

Hip Hop Is Dying

Written by Roger A. Mitchell, Jr. MD ID3371
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Nasir Jones aka Nas, with the album Hip-Hop is Dead, has generated a new conversation around the long time debate over the future of Hip-Hop. Many believe that hip-hop has moved away from its origin, not only in theme and content but also geographically. Some believe that “current rap is corny” or that the “real MC’s are gone”. “The MC’s in the likeness of Kool G Rap, Rakim, Kane, and KRS-1 don’t exist.”

The future of the Hip-Hop Community cannot be diagnosed by just looking at the future of the music, in isolation of the communities social, political, and economic future.

The No.1 killer of black men in the United States ages 10-35 is Homicide. The No.2 killer of Hispanic men in the United States of that same age group is also Homicide; populations that are largely represented in the Hip-Hop Community.

According to Healthy People 2010 (www.healthypeople.gov), Black people make up an estimated 49% of all new AIDS cases compared to 31% white and 19% Hispanic. Black women die during child birth at a rate of 25 per 100,000 live births compared to 7 for white women and 10 for Hispanic women. If the health of a community is a direct reflection of the health of their children than the fact that black infants die at a rate 3 times higher than the National goal should raise some concern. Unfortunately the statistics of health disparity are the same in most major categories. Blacks are dying at a higher rate.

Hip-Hop is dying and ending up on the Medical Examiner’s table. The death of Hip-Hop will continue unless we gain control over our own social climate. The social disparities are not relegated to health only. We are disparately represented in all policy decision making areas – Economics, Education, Housing, Healthcare, and Criminal Justice. We must concentrate on establishing a foundation of development in these areas in the form of institutions. It is not enough to protest and lobby for political and policy equity. We must generate leadership from within our community to serve our own interests. The time of the individual charismatic leader that ends in martyrdom is gone. The time is now to educate ourselves, to heal ourselves, to protect ourselves, and build homes and businesses for ourselves.

Hip-Hop is not dead but it sure is dying and I am doing the autopsies.

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Hip-Hop Caucus