

# HEALTH MATTERS

Volume 4

A Publication of the Macon County Health Care Authority

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## Statement from MCHCA Chairwoman Bernice L. Frazier

Reflecting on 2025, I am proud of how the board delivered consistent and steady leadership. We navigated challenges that tested our resolve — including the staggering cost of replacing the aging air-conditioning system at the Thomas Reed Medical Center. Through every pressure point, the MCHCA board stayed focused and unshaken.

We also recognize the partners who make this work possible. The Macon County Commission appoints the majority of our board. State Senator Billy Beasley and State Representative Pebblin Warren each appoint a member as well — and I am honored to serve as Senator Beasley's appointee.

This year brought bright moments that reaffirmed our purpose. The installation of 3-D mammography equipment was a catalyst for the launch of a countywide breast-health campaign that united the community. *Real Men Wear Pink* carried a lifesaving message that reached far and wide in Macon County and proved the power of a collaboration involving The Tuskegee News and our organization.

Our commitment was inside the walls of the Thomas Reed building and outside those walls as well. Internally, we worked with the Tuskegee Medical and Surgical Center for medical and administrative services, provided space to Crain Rehab for physical therapy and Pinnacle Cardiovascular of Auburn for heart health. We engaged students in the Macon County public school system with lessons on the

legacy of African American medical pioneers. We supported ambulance services. And we protected historic properties that will eventually be renovated and integrated into a medical complex.

Though I received an award from the local chapter of the NAACP for outstanding leadership involving health care, I do not work alone. Any and all accomplishments concerning the Macon County Health Care Authority are the result of decisions made by a dedicated board of directors.

As we welcome 2026, our mission remains unchanged and unmistakable: **HEALTH MATTERS.**



**Macon County Health Care Authority Board of Directors**

From left, Noah Hopkins, David Clinkscales, Benjamin Rackley, Bernice L. Frazier, Annie L. Brown, Rhonda McCloud, Grover Fountain, (Not shown, Deborah Ellis)

## MCHCA Chairwoman Receives NAACP Tribute

For her work in health care, Bernice L. Frazier, Chairwoman of the Macon County Health Care Authority (MCHCA), was honored on November 9 at the 2025 Annual Freedom Fund Luncheon sponsored by the Tuskegee-Macon County Branch of the NAACP. Several MCHCA board members attended, including Deborah Ellis, Ben Rackley, Annie L. Brown and Grover Fountain. Brown was present in two roles—both as an MCHCA board member and as a co-chair of the luncheon.



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HEALTH MATTERS is a newspaper featuring health-related content. This communications tool, was developed by the Macon County Health Care Authority (MCHCA), which is governed by the board of directors whose names and titles are printed below.

The Macon County Commission appoints the majority of MCHCA board members. State Senator Billy Beasley has one appointee and State Representative Pebblin Warren also places one person on the board.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**HEALTH MATTERS**  
Karin Hopkins  
**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**



Bernice L. Frazier, Chairwoman of the Macon County Health Care Authority (MCHCA), accepts a well-deserved honor from the local NAACP chapter, supported by the dedicated MCHCA board—See the front page of this edition of HEALTH MATTERS.

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HEALTH MATTERS, Quarterly Newspaper

# Why Is Preventive Medicine Important?

by David Clinkscales, MCHCA Board Member



You may wonder, “What exactly is preventive medicine?” or “Where do I even begin?” Preventive medicine is the area of healthcare dedicated to keeping individuals and communities healthy. It works by identifying risks early, lowering the chances of disease, and stopping problems before they become life-threatening. Vaccinations, routine screenings and lifestyle counseling are all key tools in this approach.

and unhealthy cholesterol. Remember: you fuel your body with what you eat. As the saying goes, “You are what you eat.” It’s hard to expect top performance from your body if you’re feeding it poorly.

Movement is another essential piece. Start a heart-healthy routine by adding low-impact activities: a daily walk, stretching or even playing with your kids or grandkids. Mental health deserves attention too. Try puzzles, word games, reading something new or writing a letter to someone you haven’t connected with in a while. Small habits add up, and everything we do affects our overall health. The goal is simple—keep your body and mind in motion.

No matter who you are—someone committed to a daily workout or someone committed to the sofa—you can still advocate for your own well-being. It starts with a simple conversation during your next medical appointment. Ask your provider to walk you through your lab results. Inquire about heart health, lung function, kidney performance, thyroid activity, PSA levels, weight management, mammograms and any bloodwork findings. These are common concerns and most can be monitored with ease once you know what to look for.

For more information or guidance tailored to you, visit the Thomas Reed building in Tuskegee for consultations or checkups by medical professionals associated with Tuskegee Medical and Surgical Center. Appointments are preferred. Call 334.727.5900.

Our medical professionals are here to help you build a plan that puts your health on the right track.

Preventive care also begins at home. Regular six-month or yearly exams can uncover early signs of illness, often long before symptoms appear. When conditions are caught early, follow-up care has a much higher chance of success. Even some of the medications you already take may play a role in prevention. The key is to stay consistent with your visits and follow the guidance of your healthcare team.



Diet matters as well. Compare nutrition labels, choose more plant-based foods and cut back on items high in fat, sugar

## DID YOU KNOW?

Cervical Cancer is one of the most preventable cancers—yet it still claims lives every year. Regular Pap tests and HPV screenings can detect early changes before cancer develops. The HPV vaccine offers powerful protection for young men and women alike.

A photograph of a woman with dark curly hair, seen from the side, looking at a large white screen. She is holding a white rectangular object, likely a mammogram film or a tablet. The background is a clinical setting with a 3-D mammogram machine.

**Schedule Your 3-D Mammogram TODAY!**

**Call 334.727.5900 For an Appointment**

# November Shines a Light on Men's Health

By Karin Hopkins | Editor-in-Chief HEALTH MATTERS

Many readers may have heard the term “Movember.” It combined “men” and “November” and became a global push to spotlight men’s health issues, from prostate and testicular cancer to suicide prevention. Because mental wellness was part of that movement, many people assumed November was officially Men’s Mental Health Month. In fact, the United States recognizes June as the month dedicated specifically to men’s mental health. Even so, the spotlight on “Movember” has been a meaningful time to focus on the well-being of our fathers, brothers, sons and friends.

The death of 24-year-old Dallas Cowboys defensive end Marshawn Kneeland shook the sports world on November 6, 2025, not because he was a star but because his story was painfully human. Kneeland, in his second NFL season, played in the Cowboys’ loss to the Arizona Cardinals on November 3.

Less than 48 hours later, he was gone.

Police in Frisco, Texas reported that Kneeland died from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound after a late-night police chase and vehicle crash just minutes from the Cowboys’ headquarters. It is a heartbreaking story. And it forces us to confront how many men, even those surrounded by teammates, coaches and fans, are fighting battles out of public view.

Here in Tuskegee and across Macon County, we know the pressures our men carry. Expectations to be providers, protectors and problem-solvers can be heavy. Many brothers will smile through stress, keep moving through

heartbreak and tuck pain into their back pockets like it doesn’t weigh them down.

This month invites us to do something different.

Look in on your people, especially the men who never ask for anything. Pay attention when someone withdraws, when anger replaces calm, or when a usually steady presence starts drifting. A simple “How are you, really?” can interrupt isolation. And if someone you know seems overwhelmed, guide them toward help without shame.

We spent the entire month of October focused on breast cancer, a health issue most often associated with women. Now, the Macon County Health Care Authority is asking the community to mark their calendars in 2026 and beyond, noting that November is Men’s Health Month.



**Marshawn Kneeland**  
Professional Football Player

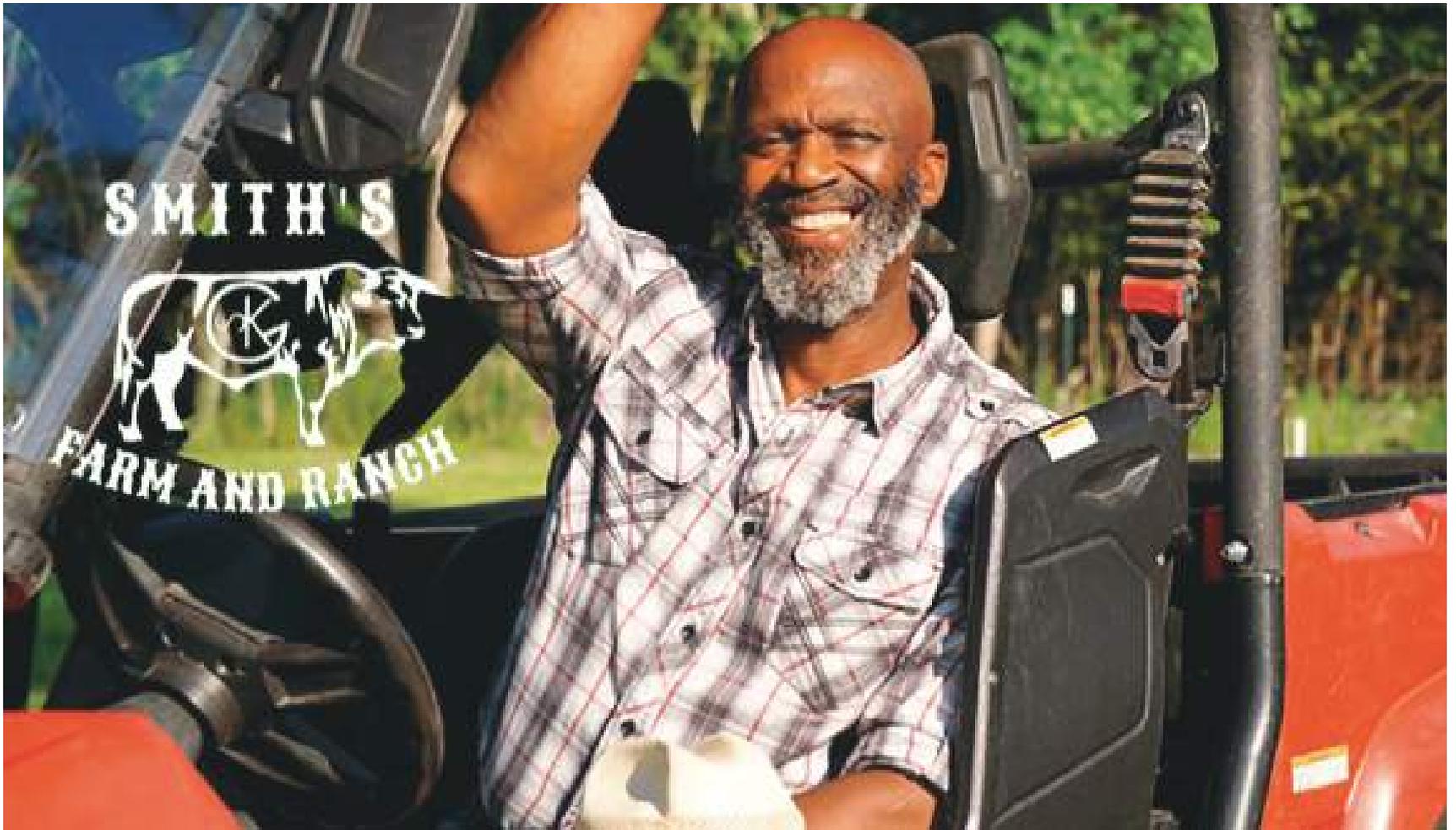


## The Beard Brothers Took a Stand

Throughout the month of October, the Macon County Health Care Authority and The Tuskegee News teamed up for the *Real Men Wear Pink* campaign—urging men to start real conversations with the women they loved about the power of mammograms, including 3-D screenings offered at Tuskegee Medical and Surgical Center.

Sheriff Andre Brunson kicked off the movement with a bold pink beard. TV producer Patrick Wallace later joined him, forming the “Beard Brothers,” each honoring women with breast cancer journeys.

The mission was clear: get more women screened. Early detection saves lives.



## A Recipe for Good Health: From a Farmer's Land to Your Table

Gregory Smith is a blessed and busy man. A military veteran, he spent 20 years in the U.S. Army before returning to Tuskegee to work on land that has been in his family for generations. A farmer and rancher, his crops include a wide variety of fruits and vegetables—melons, peaches, corn, peppers, greens, kale, cucumbers, zucchini and squash. What he grows is based on environmental factors. How he farms is a moral choice. No pesticides. No chemicals. All natural. “I farm like my daddy farmed,” he says, stating that he is aware of new trends but to him, “new” does not mean better. He cites fertilizer as an example, “I just get my wheel barrel and head out to the pasture and gather manure and take it straight out to the field and drop it. Might sound crazy when you can just go buy a bag of fertilizer.” He says store bought fertilizer is simply no match for eco-friendly manure, which breaks down into microbes that stimulate crop growth.

The Smith's Farm and Ranch is also home to an assortment of animals, including goats, cows, ducks and chickens that live naturally without hormones or genetic modifications. Greg is committed to making sure his family and customers get high quality foods that provide maximum nutrition. A multi-faceted operation, the farm sells individual custom cut meats taken from animals slaughtered onsite. The farm also sells certified organic meats.

His workload is astonishing. He cuts, rolls and sells hay. Through another branch of his agribusiness that he calls the Farm Hand Service, he helps other farmers with such tasks as plowing, hunting, bush hogging, fence repair, removal and new installation of building sheds and other work. There is even a store on the premises.

Blessed and busy; a fitting description of Greg Smith whose toiling feeds his family and offers healthy foods to the Macon County community, all from toiling on his 400-acre property that he calls the Garden of Eden.

*To purchase food online or to learn more, visit Greg Smith's Website at [www.smithsfarmandranch.com](http://www.smithsfarmandranch.com)*



## Macon County Farmers Bring Freshness to the Table Amid Packaged Food Concerns

Macon County, is home to a vibrant community of local farmers who grow fresh fruits, vegetables and other crops, ensuring residents have access to wholesome, natural food. From leafy greens to seasonal produce, these growers provide a vital connection between the land and the dinner table.

The Macon County Farmers Market is a hub for the community, offering a place where residents can buy fresh, locally grown produce directly from the people who cultivate it. Supporters say shopping at the market not only strengthens the local economy but also promotes healthier eating habits.

Health experts caution that many packaged and processed foods, while convenient, often contain high levels of sugar, sodium and artificial ingredients that can contribute to obesity, diabetes and other chronic health problems. By choosing fresh, locally grown produce, Macon County residents can enjoy nutrient-rich meals while reducing the risks associated with processed foods.

The Macon County Farmers Market, located at Elm and Spring streets in Tuskegee, is operated in partnership with the Tuskegee University College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences (CAENS) specifically involving the university's Cooperative Extension and its Carver Integrative Sustainability Center (CISC).



## Sweet Potato Stew



This stew brings winter comfort without the weight. It leans into soulful flavors—sweet potatoes, greens, and black-eyed peas—blending tradition with a lighter touch. A warm bowl that fits the winter season perfectly: hearty, wholesome and tasty.

### Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and cubed
- 1 cup diced tomatoes (fresh or no-salt canned)
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
- 3 cups chopped collard greens (or a mix of kale/collards/mustard greens)
- 1 can black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- Salt to taste
- Optional: splash of apple cider vinegar for finish
- 1 cup diced roasted turkey or smoked turkey

### Instructions:

1. Warm the olive oil in a pot over medium heat.
2. Sauté the onion until soft, then add the garlic.
3. Add the sweet potatoes, tomatoes, broth, smoked paprika, thyme, turmeric and pepper.
4. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce heat and simmer 12–15 minutes.
5. Stir in the greens and black-eyed peas. Let them simmer until the greens are tender.
6. Adjust seasoning, add a small splash of apple cider vinegar if you like that sharpness.

### Nutritional Benefits:

- Greens: Fiber, iron, vitamins A + K
- Sweet potatoes: Complex carbs, potassium, beta-carotene
- Beans: Protein + sustained energy
- Paprika + turmeric: Anti-inflammatory boost
- Roasted or Smoked Turkey: Increases protein value
- Overall: Low fat, high flavor, winter-friendly

### Why it works for cold days:

It's warm, nutrient-rich, and built around affordable, traditional staples—greens, sweet potatoes and beans. It carries that familiar soul-food character but leans toward lighter, heart-healthy eating.

# State Senator Billy Beasley Attends Macon County Health Care Authority Meeting

State Senator Billy Beasley attended the Macon County Health Care Authority (MCHCA) board meeting on Wednesday, October 15, 2025. Senator Beasley had ample time to observe his appointee to the board, Bernice Frazier, along with the seven other members who govern MCHCA.

During his remarks, Senator Beasley emphasized the growing challenges facing rural health care across the nation, calling it "a crisis." He underscored the importance of keeping the Thomas Reed Medical Center open, describing it as a vital resource for the community's well-being. MCHCA owns the Thomas Reed building and contracts with Community Hospital in Tallassee to provide administrative and medical services to Macon County.

Beasley also praised MCHCA members for the efficiency and professionalism with which they conducted their board meeting. Board Chairwoman Bernice Frazier said, "We appreciate Senator Beasley's confidence in our work and his commitment to rural health. Our goal is simple — to make sure every resident of Macon County has access to quality care close to home. We're determined to keep the Thomas Reed building functional and equipped to serve this community."

Services available inside the facility include primary medical care, cardiology, in-house lab, physical therapy and 3-D mammography. The Thomas Reed building is also home base for Haynes Ambulance Service employees and vehicles.



MCHCA Chairwoman Bernice L. Frazier is Senator Beasley's appointee to the board



MCHCA Vice Chairman Noah Hopkins and Senator Beasley are longtime friends

<p><i>2026</i> <i>Health Awareness Calendar</i></p>		<p><i>A Yearlong Guide to</i> <i>National Observances</i></p>
<p><b>JANUARY</b> Cervical Health Awareness Blood Donor Awareness Glaucoma Awareness</p>	<p><b>FEBRUARY</b> Heart Awareness Black History Children's Dental Health</p>	<p><b>MARCH</b> Colorectal Cancer Awareness Kidney Awareness Multiple Sclerosis</p>
<p><b>APRIL</b> Autism Awareness Parkinson's Awareness Alcohol Awareness</p>	<p><b>MAY</b> Mental Health Awareness Lupus Awareness Stroke Awareness</p>	<p><b>JUNE</b> Men's Mental Health Alzheimer's &amp; Brain Awareness Migraine &amp; Headache Awareness</p>
<p><b>JULY</b> UV Safety Awareness Minority Mental Health</p>	<p><b>AUGUST</b> Immunization Awareness National Breastfeeding Children's Eye Health &amp; Safety</p>	<p><b>SEPTEMBER</b> Prostate Cancer Awareness Suicide Prevention Healthy Aging</p>
<p><b>OCTOBER</b> Breast Health Awareness Depression Awareness Domestic Violence Awareness</p>	<p><b>NOVEMBER</b> Diabetes Awareness Men's Health Family Caregivers</p>	<p><b>DECEMBER</b> HIV/Aids Awareness Flu Prevention Safe Toys &amp; Gifts</p>

# Tuskegee

Medical & Surgical Center

*Quality care - Close to Home*



## services provided

**Family Medicine**  
**Cardiology**  
**Crain Rehab**  
**3D Mammography**  
**On-Site Laboratory**

an affiliate of Community Hospital • Tallassee, Alabama

**301 Wright Street • Tuskegee, Alabama 36083 • 334-727-5900**

## ADVOCACY & RESOURCES

### **Macon County Health Care Authority**

Bernice L. Frazier, Chairman  
P. O. Box 888  
Tuskegee AL 36087  
334.552.1722

### **DENTISTRY**

Tuskegee Quality Health Care  
1201-B Notasulga Road  
Tuskegee AL 36083  
334.727.7211

### **DIALYSIS**

Fresenius Kidney Care  
802 East MLK Highway  
Tuskegee AL 36083  
334.727.9447

### **DRUG STORES**

Big Bear Discount Drugs  
203 West Lee Street  
Tuskegee AL 36083  
334.727.6880

### **CVS Pharmacy**

202 West MLK Highway  
Tuskegee AL 36083  
334.727.6586

### **Tuskegee Quality Health Care**

1201-B Notasulga Road  
Tuskegee AL 36083  
334.727.7211

### **EYE CARE & EYE WEAR**

Bell & Bell Associates  
302 North Elm Street  
Tuskegee AL 36083  
334.727.6247

### **FAMILY MEDICINE**

Rhema Health & Wellness  
Dr. Deanah Maxwell, M.D.  
3805 West MLK Highway  
Tuskegee AL 36083  
334.226.1915

### **Tuskegee Medical & Surgical Center**

301 Wright Street  
Tuskegee AL 36083  
334.727.5900

### **Tuskegee Quality Health Care**

1201-B Notasulga Road  
Tuskegee AL 36083  
334.727.7211

### **PEDIATRICS**

Prime Care Medical Center  
Dr. Fazle Matin, M.D.  
203 West Lee Street  
Tuskegee AL 36083  
334.727.7050

### **Southeast Pediatrics**

Dr. Mollie Walker, M.D.  
804 Crawford Street  
Tuskegee AL 36083  
334.724.0550

### **PHYSICAL THERAPY**

Crain Rehab  
301 Wright Street  
Tuskegee AL 36083  
334.725.1261

