

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ED FLYNN, TANIA FERNANDES ANDERSON,
COLETTA ZAPATA, FITZGERALD, MEJIA, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA,
WEBER, WORRELL, LOUIJEUNE, AND DURKAN



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS THE LUNG CANCER RATES AMONG AFRICAN-AMERICAN VETERANS

- WHEREAS:** Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths among U.S. Veterans, with African-American veterans facing higher risks due to military-related exposures like asbestos. As the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) states, “Veterans have a 25% to 76% higher risk of lung cancer,” and “asbestos exposure remains a significant contributor to this elevated risk”; *and*
- WHEREAS:** African-American veterans experience disparities in diagnosis, treatment, and survival rates compared to other groups. While Boston’s Black population has a lower incidence of lung cancer than the national average, the five-year survival rate among African-Americans is “11% lower than that of white Americans,” according to The American Lung Association. Early diagnosis rates are also lower, suggesting a need for improved access to care; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The City of Boston has a responsibility to address the unique challenges African-American veterans face in lung cancer care. “Improving the care of patients” is essential, as noted by Dr. Brid M. Ryan the lead researcher on a study about racial disparities in lung cancer, to “leverage research findings to improve outcomes,” especially for communities of color like African-American veterans who may face distinct biological and treatment response factors; *and*
- WHEREAS:** There are a number of organizations in Boston that are dedicated to ensuring veterans receive medical services, such as the Boston VA Health Care System. The Boston VA provides healthcare services to veterans at increased risk of illnesses such as lung cancer through cancer care that aim to facilitate early detection and treatment with advanced therapies tailored to address racial discrepancies; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The Veteran Outreach Center at the Harvard Street Neighborhood Health Center is also vital for linking Boston veterans from marginalized communities to resources and healthcare services through tailored outreach initiatives that educate on detection and treatment choices while addressing disparities in healthcare access; *and*
- NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:**
That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss disparities in Lung cancer among African-American veterans in Boston. Representatives from the City of Boston Veterans Services, medical professionals, and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed on: January 29, 2025