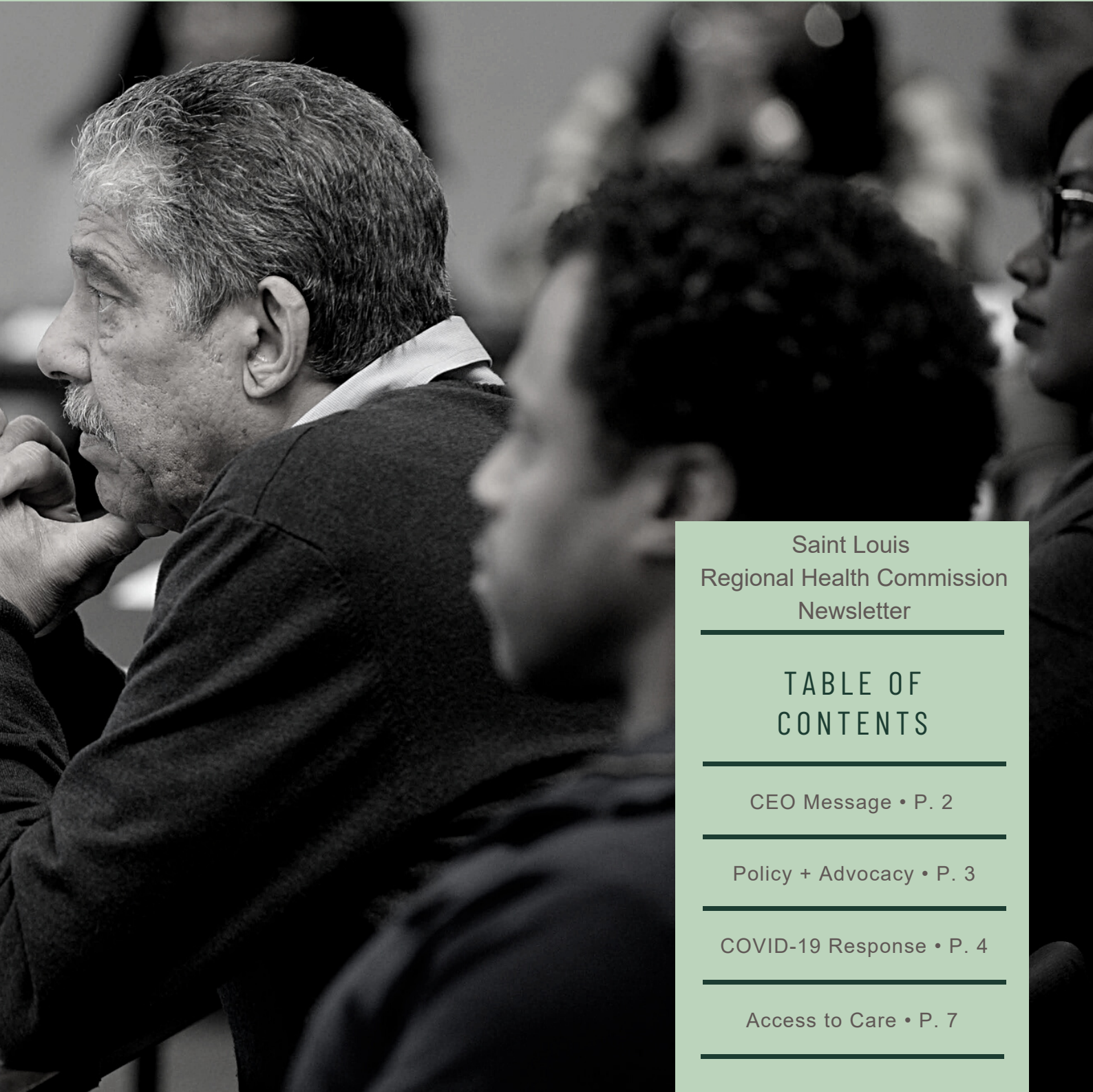




Health Care Happenings

May 2020

Improving access and health outcomes for the uninsured and underinsured across the St. Louis region



Saint Louis
Regional Health Commission
Newsletter

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CEO Message • P. 2

Policy + Advocacy • P. 3

COVID-19 Response • P. 4

Access to Care • P. 7



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

In December 2018, I was appointed Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the RHC, and the organization went through a period of transition and uncertainty while undergoing the search process for a new leader of the organization. Under my leadership, we were able to meet our 2019 strategic priorities, while also establishing a new [Patient Advisory Board](#) and developing a new framework for [policy and advocacy](#).

In February 2020, [I was named the CEO of the RHC](#). One month later, COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) entered our region, and we joined the world in a new phase of transition and uncertainty. I never would have imagined that our lives would be so drastically changed, and we would have to slowly adjust to a new life of virtual meetings (with many “bring your child and dog to work” days), teaching and entertaining our children, preparing multiple meals a day and limited exposure to the outdoors. While many of us are frustrated by the inconveniences of shelter-in-place, there are many of our friends and neighbors who have had to endure job loss or income reduction, depression or grief and limited access to transportation, food and other resources needed to survive the pandemic.

Even through this crisis and period of uncertainty, the RHC remains committed to serving the uninsured and underinsured in our communities.

We have partnered with our providers and community organizations to reach our underserved and under-resourced communities to ensure all residents in St. Louis City and County have access to services needed to survive this pandemic. As we look forward to the future and work to develop our new “normal”, the RHC is committed to:

1. Reshaping organizational strategies and priorities to meet the evolving needs of our communities;
2. Advocating for policies to increase access to care and promote health equity;
3. Elevating the voice of individuals with lived experience to inform changes in policy and systems;
4. Ensuring health care services are available regardless of an individual’s ability to pay;
5. Collecting and reporting data to inform changes to access to care; and
6. Partnering with community organizations to lead and inform health care transformation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has elevated the need to center the principles of racial and health equity in the way we provide services and distribute resources. We look forward to the work ahead to ensure all our friends and neighbors have the resources needed to be alive and well!

Angela Brown

Even through this crisis and period of uncertainty, the RHC remains committed to serving the uninsured and underinsured in our communities.

ONE STEP CLOSER TOWARDS HEALTH EQUITY AND IMPROVED HEALTH OUTCOMES

The RHC is excited to announce that on May 1, 2020, [Healthcare for Missouri](#) submitted hundreds of thousands of signatures to the State of Missouri to get Medicaid expansion on the November 2020 ballot. The RHC celebrates this momentous step towards health equity and improved health outcomes for Missourians. But we still need you! While this is the first step in a victory for the state, Missourians still need to vote for Medicaid expansion in November. [Learn more about why we are supporting Medicaid expansion.](#)

2020 STL CENSUS CHALLENGE

Join the RHC as we complete [HomeGrown StL's 2020 STL Census Challenge!](#) Help ensure that every Black household in St. Louis completes the [2020 U.S. Census](#) on their own by May 28, 2020. The challenge is focused on making sure that Black males, ages 18-29 years, are counted in their households. [Learn more about the challenge.](#)

Respond today at www.my2020census.gov, toll-free at 844-330-2020, or by mail. [Check out the 2020 Census key dates.](#)



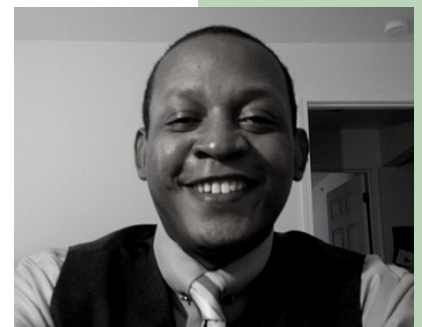
[Visit our Health Policy and Advocacy page to learn more about our efforts.](#)

WELCOME RIISA RAWLINS-EASLEY AND SHAWN D'ABREU!



Riisa Rawlins-Easley is joining the RHC as our Chief of Staff! Riisa has served in leadership positions and as an independent consultant for various nonprofits in the St. Louis Region since relocating to the area in 2004. She has over 20 years of experience in cultural competence and stigma reduction, integration of primary care and behavioral health, and positive youth development.

Shawn D'Abreu is joining the RHC as our Director of Policy and Advocacy! Shawn has over 15 years of experience as an organizer, advocate, strategic planner and policy professional. He is founder and principal of D'Abreu, Davis & Silk, LLC, a public advocacy firm offering nonprofit organizations consulting services for governmental affairs, strategic planning, policy analysis, organizing and advocacy training initiatives.



RESPONDING TO COVID-19

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold, we recognize the burden placed on our health care community to respond to our most vulnerable populations during this crisis and have developed the [RHC COVID-19 Emergency Fund](#). Together with our community partners and their generous support, we have raised \$785,000! The fund is addressing the need for urgent medical supplies and equipment, costs of testing for uninsured patients, transitional staffing, treatment services, and basic equipment to expand capacity and navigation services.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!

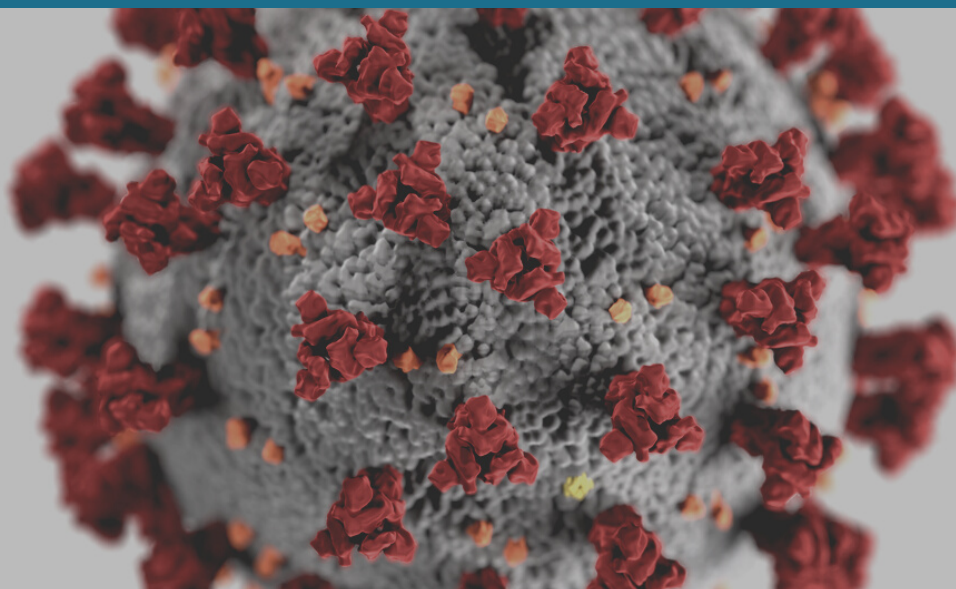
We are asking for individuals and organizations to join us in ensuring our most vulnerable populations understand how to protect themselves and their families, and have the resources they need, by contributing to our emergency fund for COVID-19. [To donate to our fund, click here.](#)

Thank you to our partners at the St. Louis County Department of Public Health, St. Louis Regional Business Council, Civic Progress, Deaconess Foundation, U.S. Bank and many community members for their generous support to the [emergency fund](#). To date, the RHC COVID-19 Emergency Fund has supported testing sites in North St. Louis, PrepareSTL canvassing efforts including the distribution of face masks, telehealth services and basic needs support for community members.

For more information on how to apply for the RHC's COVID-19 Emergency Fund, please review the [application details](#) or contact Rikki Takeyama Menn at RMenn@stlrhc.org.

THE RHC ADVOCATES FOR FIVE KEY STATE AND FEDERAL ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds, the RHC is advocating to ensure equitable access to health care for all Missourians. [Read the RHC's full policy statement.](#)



PREPARESTL: FIGHTING THE PANDEMIC THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

The RHC, alongside community partners, launched a unified communications and outreach campaign geared toward the most vulnerable and under-resourced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign, called [PrepareSTL](#), provides vital information and resources to disproportionately impacted community members (specifically African Americans, immigrants, low-to-moderate income residents and seniors living in St. Louis City and County). All St. Louisans should understand what COVID-19 is, its impact on our community and how to be prepared to handle this virus. PrepareSTL shares what we can each do to help stop the spread and how to survive the shutdown physically, emotionally and economically.



STREET CANVASSING

Community voice spearheads this campaign because we know that the information needs to be culturally competent, accessible and actionable, in order to help prepare our communities to stop the spread of the virus. PrepareSTL has activated more than 75 volunteers, outfitted in personal protective equipment (PPE), for a large-scale canvassing effort to put laminated posters and sandwich boards in more than 700 public places in North County and City. This ongoing outreach effort was designed and is led by community members passionate about protecting their friends, family members and neighbors.

PrepareSTL continues to expand its outreach efforts to meet the growing need for heightened community awareness and virus protection among the most vulnerable and under-resourced. As part of its expansion, the campaign is launching a yard sign effort in partnership with Siteman Cancer Center, Missouri Faith Voices and other area clergy that shares five ways to stop the spread of COVID-19 and how to connect to resources during this time. To maximize visibility and impact, the outreach team will place 1,000 yard signs in the most impacted zip codes throughout St. Louis City and County with distribution support from street canvassers and local clergy.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) GIVEAWAYS

PrepareSTL has organized giveaways of PPE, specifically face masks and gloves, for vulnerable community members. To date, the campaign has partnered with The T (founded by trauma surgeon and community activist Dr. Laurie Punch), the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis and BJC HealthCare to assemble and distribute 11,000 PrepareSTL PPE kits. These kits include face masks and gloves, and have been given to low-income individuals and families participating in the Urban League's food and toiletries drives in North St. Louis City and East St. Louis.



CONNECT ONLINE

Visit PrepareSTL.com to learn more about the campaign and to connect to resources. Information is available in English, Spanish, Bosnian, Chinese, Vietnamese and French. Stay up-to-date by "liking" [@PrepareSTL on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/PrepareSTL) and following the [PrepareSTL channel on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...).

PARTNERS

PrepareSTL is a [collaborative campaign](#) powered by the Missouri Foundation for Health and led by the St. Louis Regional Health Commission and the St. Louis City & County Health Departments, in partnership with the St. Louis Integrated Health Network, St. Louis Community Health Worker Coalition, Alive and Well Communities and the St. Louis Mental Health Board.



MEET OUR PATIENT ADVISORY BOARD



Formed in September 2019, the [Patient Advisory Board](#) represents the voice of patients. Leading from lived experience, all members have navigated the health care system without insurance, under Medicaid coverage or through the [Gateway to Better Health Program](#). This team identifies and defines barriers within the health care safety net, provides input on the community impact of regional health care issues and acts as a sounding board for RHC initiatives. The Patient Advisory Board members meet monthly to advise and shape the RHC's work.

"I joined the Advisory Board to be a voice for patients. Providers need to hear from us."

-Robin Cole, Patient Advisory Board Member



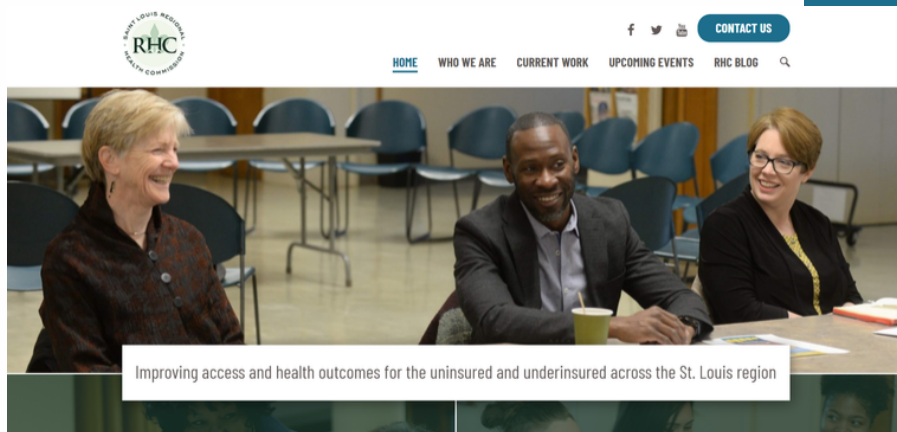
PROGRESS TOWARD BUILDING A HEALTHIER ST. LOUIS

Access to Care Data Book 2019

2019 ACCESS TO CARE DATA BOOK IS NOW AVAILABLE ON OUR NEW WEBSITE!

As part of our mission to improve the health of uninsured citizens in our region, the RHC has released the 2019 Access to Care Data Book, which reviews community-wide progress toward strengthening the health care safety net system. This report is a vital tool for many in our community to understand the local health care system. [Visit our new website to download and share the 2019 Access to Care Data Book today!](#)

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE!



RHC IN THE MEDIA

Visit our new website for [recent media coverage](#) and read what we have been up to on our [blog!](#)

RHC BLOG

<p>Healthcare FOR MISSOURI</p> <p>The St. Louis Regional Health Commission Supports Medicaid Expansion</p> <p>May 1, 2020</p> <p>Think about your neighbor who is uninsured, caring for an aging parent, and juggling a part-time job. Picture your server, at the corner restaurant, who gets no benefits and does not qualify for Medicaid or subsidies for Obamacare. Likely, we all know someone who lacks health insurance. Medicaid expansion would keep our friends, family members,...</p> <p>READ MORE</p>	<p>Local foundation giving \$2.2 million worth of grants to black-led organizations</p> <p>April 29, 2020</p> <p>ST. LOUIS, April 29, 2020 – African Americans are some of the hardest hit by COVID-19 in St. Louis and one person is offering millions worth of grants to those who are making a difference in the community. So many people are pinching pennies and trying to make a dollar out of 15 cents. People are...</p> <p>READ MORE</p>	<p>The St. Louis Regional Health Commission Advocates for Five Key State and Federal Actions in Response to COVID-19</p> <p>April 22, 2020</p> <p>As the COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) pandemic unfolds, the St. Louis Regional Health Commission (RHC) advocates for the following five actions to ensure equitable access to health care for all Missourians: 1. Missouri should expand Medicaid now. The state should immediately expand Medicaid through a State Plan Amendment, which would secure coverage for an additional 200,000...</p> <p>READ MORE</p>
---	---	--

[CHECK OUT MORE BLOG POSTS](#)

ABOUT

The [St. Louis Regional Health Commission](#) is a collaborative effort of St. Louis City, St. Louis County, the state of Missouri, health providers, and community members to improve the health of uninsured and underinsured citizens in St. Louis City and County.

Upcoming Events

Join us for an [upcoming meeting!](#) All RHC meetings are open to the public, and we invite you to get involved. Have questions? Contact Rikki Takeyama Menn by emailing RMenn@strhc.org.



[Joint Advisory Board Meeting \(virtual\)](#)



[Commission Monthly Board Meeting \(virtual\)](#)



[CANCELED: Patient Advisory Board Meeting](#)



[Provider Services Advisory Board Meeting \(virtual\)](#)



[Community Advisory Board Meeting \(virtual\)](#)

[VIEW MORE MEETINGS](#)

GET IN TOUCH

[Contact us online](#) or by calling our team at 314.446.6454.

By Mail:
1113 Mississippi Avenue, Suite 113
St. Louis, MO 63104



www.stlrhc.org