



# National Black Church Initiative

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## Health Emergency Declaration (HED) COPD Health Sermon

*Consistent with HED, we will recruit a member of the Congregational-Based Health Volunteer Corps to give this health sermon. This will be a five-minute sermon before the congregation. The pastor will introduce the member of the volunteer corps. There will be a religious introduction in order to grab people's attention.*

Praise the Lord Saints,

We have come to talk to you very briefly this morning about a disease known as COPD. As you know, our church is participating in the National Black Church Initiative's Health Emergency Declaration COPD program. We want you to understand what the nature of the disease is, what its symptoms are, and how it can be treated. COPD is a major health concern, as it is the fourth leading cause of death<sup>1a</sup> and second leading cause of disability in the United States.<sup>2</sup> It is also a preventable and treatable disease.<sup>1b</sup>

COPD is short for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. It is a serious lung disease that includes emphysema, chronic bronchitis, or both.<sup>1b</sup>

If you have COPD, then the airways that carry air to and from your lungs are partly blocked, making it hard to breathe.<sup>1b</sup> Individuals with COPD may experience shortness of breath, a cough that doesn't go away, wheezing, chest tightness and constant clearing of the throat.<sup>1c, 3</sup> These are **not** normal signs of aging.<sup>3</sup> It's important to talk to your doctor about taking a breathing test to measure the health of your lungs if you have any of these symptoms. You can also speak to your preacher about getting assistance and aid. NBCI will be organizing information sessions for you to learn more about COPD and its symptoms.

To determine if you have COPD, you will have to take a breathing test. The most common test to diagnose COPD is called spirometry. This noninvasive and painless test could detect if you have COPD even before you start showing symptoms.<sup>4</sup> We urge anyone here who believes they may have COPD to talk to their doctor and ask about this test.



Right now, there is no cure for COPD, but there are treatments to help manage its symptoms.<sup>1d</sup> Remember Saints, we have the Lord! If you have COPD, it is important to live an active lifestyle and not smoke. Smoking is one of the leading causes of COPD, and although you can't undo the damage that smoking has already caused, quitting smoking is the most important step to take to prevent or slow damage to the lungs if you have COPD.<sup>1e, 1f</sup> We will be working diligently with NBCI to get all our congregants to stop smoking. NBCI will be offering programs throughout the city to help people quit smoking, along with educating us on other ways to treat COPD, including medications, pulmonary rehabilitation exercises and surgery, the last of which is often a last resort.

If you have any questions, please take a look at the COPD Health-At-A-Glance pamphlet we've provided or come up and speak with your pastor. In the coming weeks, we will do more to help you understand COPD. Programs and information will be at your disposal to help prevent, to get diagnosed, or to get treated for COPD.

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1. COPD Foundation. COPD Big Fat Reference Guide (BFRG). 2009.
2. The Merck Manual of Geriatrics. "Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease." Available at <http://www.merck.com/mkgr/mmg/sec10/ch78/ch78a.jsp>. Accessed June 16, 2009.
3. COPD Foundation website. "Symptoms." Available at [http://www.copdfoundation.org/patients\\_caregivers/about\\_chronic\\_obstructive\\_pulmonary\\_disease/symptoms](http://www.copdfoundation.org/patients_caregivers/about_chronic_obstructive_pulmonary_disease/symptoms). Accessed on August 18, 2010.
4. National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. COPD: Are You at Risk? December 2006. Available at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/copd/campaign-materials/pub/copd-atrisk.pdf>. Accessed May 14, 2009.