



Members of the Minnesota Senate,

I am writing this letter to urge you to provide financial support for a study of the barriers to health equity for older women who are African American or African Immigrants. We need to examine the policies and practices that continue to promote isolational and institutional nursing home care for this population. A study would need to document barriers to Cultural Resilience through the identification of harmful medical practices such as inadequate treatment, amputations, lack of referral for physical therapy, and failure to use adult outpatient care where appropriate.

Historic injustice, economic inequality, isolation, Covid, climate change, and cultural displacement have eroded the sense of agency for this population of women. A study that would include the thoughts and preferences of African American and African Immigrant women needs to be culturally competent in order to understand the role of women as Culture Keepers who hold the memories of the community as well as the impact of aging.

These multiple roles must be documented by the collection of disaggregated data on health outcomes and mortality across the spectrum of aging in place and institutional care in a nursing home.

The restrictions of public housing make this study even more important. I hope you will listen to the recommendations of Fartun Weli and others who know and understand the healthcare crisis faced by older African American and African Immigrant women.

Thank you for your action today.

Judge LaJune Lange, retired
President, LTL International Leadership Institute