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CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF

Dr. Thea James, vice president of mission at BMC, said: “People can’t prioritize their health when they’re prioritizing survival.”

HER HEALTH EQUITY MESSAGE BEING HEARD

Doctor has long sought to find and fix underlying causes of disparity

By Adam Piore
GLOBE STAFF

Dr. Thea James began to suspect something important was missing from her medical school education soon after arriving in the Emergency Department of Boston City Hospital as a young resident in the early 1990s.

Every day, James diagnosed the ailments of patients in the busy safety-net hospital and wrote detailed treatment plans designed to fix them, just as she’d been trained. And every day, many of those same patients would return in worse shape than the last time she’d seen them. It was out of frustration that James hit upon a new approach.

“What would it take,” she began asking them, “for you not to come back here again?”

The answers were often surprisingly straightforward. One diabetic patient had been prescribed insulin that needed to be refrigerated. He told James he was homeless and had no place to put it. Another was scheduled follow-up appointments that conflicted with a job he couldn’t afford to miss. Some just needed a person to listen to their problems and answer questions — someone like James, a Black doctor who understood how it felt to be dismissed, not heard.

“In medical school, they teach you about disease and how to treat it, not necessarily about the human who happens to have that

disease, what their perspective is on it and how it even happened,” James said. “And without that, what is your likelihood of being able to help them?”

Today James has a far loftier title and, as vice president of mission and associate chief medical officer at what is now called Boston Medical Center, a lot more influence. And, the lessons learned all those years ago remain foundational. For the last decade, she’s infused that patient-centered perspective into a array of programs to empower people to help themselves.

Now James is applying that playbook to one of the most intractable problems in public health:

JAMES, Page A7

Black-led running group sues BAA, Newton chief over actions last year

Members say they were targeted on Marathon route

By Matt Stout
and Travis Andersen
GLOBE STAFF

Members of a Black-led running group who said they were racially profiled during last year’s Boston Marathon sued the race organizer, and the city of Newton and its police chief in what their lawyers described as an effort to “forestall a repeat” of the alleged discrimination at the race on Monday.

Boston-based Lawyers for Civil Rights filed the lawsuit in US District Court late Thursday on behalf of the TrailblazHers Run Co., charging the Boston Athletic Association and Newton Police “targeted” its members and made them “feel unsafe and unwelcomed, both in the neighborhood and at the marathon.”

“While white spectators viewed and enjoyed the event in peace, the people of color were racially profiled and discriminated against,” the 18-page complaint reads. “For individuals

and scrutiny turns what should be a day of joy and festivity into one of pain, humiliation and trauma.”

According to the civil rights group, last year the TrailblazHers set up a cheering section at mile 21 in Newton with more than 100 spectators, mostly people of color. They gathered with food, music, and signs like “hundreds of other groups” along the 26-mile course, Lawyers for Civil Rights said in a statement.

At one point, one of the spectators launched a confetti cannon to celebrate as a runner passed, drawing a Newton Police officer who “firstly

LAWSUIT, Page A10

Read’s lawyers want to share a theory

Ask judge to allow jurors to hear their version of events

By Travis Andersen
and Sean Cotter
GLOBE STAFF

DEDHAM — When the murder trial against Karen Read begins next week, her attorneys aim to convince a jury that her boyfriend, Boston Police Officer John O’Keefe, was killed by an unnamed third party inside a Canton home where police say she dropped him off hours before he was found dead outside in a snowbank.

On Friday, Read’s lawyers argued in Norfolk Superior Court that the jury should hear this theory, what’s known as a third-party culprit argument.

Trial Judge Beverly J. Cannone said she would issue a ruling on their request next week.

“I don’t know who the third-party culprit is, even after reading 4,500 pages of discovery,” Cannone said.

The final day of court preparations before the trial saw many of the same startling claims and intense jockeying between prosecution and defense that have turned this case into a spectacle, dividing friends and neighbors in Canton and triggering a federal probe into potential police misconduct.

Read, 44, is facing charges of second-degree murder, manslaughter while operating under the influence of alcohol, and leaving the scene of personal injury and death. Prosecutors allege she killed O’Keefe by hitting him with her SUV during a blizzard on Jan. 29, 2022, following a

night of drinking. Read allegedly returned hours later with two other women and discovered O’Keefe’s snow-covered body, later telling a first responder, “I hit him,” prosecutors have said.

But lawyers for Read say she is being framed by law enforcement to protect the real killer. They maintain O’Keefe entered the Canton home, where a gathering was being held, and was beaten to death in the basement, his body then left outside.

Acting US Attorney Joshua S. Levy’s office has convened a federal grand jury to investigate law enforcement’s handling of the case, and federal authorities have provided thousands of pages of sealed materials to prosecutors and Read’s defense team.

On Friday, David Yannetti, an attorney for Read, said

READ, Page A10

Harris blasts Trump on abortion

Ariz. speech affirms key strategy in Biden campaign

By Lissandra Villa de Petrzelka
GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris traveled Friday to Arizona, a battleground state that was roiled this week by the reinstatement of a more than 100-year-old law banning nearly all abortions, and said there was one person to blame: Donald Trump.

During a campaign event in Tucson, Harris called the Arizona ruling “one of the biggest after-shocks yet” of the US Supreme Court’s 2022 decision overturning Roe v. Wade, which eliminated the federal right to an abortion and put the issue into the hands of the states. And she hammered the point that Trump is responsible for the patchwork of state laws now governing abortion that have made access to it difficult, if not impossible, for millions of women across the country.

She branded the new restrictions in more than a dozen states “Trump abortion bans” and called him the “architect of this health care crisis.”

“What has happened here in Arizona is a new inflection point. It has demonstrated once and for all that overturning Roe was just the opening act ... of a larger strategy to take women’s rights and freedoms,” Harris said. “Part of a full-on attack, state by state, on reproductive freedom. And we all must understand who is to blame: Former President Donald Trump did this.”

President Biden’s campaign has sought to highlight the contrast on abortion rights between him and Trump, including new ads featuring Biden and a woman who nearly died because of her state’s abortion ban. Harris’s visit to Arizona signaled that effort is only going to dial up heading toward the November election.

HARRIS, Page A7

US expects Iran to attack Israel in coming days

But says American sites are unlikely to be targeted

By Eric Schmitt, Farnaz Fassihi,
Aaron Boxerman, and Thomas Fuller
NEW YORK TIMES

US intelligence analysts and officials said Friday that they expected Iran to strike multiple targets inside Israel within the next few days in retaliation for an Israeli bombing April 1 in the Syrian capital that killed several senior Iranian commanders.

The United States, Israel’s preeminent ally, has military forces in several places across the Middle East. But Iran is not expected to target them in order to avoid a direct conflict with the United States, according to US and Iranian officials who spoke anonymously about the expected attacks, which they were not authorized to discuss publicly.

Any Iranian strike inside Israel would be a watershed moment in the decades of hostilities between the two nations that would most likely open a volatile new chapter in the region. Israel and Iran do not maintain any direct channels of communication, making the chances far greater that

IRAN, Page A6



ARASH KHAMOOSHI/NEW YORK TIMES

People marched in the funeral procession in Tehran for seven Iranian commanders killed by an Israeli airstrike in Syria on April 5.



Going green

Saturday: Cloudy, showers. High: 52-57. Low: 41-46.
Sunday: Milder, some sun. High: 59-64. Low: 48-53.
Sunrise: 6:06 Sunset: 7:24
Comics and Weather, **D4-5**.
Obituaries, **C9**.

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