

Health Equity Journalism

The Category Manifesto

MELANIN BLISS MEDIA · AMBER K. McCLENDON, FOUNDER & CEO · NEW YORK, NY · 2026

The Category

Health Equity Journalism is the editorial discipline of treating information access, narrative accuracy, and institutional accountability as material public health interventions for Black and Brown communities — built bottom-up by founders with operational fluency inside the systems they cover.

It is distinct from health journalism, from Black media, from advocacy journalism, and from public health communications. It rejects all four as insufficient.

What It Is Not

Not health journalism.

Health journalism reports on healthcare to a general audience — it explains. Health Equity Journalism intervenes. The piece is the intervention.

Not Black media as currently practiced.

Most Black media tends top-down: celebrity, lifestyle, commentary, recycled mainstream coverage. This is bottom-up: the patient, the family, the community, then the system. Peers like Capital B and Word In Black do vital community-centered, accountability work; Health Equity Journalism extends that lineage with operational fluency inside healthcare specifically.

Not advocacy journalism.

Advocacy journalism takes a position. Health Equity Journalism takes a posture: solutions-first, fact-checked, source-protected, editorially independent. Every piece names a problem AND gives the reader a tool to act.

Not public health communications.

Public health communications come from institutions speaking down. Health Equity Journalism comes from the community speaking up — and is held to journalistic standards public health communications never face.

What It Is — The Four Structural Requirements

1 • Information as care.

Every piece is published with the operational understanding that what Black readers know about hospitals, policy, billing, bias, and systems determines whether they live, recover, or die. Coverage gaps are mortality drivers. We name them as such.

2 • Bottom-up architecture.

Reporting begins with the person, the community, the lived experience — and works upward through systems and institutions. Never the reverse. Never the press release. Never the policy expert before the patient.

3 • Operational fluency at the founder level.

This discipline requires practitioners who have worked inside the systems they cover — not studied them from the outside. The structural moat: 15 years inside top hospitals in NYC and Los Angeles — healthcare administration, oncology, cardiology, billing infrastructure — plus survivor authority from the 2022 accident and the medical errors that followed. It cannot be hired. It must be built by someone who already is what the field requires.

4 • Solutions-first standard.

Every problem the platform names includes a resource, a tool, or an action step. Coverage without an exit door is trauma porn. Health Equity Journalism does not produce trauma porn. Ever.

Who Coined the Category

Amber K. McClendon, Founder & CEO of Melanin Bliss Media, in New York, NY, coined and is building the category of Health Equity Journalism — through original investigative work, editorial architecture, and operational practice.

Who Operates It

Melanin Bliss Media is the independent, founder-led cultural digital media platform that defines and operates Health Equity Journalism. The Melanin Memo publishes Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, with a new investigation every week. The investigative beats — Medicaid Countdown, The Hospital on Your Block, Diagnose Bias, Behind the Bill, The Price Is Wrong, Sounding the Alarm, MB Rate My Bill, and Name Your Price — are the operating proof, alongside MB's published reporting on the Piedmont Henry Hospital doula case (Black Maternal Health Week 2026).

Position

MB does not compete in cultural digital media. MB does not compete in Black media. MB does not compete in health journalism. MB defines and operates the category of Health Equity Journalism.

On Building a Category

Health Equity Journalism is not yet formalized by a press association, a journalism school, or a peer-reviewed body. It is being established through practice — original investigative reporting, defined editorial pillars, public publication on a fixed cadence, and accumulated proof of work.

Categories are founded by practitioners before they are credentialed by institutions. That is the order of operations here.

We state it plainly, because honesty about how the field is being built is itself a form of editorial integrity.

Press Kit Definition (≈ 250 words)

Health Equity Journalism is the editorial discipline of treating information access, narrative accuracy, and institutional accountability as material public health interventions for Black and Brown communities.

It is distinct from health journalism, which explains; from Black media as currently practiced, which tends top-down toward celebrity and lifestyle; from advocacy journalism, which takes positions; and from public health communications, which speak from institutions down to communities.

Health Equity Journalism is built on four structural requirements: information as care — coverage gaps treated as mortality drivers; bottom-up architecture — reporting that begins with the patient, family, and community before reaching the system; operational fluency at the founder level — practitioners who have worked inside the institutions they cover, not studied them; and a solutions-first standard — every piece names a problem and equips the reader with a tool to act.

Melanin Bliss Media is the independent, founder-led cultural digital media platform building the category. Founded and operated by Amber K. McClendon, drawing on 15 years of healthcare administration at top hospitals in NYC and Los Angeles, MB publishes The Melanin Memo on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and runs investigative beats including Medicaid Countdown, The Hospital on Your Block, Diagnose Bias, Behind the Bill, The Price Is Wrong, Sounding the Alarm, MB Rate My Bill, and Name Your Price. MB does not compete in adjacent fields. MB defines and operates the category.

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We challenge. We investigate. We restore the truth. · Journalism for the culture. — Not a brand. A blueprint.