

African American Men's Health

It has long been documented that African Americans have been overwhelmingly burdened by the health inequities that exist within our nation, and for African American men the challenges are greater than any other race or gender group. African American men have the lowest life expectancy and highest death rate compared to men and women in other racial/ethnic groups in the United States. And African American males also have higher death rates than men from other racial groups for heart disease, HIV/AIDS, and certain cancers, including prostate, lung, and colon. Relative to diabetes, over three million or 13% of all African Americans aged 20 years or older have diabetes.¹ African Americans are 1.8 times more likely to develop diabetes than their non-Hispanic white counterparts, and the age-adjusted prevalence of diagnosed diabetes among men has doubled for Black males.² There are unique issues faced by African American men that impact their health as well as systematic challenges that influence their access to health care.

Save Our Sons Project

Save Our Sons is an innovative health education program centered on diabetes prevention. It is designed to improve the health status of African-American men and assist them with connecting with a primary care health physician and establish a medical home. This process will be facilitated by highly trained community health workers that will also implement a six session diabetes prevention curriculum based on a modified version of the *Power to Prevent* intervention that was developed in part by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health. Participants will include African-American men over 18 years old interested in improving their general health and well-being. Our aim is to develop a best practice education and community engagement model that may be replicated for use with African-American men across the nation. Evaluation of the project will entail use of qualitative and quantitative approaches to assess goals and overall effectiveness.

Project Activities

- Implement a diabetes prevention curriculum utilizing culturally competent community health outreach workers.
- Facilitate focus groups with African-American men regarding health and healthcare issues.
- Promote community engagement and partnership development with local health care providers, facilities, agencies, and organizations.
- Conduct key informant interviews with community stakeholders to help inform local health policy targets.
- Develop social marketing and health education materials for dissemination through various media outlets.

Key Collaborators

- National Urban League
- Lorain County Urban League
- Community Voices: Health Care for the Underserved at Morehouse School of Medicine
- Pfizer, Inc.

¹ American Diabetes Association. African Americans and Diabetes. Available at: <http://www.diabetes.org/communityprograms-and-localevents/africanamericans.jsp> Retrieved June 30, 2008.

² Centers for Disease Control. Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (OMHD). Eliminate Disparities in Diabetes. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/omhd/AMH/factsheets/diabetes.htm> Retrieved July 1, 2008.