



A RESEARCH CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY, S.U.N.Y

Newsletter

Summer/Fall 2011

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Working with Our Community Partners

By Wilma Alvarado-Little

A relationship of mutual respect and understanding is important to create trust and to provide an opportunity for community participation. Without it, the possibility of the community participating in research on health disparities is far less likely.

The overall work of the Community Engagement and Outreach Committee has involved local, state and national participation in presentations on issues involving mental and physical health disparities. In addition, it has given presentations to middle school and high school audiences in order to create an awareness of healthy behaviors and practices within the youth population.

The Committee has also established task force groups in collaboration with the local communities in order to ensure that they have a voice at the table.

The Amsterdam Minority Health Task Force is comprised of residents of Amsterdam who have a strong commitment to the well-being of the community. In response to concerns about adolescent pregnancy, the task force developed "Young Moms on a Mission" – a series of workshops presented to the young women of the Latino community in Amsterdam, NY. The organizers also invited partners, parents and individuals

identified as part of the young woman's support network.

These workshops provide information on educational opportunities, healthy behaviors and practices for baby and mom, financial well-being, and basic job-seeking and interviewing techniques.

The Albany Minority Health Task force has also engaged local community members for their input on projects such as updating the Center brochures and literature and developing strategies for activities including "Dad's Take Your Child to School Day," which encourages fathers to take their children to school and to make an educational commitment.

Most recently, the Committee sponsored a very well-attended and well-received NYS Regional Multicultural Advisory Committee Town Hall Meeting for the Hudson River Region with the Office of Mental Health to address issues involving mental health disparities.

In September, the Outreach Committee will be hosting a workshop focusing on trauma in women's lives and its health impacts.

The Outreach Committee has been hard at work but recognizes the need to continue to partner with local communities and the university on health care disparities.



Town Hall Meeting attendees, August 11, 2011

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FAST FACTS ON DIABETES

Diabetes affects 25.8 million people of all ages, 8.3 percent of the U.S. population.

Diabetes is the 7th leading cause of death in the U.S.

DIAGNOSED: 18.8 million people
UNDIAGNOSED: 7.0 million people

In 2000, American Indians and Alaska Natives were 2.6 times more likely to have diagnosed diabetes than non-Hispanic Whites. African Americans were 2.0 times more likely, and Hispanics were 1.9 times more likely.

Source: National Institutes of Health

Making the Connections

By Greg Owens

Local communities have changed over the past 15-20 years. Institutions

that were once important, like the school, church, and family, now are not as influential as they once were in some places. They have been supplanted by other realities that influence the environment and the choices people have about how, when and where they can travel, what safety looks like and how they will survive.

Those of us in the helping professions who intend to engage our communities for better health outcomes must understand these changes, and how the trauma of this unprecedented economic disaster may transform the possibility of a healthy future for many of our citizens.

The CEMHD works to engage the people in the neighborhoods to become their own health ambassadors and champions, and to advocate for them to take control of their health. The Outreach and Engagement program is key to the process of connecting the community with information and answers. Letting families determine the path they will take to achieve better health is a critical core value.

Our work is to provide information about the real causes of health inequities and disparities. Structural and institutional factors in this nation's relationship to people and communities of people of color are contributing factors. Unless they are addressed, the personal choices that we encourage will be lost to the larger issues of unequal access and treatment, culturally destructive practices, and the residual effects of institutional and structural racism.

As we visit schools to talk with students about healthy options and strategies to change their personal circumstances, we must also bring resources to the neighborhoods of greatest need.

To accomplish this, we must work with local organizations, re-engage the local Albany Minority Health Task Force, and help people to see that they can achieve better physical, emotional and spiritual health. We must also teach the leadership tools and competencies required for lasting change. I look forward to engaging in this work with you.

Fall 2011 EVENTS CALENDAR

September 17

The Legacy of Trauma in Women's Lives: Health Impacts and Strategies for Healing in Community

Time: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm (Sat)

Location: UA Campus Center, Room 375

Cost: \$25 professionals,
\$15 students/community members

Advance Registration Required

For more information and to register:

www.thewomensbuilding.org

or call: 518.462.2871

November 7 - 8

Health Disparities in Sexual Minorities Along the Life Cycle: Initiating a Community Discussion

Time: 9:00 am– 4:00pm

Location: Page Hall, Downtown Campus

Cost: Free

Advance registration required

Please register electronically at:

www.albany.edu/cemhd

For more information contact:

Dr. Robert Miller at: rmiller@albany.edu

Spotlight: The Community Outreach and Engagement Co-Directors

Wilma Alvarado-Little, MA, MSW, is also the Outreach Committee's Principle Investigator. She has been a health care interpreter and trainer for over 25 years, and has been instrumental in the implementation of many hospital- and clinic-based interpreter programs. She has also served on a number of state and national advisory boards working on initiatives to identify linguistic and cultural barriers in the provision of quality health care services.

Greg Owens, LMSW, is also the Special Projects Director at the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. His has spent his career in social work as a practitioner, manager and policy maker, with 9 years in the juvenile justice arena and a decade on issues related to the overrepresentation of children and families of color in the child welfare and juvenile justice arenas. He has also worked as a trainer and consultant in leadership development, mentoring, youth gangs, and effective communication.

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Community Partners and Supporters

• Amsterdam Resource Center for Independent Living • Centro Civico of Amsterdam, Inc. • Capital District African-American Coalition on AIDS • Centro Civico Hispanoamericano, Albany • Capital Area School Development Association • The College of Saint Rose • Empire State College • Fulton - Montgomery Community College • HealthNow New York, Inc. • Healthy Capital District Initiative • Hudson Valley Community College • Internships in Aging Project • Montgomery County Community Services • Montgomery County Office for Aging • NYS Department of Health • St. Mary's Hospital, Amsterdam • United Way of Northeastern New York, Inc. • Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood • Whitney M. Young, Jr. Health Center