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## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2020

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### **THE C. W. WILLIAMS COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER HOSTS COMMUNITY-WIDE CALL TO ACTION MEETING TO ADDRESS COVID-19'S IMPACT ON THE BLACK COMMUNITY**

CHARLOTTE, NC, April 24, 2020 – Debra Weeks, CEO of The C.W. Williams Community Health Center, Inc. (CWWCHC) hosted a “Call to Action” virtual meeting on Monday, April 20, 2020 from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. The purpose of the meeting was to address and respond to COVID-19 and its impact on the black community.

CWWCHC Board member, Dr. Michele Griffith, facilitated the meeting. Guest speakers included Mecklenburg County Public Health Director, Gibbie Harris; Mr. Benjamin Money, NCDHHS Deputy Secretary for Health Services; Dr. Ray Feaster of Novant Health; Dr. Emily Cooper of Atrium Health; Garry McFadden, Mecklenburg County Sheriff; and Dr. Jerry Saunders of The C.W. Williams Community Health Center, Inc.

More than 63 community members participated on the call to hear and interact with the guest speakers on topics such as testing, the healthcare delivery system for well and sick patients, crime and domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health, and social determinants of health factors in minority communities, including employment, food and housing security.

“Addressing COVID-19 requires more than a few; it requires us all to fight this like we’re in a war” said CWWCHC CEO Debra Weeks. “There is work to be done on the ground, and we have a lot of work to do. We must galvanize and coordinate services and bridge the gaps that exist. Where are we now? Where can/should we go? What do we need to do? Who is responsible for doing it? We all need to come together to determine what needs to be done to minimize deterioration in the black community,” added Ms. Weeks.

Mecklenburg County Public Health Director Gibbie Harris shared current statistics related to COVID-19 testing, positive cases, and deaths countywide and reemphasized the County’s commitment to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. Although blacks make up only one third of Mecklenburg County’s population, Ms. Harris shared that more than half of COVID-19 deaths are non-Hispanics blacks.

At the meeting’s close, participants were asked to join one of six committees: Crime, Education, Faith-Based, Healthcare, Legislative, or Social Determinants of Health (to include factors such as Housing, Employment, Food Security, Homelessness, Transportation, etc.). The next Call to Action meeting will be held in approximately three weeks. If you would like to serve on one of the six committees, please send your contact information and committee preference to [evaughn@cwwilliams.org](mailto:evaughn@cwwilliams.org) or you may call (980) 335-0498.

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#### **About The C. W. Williams Community Health Center, Inc.**

*The C. W. Williams Community Health Center, Inc. (CWWCHC) is a Federally Qualified Community Health Center (FQHC) and 501(c)(3), non-profit organization established by the late Dr. C. W. Williams and friends in 1981 to ensure that under-served patients receive high quality healthcare. CWWCHC provides primary medical care, dentistry, mental health & substance use disorder treatment and counseling, comprehensive HIV/AIDS/STI testing and specialty care, PrEP, women’s health services, and pharmacy services for people of all ages. Each year, CWWCHC handles approximately 30,000 patient visits.*