



HEALTHIER BLACK ELDERS CENTER

Promoting Successful Aging in Detroit and Beyond

FALL 2009

Please mark your calendar to join us at the:

8th ANNUAL HBEC HEALTH RECEPTION

Tuesday, June 1, 2010
8am to 2pm

A free day of health screenings panel discussions, exercise, music and nutritious food.

The location has not been confirmed but pre-registration will again be required.

Look for more details over the next few months.

Please leave a message on our new HBEC number,

313-577-1000
if you have questions.

Survey Shows Health Reception Helps Many in Tough Times

The current economic crisis has placed a particular burden on older African Americans in Detroit, according to data retrieved from the 2009 Healthier Black Elders (HBEC) Participant Survey. Despite the financial downturn, though the benefits to the 1,100 seniors attending the Annual Health Reception continue to grow.

The 2009 respondents overwhelmingly (94%) felt that the HBEC Health Reception had a positive effect on their well-being with constant positive messages to enhance their health. Over 70%



Guests at 2009 Health Reception learn fun ways to stay healthy and lower their stress.

of participants self-rated their health as "Good" to "Excellent." The data

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HBEC CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP



Dr. Washington Dr. Green

Much of Dr. Washington's work with the HBEC will continue in the hands of Dr. Carmen R. Green, M.D.

Inspiration, Dedication and Passion Mark Career of Olivia Washington

Dr. Olivia Washington, a lifelong champion for improved health and healthcare for vulnerable African Americans, has announced she will retire from Wayne State University on December 31, 2009. Dr. Washington's involvement in the Institute of Gerontology (IOG), the Healthier Black Elders Center (HBEC), and the College of Nursing has been deep, broad and

meaningful. She has published nearly 40 articles and book chapters, received 15 awards of significance including the Great Seal of Michigan, the Women of Wayne Outstanding Achievement award, the Career Development Chair Award, and the Pillar Award of Excellence, and completed several major research projects.

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HEALTHIER BLACK ELDERS CENTER (HBEC)

University of Michigan and Wayne State University Center for Urban African American Aging Research:
A National Institute on Aging Grant Program





Is Laughter Good Medicine? Yes!

Research recently published in *Immunology Today* magazine, showed that humor and laughter help people live longer and happier lives. Humor reduces stress, fear, intimidation, embarrassment and anger.

Laughter has also proven to be a healing agent. The *American Journal of the Medical Sciences* reported, "When a person laughs, blood pressure decreases, heart rate and respiration increase, the body releases endorphins, and depression declines." Even after the

laughter stops, feelings of well-being and relaxation continue.

We can learn how to laugh from watching children. The *American Journal of the Medical Sciences* article also reported that "children laugh 400 times a day, while adults laugh only about 15 times a day." Watch children at a playground to see this firsthand. They are free, spontaneous and laugh outloud a lot. They resolve conflicts quickly (who gets the tricycle?) and move on. Children also don't

take life so seriously. It may be that, as we get older, we hold on to negative thoughts too long and lose our sense of humor and joy.

Dr. Gary Palmer, Professor of Recreation Management at Brigham Young University, said humor "is an attitude, not an event." The HBEC Annual Health Reception in June is a good place to refresh your attitude, laugh with friends, and learn how to significantly improve your health.

Research



Survey Reveals Healthier Guests

FROM PAGE 1

shows that multi-year attendees have increased their exercise, are eating more nutritiously, have better health habits, and see their physicians more regularly. Better yet, 92% of attendees said they share the information they receive with others.

But while health awareness of our attendees improves, their economic stability does not. More than half of the participants (53.6 %) said there is less money in their household this year, while 27% cut their spending on

prescription drugs and 24% delayed seeing a dentist or doctor. These HBEC statistics are consistent with national data. "Whenever there is an economic downturn, African Americans are most negatively affected," said Jon Schmitt, senior economist, Center for Economic Policy Research, Washington, D.C. Schmitt explained this disparity as a consistent gap in the wealth between African Americans and Whites, among other issues.

"What makes this recession particularly painful," Schmitt said, "is its origin in the housing market collapse." While only 5% of the HBEC respondents reported experiencing

foreclosure, 17% said they are having difficulty paying for housing and more than a third of the seniors (33.3%) are having difficulty paying their monthly bills. According to Schmitt, when industry and the economy falter "on Black Main Street, the devastation is far worse."

"Our annual event and survey are an important barometer of the physical, mental and economic health of Detroit's elders," IOG Director Dr. Lichtenberg said. "In stressful economic times, it is even more critical that older adults take care of their health. We are pleased that the HBEC Health Reception is helping to show them how."

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In a perfect world – where pristine qualities and inspiring realities are givens – one would never be overwhelmed by disparities, biases and insufficiencies. In our imperfect world, however, these difficult conditions provide many chances to apply wisdom and understanding, and to embrace hope in ways that build up those who are beleaguered.

- Olivia G.M. Washington, Ph.D.

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New Changes for HBEC

FROM PAGE 1

“Olivia has achieved extraordinary success during her 29 plus years at Wayne,” IOG Director Dr. Peter Lichtenberg said. “We are extremely sad to lose her.”

Dr. Washington’s credentials make her uniquely qualified to provide health education and conduct health research. She has two degrees in nursing – a Bachelor and Master of Science – and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Counselor Education with a focus in mental health counseling. She also is a Nurse Practitioner, a board certified Clinical Nurse Specialist in Adult Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing, and a Licensed Professional Counselor.

INFORMATION TAILORED TO THOSE IN NEED

The HBEC is part of the outreach component of the Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research, a shared collaboration between the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research (Director, James S. Jackson) and the Wayne State University IOG (Director, Peter Lichtenberg). Dr. Washington also

co-directors this Center’s Community Liaison Core. The Center works to reduce the health disparities that put older African Americans at increased risk for many chronic and potentially disabling diseases like diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and certain cancers. “Decades of mistrust in traditional medicine had taken their toll on the health of urban African American elders,” Dr. Washington said of her work as director of the HBEC, whose mission

is to educate elders to overcome their fears and to seek preventative health care through community outreach, education, and participating in research.

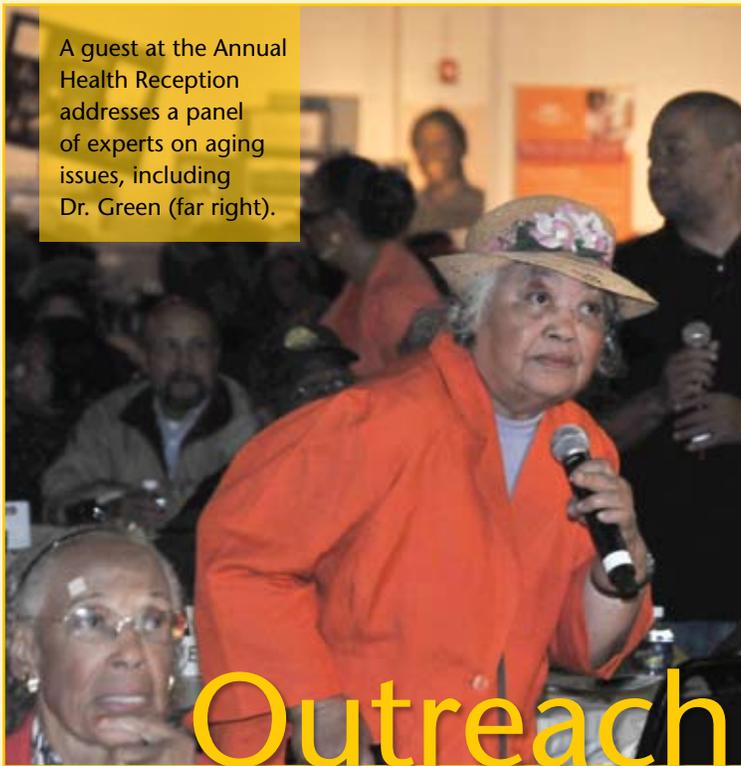
RESEARCH INFORMS THE OUTREACH

In line with the HBEC’s research mission, Dr. Washington helped to establish one of the country’s first databases of older African Americans willing to participate in health



Dr. Washington teaches Wayne State students about the needs of homeless older women. The collage in the background was created by a woman in Dr. Washington’s homeless support group with the assistance of a digital artist.

A guest at the Annual Health Reception addresses a panel of experts on aging issues, including Dr. Green (far right).



“

I'm enthusiastic about our future and our ability to reach new milestones.

- Carmen R. Green, M.D.

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research. The Participant Resource Pool now totals 1,137 participants. Research projects using participants from this pool may help find solutions to the health problems disproportionately affecting African Americans elders and their families.

The HBEC organizes five to six Community Healthcare Consumer Learning Series each year and a large annual reception in June that attracted more than 1,100 participants and performed a record 930 free health screenings. A majority of attendees said the Health Reception inspired them to eat better, exercise more and pay more attention to their health conditions.

Research surveys showed that 85.6% of attendees improved their understanding of research and 72.3% plan to improve their health habits as a result of attending the reception. “Our efforts are having a profound impact on urban health,” Dr. Washington said. “Consistency and quality year-after-year make a measurable difference.”

Although Dr. Washington's re-

tirement rapidly approaches, she continues to find significant ways to assist vulnerable populations. Her most recent accomplishment was helping the College of Nursing win a three-year, \$916,797 grant from the federal government's Health Resources and Services Administration. The project will prepare select Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners (APPNs) and Advanced Practice Public Health Nurses (APPHNs) to fill the shortages of health providers in designated urban and rural areas in Michigan. “This is greatly needed,” Dr. Washington said of the project. “We must do all we can to bring quality health care to these forgotten areas.”

A COMMITMENT TO CONTINUED EXCELLENCE

Though Dr. Washington is retiring, the serious work of the HBEC will continue. Carmen R. Green, M.D., a professor of anesthesiology, obstetrics and gynecology, and health management and policy at the University of Michigan school

of Medicine and Public Health. She is also a faculty affiliate with the Program for Research on Black Americans. Dr. Green will co-direct the HBEC Community Liaison Core and oversee the HBEC's health and education events. “Dr. Washington has provided the HBEC with a solid foundation for continuing the progress in improving the health of African American elders,” Dr. Green said.

Dr. Green attended last year's Health Reception as the panelist expert on pain and its management, fielding several questions about pain control. She is principal investigator for the Michigan Pain Outcomes Study Team and attending physician in the Multi-disciplinary Pain Center. Dr. Green is currently director of the dissemination and health policy core for MCUAAAR and will continue in that position as she assumes her expanded role with the HBEC.

New Scholars Increase Diverse Approaches to Research

The Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research announces the selection of four new pilot scholars for 2009-2010. These scholars are all junior faculty chosen for the quality of their research and its focus on underrepresented and vulnerable populations.

“Our objective is to develop a new generation of scholars in social and behavioral science research, devoted to improving the health of older ethnic and racial minorities,” said MCUAAAR co-director James Jackson, Ph.D., of the U-M. The pilot scholars receive research funding and intensive mentoring.

Florence Dallo, Ph.D. – Dr. Dallo is currently an assistant professor of wellness, health promotion and injury prevention in the School of Health Sciences at Oakland University. As a Chaldean immigrant growing up in a racially and ethnically diverse community, she was curious why some individuals led healthy lives, while others did not. Her research passion is to promote health and prevent disease in minority communities.



Dr. Griffith

Derek Griffith, Ph.D. – Dr. Griffith is an assistant professor in the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education in the University of Michigan, School of Public Health and the Assistant Director of the Center for Research on Ethnicity, Culture and Health. The primary focus of Dr. Griffith’s research is using qualitative and quantitative approaches to develop and test theories

to improve older African American men’s longevity and quality of life.

Ronica Rooks, Ph.D. – Dr. Rooks is an assistant professor in the Department of Health and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Colorado Denver (UCD). She is currently investigating: 1) the relationship of health and racial health disparities to employment among older, well-functioning Black and White adults; and 2) whether



Dr. Rooks

well-functioning Black adults, who have already survived certain higher health risks, will be more robust than White adults over time with regard to chronic conditions.

Jean Burton – Jean was selected to receive MCUAAAR’s Diversity Supplement grant for her work on the research project, “Menopause in Social Context.” Jean is a predoctoral trainee at the Institute of Gerontology.



Jean Burton



Partnership

QHHC Partner Makes Good Health Easier

Health screenings save lives.

Screenings can detect dangerous but treatable conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol – conditions that older African Americans are at high risk of developing. By partnering with health care agencies like the award-winning Quality Home Health Care Services of Michigan (QHHC), the HBEC has been able to offer screenings to hundreds of attendees at its Health Reception and Healthcare Consumer Learning Series.

For the past year, QHHC and its qualified staff of medical professionals have administered free on-site blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol screenings at HBEC events, and identified dozens of persons who needed follow-up care to stay healthy. This partnership helps align the missions of QHHC and the HBEC: To provide health knowledge and critical resources to the older adults of metro Detroit.

QHHC also supports the Institute of Gerontology as a sponsor of its weekly professional development and colloquia series, in which experts from around the country address students and faculty on research projects, techniques and results. “Like the Institute, QHHC is committed to the continuous education of its staff,” said President Michael Gilliam, “and to incorporating research findings and best practices into its home care services.”

DR. WASHINGTON

Seniors
Volunteers
Educators
Students
Caregivers



We All
Thank You!



HEALTHCARE CONSUMER LEARNING SERIES

The Healthier Black Elders Center organizes five to ten educational events each year to provide accurate and up-to-date health information to older adults in their Detroit communities. Reservations required for December and April events by calling Karen Daniels at 313-871-0735.

Monday, Dec. 14, 2009 (10:00 am - Noon, light brunch provided)

Especially for Latino Americans: Join Senator Hansen Clarke to discuss the future of your healthcare. Presentations in Spanish with English translation.

LA SED community center, 7150 W. Vernor, Detroit 48209

Monday - Wednesday, Jan. 11-13, 2010

Please join us at the ***Grand Re-opening of the Villa Wellness Center.***

2301 Woodmere St. Detroit 48209. Call 313-831-2503 x240 for program details.

Saturday, April 24, 2010 (11:00 am – 1:00 pm, lunch provided)

Celebrate Older American's Month.

Temple of Faith Baptist Church, 15801 W. Chicago Rd., Detroit 48228

IOG Director Dr. Peter Lichtenberg brings everyone up-to-date on the latest aging issues and research. Guests get a chance to kick-up-their-heels by learning gentle dance and movement exercises.

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