

This topic was revisited by multiple speakers during the day, including Tina Dortch, program manager for the Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity, who took part in a three-person panel discussion on Alzheimer's Disease and dementia in the African American community alongside Denise Hund of the Alzheimer's Association and Heather Haslmen of UNR's Sanford Center for Aging.

According to information from the Alzheimer's Association, African Americans are about two times more likely than white Americans to develop Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia—but they're less likely to have a diagnosis of the condition and are typically diagnosed once in later stages of the disease. One factor believed to contribute to this problem is that black patients often report having less respectful, and thus less productive, interactions with their health care providers—and panel moderator, Sanford Center Director Dr. Peter Reed, asked Dortch how health care providers might remedy these issues in order to get more information about Alzheimer's and its contributing factors to the black community.

Dortch's answer returned the symposium to the theme of culturally competent care. Physicians and other health care providers, she said, need to consider that patients—whether they're black or a person of any other race—may bring cultural beliefs about health care, from home remedies to negative expectations about how they'll be treated. To overcome it, she said she recommends health care workers

follow the steps enumerated in an acronym she called "AWARE."

"Accept someone's behavior without holding them in judgment using yourself as a barometer," she said. "Wonder what does the behavior that you're seeing—what does it mean? ... Ask what it means. If you have a non-compliant patient or a patient who is using other means than those you recommended, ask if there's a reason or a rationale for that. ... Research. Before a patient presents in the office, it does not hurt to do a bit of research about the culture. ... And then, lastly, the 'e.' Only after you've had this dialogue as a practitioner, should you then explain what the behavior is that you're hoping to achieve from this interaction. Only then should you start explaining what the course of care will be."

Throughout the day, speakers reiterated to symposium participants that the goal of the event was to spark a call to action among local NAACP members. Speakers left informational handouts and their business cards at tables around the room and encouraged attendees to reach out with ideas, opinions and concerns. According to Gallimore, between now and the next annual summit, the Reno-Sparks NAACP branch and its members will be busy "getting out into the community, getting to know people" and getting to know their health care needs and goals.

Those who are interested in learning more about how they can get involved are advised to visit [renosparksnaacp.org](http://renosparksnaacp.org). □

## In line



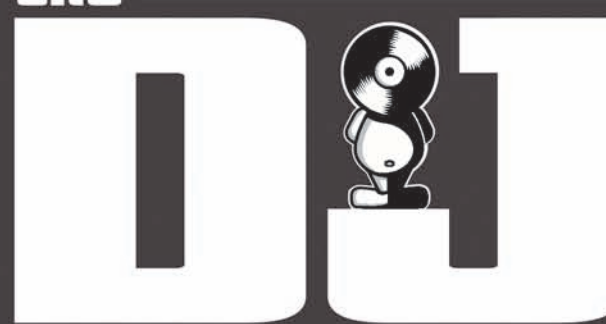
People lined up at the Joe Crowley Student Union on the first day of early voting in the Nevada Democratic Presidential Caucuses on Feb. 15. Early voting ran from Feb. 15-18. The line was long, and some voters decided to leave before they were able to vote. Others stuck it out.

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