

# Press Advisory...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

**For Immediate Release:**  
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## **REP. FORD, DOCTORS BALARK, WEST AND LATIMER DISCUSS THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS AND BLACK PEOPLE**

**CHICAGO-** State Representative La Shawn K. Ford (D-CH) will be joined by a panel of three of Chicago's black female medical doctors. Kimbra Bell Balark, Joy West, and Tomitra Latimer will discuss and offer medical advice on COVID-19. The Novel Coronavirus is having a deadly impact on minorities, according to the Center for Disease Control, pre-existing conditions and poor access to healthcare have made minorities the hardest hit by COVID-19. Press is welcomed to join and ask questions.

Dr. Kimbra Bell Balark is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine at Northwestern University Medical school and on staff at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. She is a board-certified Internal Medicine physician. Dr. Bell was appointed to the Illinois Diabetes Commission by Illinois Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services Carol L. Adams, Ph.D. in 2008 and she served on the Young Women's Leadership Charter School Board of Directors from 2011 – 2015. She currently serves a member of the African American Legacy board of The Chicago Community Trust and also serves as a board member of the Kerengende Foundation whose mission is to support young victims of sexual trauma.

Dr. Bell has an extensive background in community medicine and served as the medical director of a federally qualified health center in downtown Chicago from 2001-2008. In 2010, she was named one of the Top 25 Influential Black Women in Chicago by RollingOut.com. In 2011, she was named one of Illinois' Most Powerful and Influential Women by the National Women's Conference. In 2013, she was named a "Woman of Excellence" by The Chicago Defender newspaper. She attended medical school at Meharry Medical College in Nashville TN and she served as President of the Meharry Medical College National Alumni Association from 2012 – 2014 and served on the College's Board of Trustees from 2013 - 2017. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated as well as The Links, Incorporated. She is married to Mr. Sam Balark and they have three children – Kristin Nicole, Alexandria Olivia, and Sam Lee Jr.

Joy B. West, MD, FACOG, is a native of the south side of Chicago where she currently practices Obstetrics & Gynecology at Roseland Community and Mt Sinai Hospital. She is past Medical Staff President of Roseland Community Hospital where she previously served as the Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Chair of Quality Improvement, Member of RCH Board of Directors, Vice-Chair of RCH Foundation Board of Directors and Medical Director of the Nandi Teen Clinic. Dr. West has an extensive background in Community Medicine and her prior professional experiences include Medical Director of Women's Health at The Clinic in Altgeld, Director of the OB

Hospitalist Group for Access Community Health at Holy Cross Hospital, and Director of Women's Health at Christian Community Health Center. Dr. West earned her Bachelor of Arts from Augustana College (1985) and her Medical Degree from The University of Iowa (1989). She completed a residency in Obstetrics & Gynecology at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center. She is a Diplomat of the American Board of Obstetrics & Gynecology and a Fellow of The American College of Obstetrics & Gynecology.

Tomitra "Tomi" Latimer, MD is a graduate of Cornell University, University of Michigan Medical School, and The University of Chicago Comer Pediatric residency program. She is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at Northwestern University, Feinberg school of medicine. She is the Medical Director of Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Pediatrics at Deming; a primary care clinic that provides care for patients that are underserved and have complex medical problems. She is active in the medical education of pediatric residents and medical students. Tomi is actively involved in the Provider Advisory committee and Quality Improvement Science at Lurie Children's. Dr. Latimer is an executive board member of the Angel Harvey Family Health Center of the Infant Welfare Society (an FQHC-like primary care clinic) and the Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee. She loves to travel with her husband and as a triplet she enjoys celebrating birthdays with her sisters.

Illinois will begin to reopen, and we are looking to have 3 prominently know doctors to offer professional medical advice to the community.

**WHO:** State Representative La Shawn K. Ford, Dr. Kimbra Bell Balark, Dr. Joy West, Dr. Tomitra Latimer

**WHAT:** A Discussion About COVID-19 & African American Communities

**WHERE:** Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87898417566>

**WHEN:** Saturday, May 30, 2020 @ 11:00 a.m.

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