

## WAS THE SURGEON GENERAL JEROME ADAMS WRONG?

By Dr. Michael Lenoir

When I heard Surgeon General Jerome Adam's recent statement, explaining why Black people have the highest rates for contracting the coronavirus by citing their use of "drugs, tobacco and alcohol," I thought he said "lifestyle," but when listening again my first response was what is a "Black lifestyle?" But his definition is probably shared by most White Americans.

Of course lifestyle is a problem for any American who drinks alcohol, uses drugs and eats dangerous foods... that is the poster child for the vulnerable population most susceptible to the corona virus. But his causation ignores several key issues.

Black people are the thin black line .... driving buses and subways, cleaning streets and hospital, and working in nursing homes that were health deathtraps before the pandemic started.

We were sick before this happened. More hypertension, diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease. So why is America surprised when we are sick more often, die more from and are more impacted by this virus?

Finally, but still in the closet, is the common denominator... racism. In the health care system, from the cradle to the grave Black people are treated differently...less testing, less necessary surgery, maybe even in choices of who gets ventilators if it comes to that possibility.

In defense of the Surgeon General, he had a tough job, and I think he has done pretty well. It is almost like he is a secret agent trying to get the truth out from that cesspool of lies and distraction coming from leadership in the federal administration. But his statement, probably simply reinforces very common perceptions of White Americans about who we are as a people. When he tried to explain his comments for an administration that was probably euphoric by what was said, you haven't seen him since.