

## **2020 Hoops 'n' Health Sports Tournament and Health Fair During COVID-19**

In light of ongoing concerns related to the 2019 Coronavirus (COVID-19), the Cambridge Public Health Department has made the difficult decision not to hold its annual Hoops 'N' Health sports tournament and health fair in its traditional format at Hoyt Field.

This would have been the 27th consecutive year of celebrating this annual event, and we are sad to miss this opportunity to connect with the community in Cambridge. Hoops 'n' Health has long served to remind us to make men's health and wellness a priority in the city, and the health and safety of participants, audience, and community partners is our primary and utmost concern.

While we would hope that the number of cases attributed to the global pandemic will be on the decline in our community by late June, and that social distancing measures may have lessened by that time, it is clear that our continued vigilance will be needed for the foreseeable future. The Cambridge Public Health Department has been paying close attention to the health impacts of COVID-19 on communities of color. Earlier this week, the department released data regarding the number of cases of COVID-19 among communities of color, which can be found on the City's website [here](#). While not surprising, the data are a stark reminder of the structural inequities acting on communities of color and the subsequent of the disproportionate burden of health risks. The rate for black (nonhispanic) residents is nearly 3x the rate for white residents.

Given the critical needs associated with flattening the curve of this health pandemic and the restrictions that are currently in place for maintaining the recommended social distancing in Cambridge and in the Commonwealth, we firmly believe that postponing the event is the right and best decision. A large basketball tournament and community health fair would be too risky, and would not be sending the right message to our friends, neighbors and long-standing supporters at this time.

We are using new ways to stay connected to the community virtually during this time, including the continuation of our Mental Health Conversations for Men with a Zoom session on Men's Mental Health and COVID-19, and are planning two additional virtual health events. We continue to collect additional race and ethnicity data, and are looking at how social determinants of health such as housing and employment impact the spread of COVID-19. This will help us better understand and respond to this health crisis.

We thank our city partners and longtime collaborators, including the Men of Color Task Force as we are all adjusting to this new environment, and are looking forward to continued collaboration.