*A press release on the disparities suffered by Black and Brown communities as a result of COVID-19*

[**http://iaal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BAG-Racism-Declaration.pdf**](http://iaal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BAG-Racism-Declaration.pdf)

Rochester, NY – June 3, 2020 The Black Agenda Group and La Cumbre would like to announce that we stand together in solidarity to support our Black and Brown communities, which have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.  **We will have a joint press conference Wednesday, June 3 at 2 pm, at the David F. Gantt Recreation Center located at 700 North St, Rochester, NY 14605.**

The disparities are experienced across multiple contexts, including social life, workforce, healthcare, education, and government. To make things worse, mixed messages are plaguing our Black and Brown communities.  Such inconsistent messages are resulting in confusion about COVID-19, leading to increased and unnecessary illness and suffering.  Consistent and clear messaging must be prioritized to effectively address the disparities of concern.

Our ongoing concerns relate to:

Social Life/Workforce

* Family/community gatherings such as barbecues, card games, and birthday and graduation parties.
* Unnecessary shopping and in-person patronizing of businesses: (in-house barbershops/salons, nail salons, crowds at groceries stores and other essential business stores).

Health Care and Education

* Personal protective equipment (PPE) education related to how to properly wear gloves and why it is still important to wear masks even now that Phase I and Phase II reopening activities have commenced.
* Concerns that messaging around social distancing and protecting your circle is being lost or disregarded.

Government

* With everything that has occurred in our communities within the last few days, our concerns are even more pressing.

**For additional media information, contact Jerome Underwood, CEO, Action for a Better Community (ABC), at (585) 325-5116.**

**About Black Agenda Group (BAG)**

We are a group of dedicated stakeholders committed to the uplifting and improvement of Black people.

We and only we are the architects of our destiny.  We use our creative energy to sustain a healthy, vibrant Black community.

Black community embraces and works to implement its collective interests in order to establish and maintain a comprehensive systemic framework (Black Agenda) that will be adopted to drive, influence and endorse policies and practices in the areas of education, health and wellness, and economic development.

Given the disproportionate negative impact to people of color stemming from COVID19, which further compounds an extensive list longstanding disparities, the BAG made a declaration that “Racism is a Public Health Crisis”.  Organizations and individuals are being asked to endorse the declaration and commit to actions that will ultimately reverse these unfair and unethical realities. The declaration and a flyer displaying it are attached.

**About La Cumbre**

La Cumbre (Spanish phrase meaning "the Summit") is a nonpartisan forum for members of the Greater Rochester Area community and others to meet, discuss, coordinate, facilitate, organize, and collaborate in order to assess and improve the lives of Latinos/Hispanics relating to: Arts & Culture,  Economic Development, Education, and Government.

La Cumbre will address critical issues together to influence and focus efforts by making a sustainable impact in our community. Participants volunteer their time to help each other set and achieve common goals aimed at addressing important community issues.

**Latino/a/x and other La Cumbre member organizations in support of the declaration Racism is a Public Health Crisis:**

Ibero-American Action League

Father Tracy Advocacy Center

Puerto Rican Festival of Rochester

Latinas Unidas

Beatriz Lebron- RCSD BOE Commissioner

Empire Justice Center

Rochester Latino Theater Company

Pathstones Corporation

Borinquen Dance Theater

Community Health Workers Association of Rochester

Eugenio Maria De Hostos Charter School