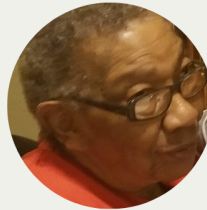




February 2026



Christomer Louise



Mary Pearl

Women of C.H.L.M.S

"If you know whence you came, there is really no limit to where you can go."

—James Baldwin, 20th-century poet, novelist, playwright and activist



Sandra Louise

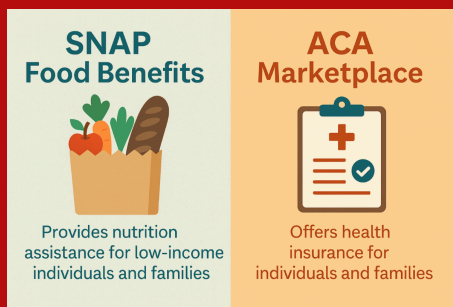


Henrietta Louise

"To be an activist is to speak. To be an advocate is to listen. Society can't move forward without both." _ Eva Marie Lewis



This edition commemorates the 100th anniversary of Black History Week later expanded into Black History Month—and explores Carter G. Woodson’s insights on how health injustices continue to impact marginalized communities. It also connects these themes to key provisions in the Big Beautiful Bill.



In our February Newsletter we will take a moment to understand where we stand with the One Big Beautiful Bill.

- The expiration of ACA marketplace has occurred
- Congress is still divided on restoring the enhanced subsidies, evidence indicates that the decision will continue to shape premium levels and overall market stability throughout 2026.
- New work requirements to qualify for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits will begin as of February 1, 2026

“From Mis-Education to Empowerment: Woodson’s Vision Through the Lens of SDOH”

Woodson argued that when a society teaches people to see themselves as inferior, it produces real-world harm.

His famous line:

“If you make a man feel that he is inferior... he will seek the back door.”

According to an article published in [springer.com](https://www.springer.com): A 2025 systematic review found that racial bias in healthcare and healthcare education

creates a “perpetual cycle” in which Black patients receive lower-quality care, less time with providers, and more frequent misdiagnoses. The Big Beautiful Bill includes provisions that expand coverage, reduce costs, and increase access to preventive services. But peer-reviewed research shows that access does not eliminate unequal treatment.

Institutions Built Without Black People Cannot Serve Black People Well

Woodson warned that systems created by those who oppressed Black people would never fully meet Black needs. He argued that modern institutions were built “in conformity to the needs of those who have enslaved and oppressed weaker peoples.”

Peer-reviewed research shows that the Big Beautiful Bill does not address this critique. Instead, several of its major provisions—particularly cuts to Medicaid and SNAP—intensify the very structural inequities Woodson described.

For more information, visit socialworkers.org.

“Structural Barriers, Systemic Solutions: Applying Woodson’s Analysis to Modern SDOH Policy”

Economic Stability

Woodson argued that Black people were intentionally denied economic opportunity through mis-education and discriminatory systems.

His message:

A community cannot thrive when it is locked out of fair wages, ownership, and economic mobility.

SDOH connection:

Economic instability leads to poor health outcomes, chronic stress, and limited access to care.

Education Access & Quality

This is Woodson’s most direct contribution.

In *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, he wrote that education was designed to keep Black people subordinate, not empowered.

His message:

Mis-education is a tool of oppression that shapes every life outcome — including health.

SDOH connection:

Education affects health literacy, employment, income, and the ability to navigate healthcare systems.

Healthcare Access & Quality

Woodson didn't write about hospitals or insurance, but he wrote extensively about institutional neglect and the devaluing of Black life.

His message:

Systems built by oppressors will not meet the needs of the oppressed.

SDOH connection:

This aligns with modern findings on:

- **unequal treatment**
- **shorter appointments**
- **misdiagnoses**
- **undertreatment of pain**
- **lack of culturally competent care**

Neighborhood & Built Environment

Woodson highlighted how segregation, poverty, and discriminatory policies shaped the environments where Black people lived.

His message:

Oppression is geographic — it shows up in where people are allowed to live, work, and build community.

SDOH connection:

Neighborhood conditions influence and health :

- **exposure to violence**
- **access to healthy food**
- **environmental hazards**
- **safe housing**
- **transportation**
- **green space**

Social & Community Context

Woodson emphasized the psychological and social impact of racism, exclusion, and the erasure of Black history.

His message:

A people stripped of dignity, identity, and community support will suffer spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

SDOH connection:

Social context affects:

- **stress**
 - **discrimination**
 - **community cohesion**
 - **trust in institutions**
 - **mental health**
-

Did you know:

The new SNAP Work Requirement took effect on February 1, 2026, marking the most significant eligibility shift in over a decade. The policy expands work rules for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents, raising the age range from 18–49 to 18–64 and requiring at least 80 hours of work, training, or community service each month to maintain benefits beyond the three-month limit.

Researchers warn that the change may increase food insecurity, particularly for adults with unstable employment, chronic health conditions, or limited access to transportation and digital tools. Early evidence shows that many individuals lose benefits not because they fail to work, but because they struggle with complex reporting requirements. Communities of color, people experiencing homelessness, and those with unrecognized disabilities face the greatest risk. Local economies may also feel the impact, as reductions in SNAP benefits can decrease revenue for grocery stores and small businesses. Community organizations are responding by expanding workforce programs, offering clearer guidance on reporting rules, and advocating for more flexible exemptions. The long-term effects will depend on how effectively states and community partners support individuals navigating the new requirements.

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