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# The Impact of Community Engagement: The Perspective of a Community Member

Quincy J. Byrdsong  
*Virginia Commonwealth University*

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**Location**

VCU ASPIRE, 835 W. Grace St., Richmond VA

**Disciplines**

Higher Education

**Presenter Information**

Quincy J. Byrdsong



THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT: THE  
PERSPECTIVE OF A  
COMMUNITY MEMBER

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*Dr. Quincy J. Byrdsong*

*Associate Vice President for VCU Health Sciences*

*Vice President for Clinical Research Administration and Compliance*

*VCU Health System*

*May 14, 2015*

# OVERVIEW

- ❖ Humble beginnings
- ❖ The City of Nashville
- ❖ Meharry Medical College
- ❖ The Journey of Impact



# HUMBLE BEGINNINGS





# THE CITY OF NASHVILLE

- ❖ Nashville, Tennessee
- ❖ Population: over 620,000
- ❖ Median Income: \$45K
- ❖ Predominantly White
- ❖ Predominantly Female
- ❖ 80% of adult population are HS graduate
- ❖ 12% of families living in poverty



TN Dept of Health: Office of Policy

# NASHVILLE: HEALTHY COMMUNITY?

- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> worst crime
- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> most teen pregnancy
- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> worst in cholesterol screening
- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> in binge drinking
- ❖ 4<sup>th</sup> in diabetes mortality
- ❖ 4<sup>th</sup> in breast cancer incidence



TN Dept of Health: Office of Policy; N-14

# THE SALT WAGON STORY

- ❖ In the 1820s, 16-year old Samuel Meharry was hauling a salt wagon in Kentucky
- ❖ Helped by a newly freed Black family who out him up, fed, and helped repair the salt wagon
- ❖ Vowed to help the race when he was able
- ❖ In 1866, Freedman Aid Society wanted to elevate former slaves
- ❖ The Meharry family responded with \$30K and property





# MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE

- ❖ Meharry Medical College
- ❖ Founded in 1876 to teach former slaves the art of healing
- ❖ Diversify the healthcare workforce
- ❖ Currently, the largest producer of minority PhDs in the country



# MEHARRY IN THE COMMUNITY

- ❖ Health fairs
- ❖ Free screenings
- ❖ Financial planning (MSPH)
- ❖ Presentations to community groups
- ❖ Clinics all around the Nashville community
- ❖ Participated in community conversations





# MEHARRY'S IMPACT





## DIRECTOR OF THE CLINICAL RESEARCH CENTER

- ❖ In 2002, I was hired by Meharry Medical College and lead the Clinical Research Center
- ❖ Oversaw all operations for human subjects research and specifically clinical trials
- ❖ Most studies exceeded accrual goals and secured a \$10M grant for infrastructure
- ❖ Very visible in the community as I saw as a child





## CAREER: SERVICE AND RESEARCH

### ❖ Supported Institutes, Centers, and Departments

- Over 500 publications
- Over \$100M in grant funded
- 100s of faculty

❖ Participated in community engagement at some level my entire career

❖ Continue to support the academic, research, clinical, and service missions of higher education

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

## From...

- ❖ Assessment
- ❖ Gathering data
- ❖ Service to the university
- ❖ Identifying organizations
- ❖ Temporary good will

## To...

- ❖ Impact
- ❖ Building relationships
- ❖ Service to the community
- ❖ Identifying partners
- ❖ Sustainable presence