

# Press Release

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“700 RISC Members to gather for healthcare access and more drug treatment”

RISC Nehemiah Action

Monday May 12

6:30pm sign-in 7:00 start

Sixth Mount Zion Baptist, 14 W. Duval Street in Jackson Ward

Over 700 members from local congregations will gather to address public officials and decision makers in two critical areas- healthcare and substance abuse treatment. In the area of healthcare, RISC members are concerned about the growing number of uninsured individuals who lack access to basic primary care. According to a study done by REACH, an estimated 131,000 adults in the Greater Richmond Area are uninsured and of them over 57,000 are low-income. Despite state and federal resources made available to VCU to care for this population, at any given time only about 11,000 people are receiving primary care as result of these funds. Rev. Ralph Hodge, RISC Vice-President and pastor of Second Baptist, Southside states, "As stewards of considerable public resources dedicated to the care for the uninsured, RISC challenges VCU Health Systems to take the lead by delivering substantially more primary care to the growing uninsured population." Dr. Sheldon Retchin, CEO of VCU Health System has been invited to our Action to address our concerns.

In the area of drugs and crime, RISC members are concerned about the lack of evidence based intensive substance abuse treatment services in the Richmond City Jail. “Knowing that 70-80% of inmates in our jail are in need of substance abuse treatment services and also that recidivism rates are near 70%, our City jail must take aggressive action to save taxpayer costs and human lives,” commented Rev. Tyrone Nelson, pastor of Sixth Mount Zion Baptist and President of RISC. Sheriff C.T. Woody is committed to attend to address our concerns in this area.

The congregations of Richmonders Involved to Strengthen our Communities (RISC) will hold their annual Nehemiah Action meeting on Monday, May 12th at Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church (located at 14 W. Duval Street in Jackson Ward). Sign-in begins at 6:30 and the meeting will start promptly at 7pm