

Advancing Health Equity Through Advocacy, Community Leadership and Research in Action!

By Tabia Henry Akintobi, PhD, MPH

Fall brings change and transition, some of which we expect, like cooler temperatures and the beautiful array of leaves that change and naturally adorn trees. Others are unexpected and represent a recognition of the importance of banding together with brothers and sisters near and far in response to Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, to name a few at the time of this writing. They remind me of the common necessities that band us together as members of the human race. We stand in unity with all those affected by the storms during this time of tragedy in our country.

We have been strategically increasing our visibility among policy-makers who are important in ensuring the sustainability of our work. LaShawn Hoffman, Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center (MSM PRC) Community Coalition Board (CCB) Chair and I were part of a group of six-PRC contingency (Dartmouth, NYU Medical College, UNC and UMass Worcester) to discuss the impact, value and return on investment of the Prevention Research Center (PRC) Network. Mr. Hoffman represented both the PRC Community Committee and the MSM PRC CCB. Meetings were held with representatives for the Offices of Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (CT-03), Eric Anthony; representatives from New Hampshire Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Michelle Greenhalgh and New York Senator Charles Schumer. These activities will continue to be among our priorities towards demonstrating our value to those that make decisions about funding the 26 Prevention Research Center network, as well as our own local, unique brand of community-centered research.

We are clear that the impact and sustainability of the Morehouse School of Medicine Community Coalition Board (MSM PRC CCB) is based on evidence of our successful community-engagement processes, outcomes and partnerships. Our community health workers, Sabrina Mobley and Adrienne Proeller have been central to our Community Health Needs and Assets Assessment (CHNA2) (see Page 4). This neighborhood resident engagement process will be used directly steer the research and health activities of the center and has been among our top priorities this year. I am also proud of the leadership that members of our CCB bring to the work of the Morehouse



Russell Hopson, *Neighborhood Planning Unit Y Chairperson*

School of Medicine. Russell Hopson, Neighborhood Planning Unit Y Chairperson, will be applying his knowledge and passion for addressing community health concerns on a greater scale as the newest member of the Board of Trustees for Morehouse Healthcare! He is thankful to the MSM PRC for promoting him to this new role, while still allowing him to play an integral part in the work the CCB continues to do.

This issue is complete with reflections from our CCB Chair (see page 4), and the ways in which PROJECT HAPPY (Page 4) are advancing their efforts through work that is made for and led by youth. Our visibility and partnership with The American Public Health Association and Community-Campus Partnerships for Health noted on Page 4. We are on a mission and the best is yet to come!



Prevention Research Center (PRC) Legislative Visit Delegation (Left to Right): LaShawn Hoffman, MSM PRC Community Coalition Board Chair, Tabia Henry Akintobi, PhD, MPH, MSM PRC, Nadia Islam, PhD, New York University School of Medicine PRC, Stephen Bartels MD, MS, Dartmouth PRC, Stephenie Lemon, PhD, University of Massachusetts PRC, David Katz, MD, MPH, Yale PRC, Samantha Schmidt, Dartmouth PRC and Managing Epilepsy Network, Alice Ammerman, DrPH, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill PR

Community Health Worker Update: Building Bridges to Community One Project at a Time

By Sabrina Mobley & Adrienne Proeller

As Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM PRC) Community Health Workers (CHW), we are constantly looking for new ways to strengthen every level of community engagement for the Center. Here are a few of the projects keeping us engaged with the community:

Community Health Needs and Assets Assessments: (CHNA2): To date, the CHWs have participated in more than 50 community events, meetings and health fairs to administer and promote the CHNAA surveys. At last count, MSM PRC is more than half way to the goal of 613 completed surveys.

Healthy Happy Hour: As part of the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health Health Initiative (REACH HI) Healthy Corner Stores Initiative, the CHWs worked with partners at Georgia State University (GSU) to plan and promote a Fruit and Vegetable Happy Hour at Peach Pantry. The event was designed to drive awareness and demand for the fresh produce carried by the corner store in Sylvan Hills.

REACH Webinar: The CHWs led a webinar Ten Tips for Successful Community Engagement and Priorities for Powerful Partnerships. The webinar is being archived to share with a national audience.

CHWs worked with partners at Georgia State University and Cooking Matters to host a Fruit and Vegetable Happy Hour at Peach Pantry on August 18. The event featured blood pressure screenings, health coaching, and cooking demonstrations that used ingredients for sale at this Healthy Corner Store. The event was supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) REACH HI grant # 5NU58DP005945.

CBPR Curriculum Focus Groups: MSM PRC developed a curriculum on Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) and the CHWs contributed in two ways: they assisted with content development and helped recruit community members for a pilot testing on the curriculum and a focus group to get feedback on the design.

Community Resource Guide: CHWs are compiling a print guide of health-related resources, facilities and services in NPUs T, V, X, Y and Z. The resource inventory will be expanded later to include all of Atlanta. The inventory will then be mapped and offered to the community on a smart phone app.

For more information about past survey results or ways to get involved with this current effort, please contact Latrice Rollins, PhD at 404-752-1187.



Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Res

Project HAPPY

By Romell Phillips, MPH

Now in its 3rd year, Project HAPPY (The HIV/ AIDS Prevention Program for Youth) is developed for African American teens –ages 14-18. The goal of the project is to assess the impact of four distinctive interventions on teen’s knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of HIV/AIDS and risky sexual behavior. Peer groups of 8-10 teens meet over the course of a four week period. Three intervention arms meet eight times and the remaining intervention arm meets twice during the four weeks.

The project intends to recruit a total of 384 teens for the project (96 per arm) and 96 parents for the parental arm. Presently, there are 100 students enrolled in the project. Recruitment and retention remain a challenge, but new strategies have been implemented to improve both areas. These strategies include:

- Enhancing incentives to include community service hours for teens.
- Expanding recruitment criteria to include teens that use resources within the recruitment communities and not just those residing in the recruitment communities.
- Providing transportation to students to attend sessions.
- Providing incentives for attendance.

Project Successes

- Partnerships with Carver and South Atlanta High School to host session after school.
- Partnering with YMCA & Boys & Girls Club to recruit directly from in house programming.
- Training teen ambassadors to assist with recruitment and driving our social media presence.
- CCB involvement in project innovations.
- APHA abstract acceptance: Peer-to-Peer Developed HIV Education and Prevention Messaging Delivered Through the use of Social Media.

Community Coalition Board

By LaShawn Hoffman, CCB Chair



LaShawn Hoffman, CCB Chair

As we enter autumn of 2017, I am very excited about the work Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center (MSM PRC) has accomplished in partnership with the Community Coalition Board (CCB). Our work is truly striving to support the mission of MSM PRC and I can see a bright future for our communities, residents and city.

The CCB is at the forefront of ensuring the work of MSM PRC is closely aligned to research practices and outcomes truly benefit the community. From the various community trainings to the implementation of key interventions, the CCB practices the principles of community-based participatory research to guide and develop every aspect of keep project that engage our communities.

With the dedicated members of the CCB, who consist of a diverse group of community advocates, academic partners, and agencies, our commitment to reducing health disparities and improving health outcomes for every person is a responsibility we don’t take lightly. Through our linkages to communities, neighborhoods and organizations, we can ensure the research conducted is community centered and focused on the most important people, which includes YOU!

We are always seeking new partnerships, collaborations, ideas, and innovative tools that will help towards the advancement of health equity. My approach to achieving comprehensive community revitalization and development in Atlanta is through the intersection of public health and community development. I look forward to the opportunity to share more about our work in the months to come.

In closing, this work is what servant-leadership is all about.

Onward and Upward!

American Public Health Association Presentations and Collaborations

The American Public Health Association (APHA) is the nation's leading public health organization and works to advance the health of all people and all communities. Its annual meeting will be held in Atlanta, Georgia this year. MSM PRC, community partners and other collaborators will be presenting at the APHA meeting. We are also thrilled that the Men's Oral Health Dental Access Program (MOHDAP), led by LaShawn Hoffman, MSM PRC Community Coalition Board Chair was recently published in the APHA's journal! This is what we call flipping the script! The presentations and article are listed below with community co-authors/presenters with names bolded.

Presentations

Henry Akintobi, T., **Hoffman, L.**, Blumenthal, D., Collins, D., McCray, G., **Mobley, S.**, **Leslie, T.**, McCrary, C., McAllister, C., **Proeller, A.**, Hernandez, N., Braithwaite, R., & Mayberry, R. (2017). *Advancing community-based participatory research from start to finish: a community engagement model to support a center of excellence on health disparities.*

Griggs, B., Henry-Akintobi, T., Rollins, L., Miller, A., **Johnson, T.**, & **Trotter, J.** (2017). *Surviving the pressure: An exploration of multilevel factors influencing sexual health behaviors of at-risk, African American adolescents.*

Hunter-Jones, J., Hernandez, N., Smith, J., Tolbert, A., Slocumb, T., Kottke, M., Freeman, J., Sinclair, D., Appleby, S., **Johnson, L.**, **Burney, R.**, Rivers, D., Rollins, L., and Sawyer, S. (2017). *A community engaged approach to understanding unintended pregnancy among young Black and Latina women in Atlanta, GA.*

Hoffman, L.M., Rollins, L., Akintobi, T.H., McAllister, C., Hernandez, N., Erwin, K., Miller, A. (2017). Evaluation of a community-based participatory oral health intervention for low-income African American men. *American Journal of Public Health*, Supplement 1(107), 104-110. PMID: 28661811

APHA's Community Based Public Health Caucus leaders, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health and the Morehouse School of Medicine-Prevention Research Center are partnering to conduct a writing and dissemination institute designed to build community and academic partners' capacities to engage as equal partners in the writing and dissemination of community-engaged research and related health initiatives.

For more information about the APHA visit <https://www.apha.org/>. Visit <https://www.apha.org/apha-communities/caucuses/community-based-public-health-caucus> to learn more about the Community-Based Public Health Caucus. For more information on Community-Campus Partnerships for health visit <https://ccph.memberclicks.net/about-us>

