



Sonya Young Aadam has been the CEO of the California Black Women's Health Project for nearly 7 years. With a history of working as a highly trained financial and strategic analyst at top corporations, she selflessly moved her work to support community empowerment and engagement through transformative intervention in under-resourced urban communities -- particularly in South Los Angeles, where she was born and raised.

SONYA YOUNG AADAM

THE CALIFORNIA BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH PROJECT

"California Black Women's Health Project is rooted in better health and wellness for Black women and girls. It is a statewide partner-driven organization that works in areas of the state with the largest population of Black women and girls such as Los Angeles County, Alameda County, Sacramento County, Central Valley, and the Inland Empire. Black women tend to be the administrative and health heads of their homes, and as such, the health of the Black community rests, in large part, with Black women. Improving the health of Black women thus has the iterative effect of improving the health of everyone in their familial and social circles. With a strategic focus on advocacy, outreach, policy, and education, the goal is to build the Black community's capacity to address disparities in the provision of/access to care, healthcare knowledge, and its ability to navigate these systems."

MY MOTIVATION TO FIGHT HEALTH INEQUITIES

"I was born and raised in South Los Angeles, so I grew up experiencing all the things that exist for people who live there, both the challenges and the support of community-based organizations. After graduating from an Ivy League University and being the first person in my family to graduate from college, I worked in commercial and investment banking. However, I decided to leave that career and utilize my skills in strategic analysis and management to make a difference in the lives of others. I wanted to be of service to communities like the one where I grew up. When I moved back to South Los Angeles after 14 years outside of CA, I was shocked to see how little had changed. Community conditions seemed to remain unchanged while I growing as a young adult outside the community. I determined to work to shift my efforts to serve the community around me."

SISTER CIRCLES AS AN ENGAGEMENT MODEL

"At CA Black Women's Health Project, we use an engagement model called the Sister Circle, which is an evidence-based practice that provides a supportive environment where Black women can come together to heal and deal with issues involving mental health, maternal health, violence prevention, aging, and chronic health conditions. I have a strong belief in incorporating community-defined evidence practices (CDEPs) into traditional healthcare models, and the CA Black Women's Health Project uses the Sister Circle engagement model across different areas of our work. Sister Circles allow for the integration of cultural and community-defined care with the traditional healthcare system."