

## REV. DR. MELVIN GRIMES

*Board Member since 2019  
Be Healthy QC Coalition Member  
Access to Healthy Foods Group Member*

Officiating memorial services, after someone has died, is nothing new for Reverend Dr. Melvin Grimes, who has pastored the same church in Moline (Tabernacle Baptist) for the last 31 years. What *is* new, since early 2020, is their frequency. He says he's conducted 15 services, so far, directly blamed on COVID-19. "I don't like funerals—especially lately," Grimes solemnly admits. Several have hit him personally hard, as he's had to say goodbye to both congregants *and* colleagues. Besides his ministerial duties, he also serves as the Executive Director of Churches United of the Quad City Area, a non-profit that provides food and other assistance to many of our neighbors. In these two roles, alone, Dr. Grimes says he's always seen inequalities, but the pandemic has pushed

them to the surface, especially for the African American community. "I've noticed two things," Grimes emphasized. "Disparity is still here in terms of good access to medical care, and there's a lack of trust between patients and doctors." Grimes says much needs to be done to close these gaps and bridge misperceptions, which is why he had an interest to join the QCHI Board. "I can't make a difference from the sidelines," he says. One of QCHI's core values centers on collaboration ["We work to bring the right people and resources to the right place at the right time and create strong partnerships for the greater good of our community."] And Grimes agrees QCHI has one of the best models of inclusiveness, with its cross-sector board, etc. He says it's important to continue growing on that framework and he wants to be a part of creating a healthy community for all. "We don't need to have a lot of sick and disenfranchised people. We *can* have a community without that."

# Beard Stories

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