profound health disparities among those under the care of the VA. "The trust barriers that remain highlights the need for the Veteran's Administration to make conscientious steps and develop novel ways to address cultural competency and action to impact the glaring health disparities amongst those under its care; especially those who face steep health disparities."

The survey findings underscore the pressing need for immediate action to bridge the existing gaps in health information, access, and outreach for African American military and military-connected individuals. The PMW Foundation and its partners are committed to leveraging this data to advocate for meaningful change and to support initiatives that uplift and empower African Americans within the military community. By collaborating with stakeholders and policymakers, the foundation aims to drive positive outcomes and improve the health outcomes of those who have served this country.

The PMW Foundation and its partners including but not limited to Healthywomen.org are committed to advocating for meaningful change and driving initiatives that uplift and empower this underserved community, improving the health outcomes and well-being of those who have selflessly served their country.

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About The PMW Foundation, Inc:

The PMW Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing support, education, and outreach for veterans in the United States, starting from the time of separation. Through collaborations, partnerships, and culturally relevant educational initiatives, the foundation aims to empower veterans by providing information on benefits and opportunities. To learn more, visit www.thepmwfoundation.org.