



Colon Cancer – A Preventable Tragedy

A National Faith – Based Strategy

Colorectal cancer screening has been identified as a measure to save lives. However, nearly one-third of the adult population of the age of 50 and older is not getting screened. The American Cancer

Society (ACS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (an organization co-founded by ACS and CDC) have joined together to promote 80 percent by 2018 – a colorectal cancer screening initiative.

More specifically, each year more than 18,000 African Americans will be diagnosed with colon cancer and almost 7,000 will die from this disease; the real tragedy is at least 6,300 of those lives could have been saved. Unlike other cancers, colon cancer can be prevented by maintaining a healthy lifestyle and removing polyps before they become cancerous.

While colon cancer impacts all races and both genders, the problem is particularly acute among African Americans; in fact, the death rate is 45% higher for blacks than other racial groups. Historically, this has been attributed to socio-economic factors such as access to health care and the screening rate; however, new research is demonstrating there are different mutations significantly more prevalent among African Americans, placing them biologically at a higher risk. Thus, there is great need to be proactive to ensure African Americans are not impacted disproportionately by disparities affecting the overall population as well as the disparities linked to the specific types of gene mutations.

A New Approach is Needed Now

More Americans than ever before are getting screened for colon cancer resulting in a 30% reduction in the number of people diagnosed with the disease. Yet one (1) out of three (3) people still has not taken this life saving step.

Individuals who are aware of screening, but have chosen not to take this step are described as “the unworried well.” African Americans are part of this reluctant group with just more than half of them getting screened at the recommended time and the screening rate among this group is lower than any other racial group.

To motivate African Americans and others similarly situated, we must go beyond traditional mass-communication and a sole focus on the colonoscopy; we need a personalized message that highlights multiple screening methods including easy to use, at-home options. We need a comprehensive approach unlike those unfunded and unimplemented initiatives by societal agencies like Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control, and the National Institute of Health.

Now is the Time – A Faith Based Approach to Colon Cancer Prevention

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) and the Colon Cancer Alliance have established a unique partnership dedicated to preventing colon cancer in the African American community. NBCI is a faith based charitable organization comprised of more than 34,000 member churches dedicated to decreasing health disparities. Through a network of more than 150,000 churches, NBCI is uniquely positioned to communicate with more than 15 million African-Americans. The Colon Cancer Alliance is the oldest colon cancer and providing support for families facing the challenge of this devastating disease.

The campaign theme, “Now is the Time,” originates from the fact that often adults know they should get screened for colon cancer, but they keep putting it off. This campaign targets specific markets, both urban and rural. NCBI and the Alliance will recruit churches to participate in a Colon Cancer Prevention Sunday. The health navigator at each church will be trained on prevention of colon cancer, including information on the various stool based at-home screening methods for individuals who cannot or will not have a colonoscopy. On identified Sundays, the navigator will include a health sermon as part of the service and will be available to provide information and speak with parishioners following the service in the social hall. In addition, written information will be included in the church bulletin and as a hand-out for parishioners

Using the NBCI database, we will conduct a pre and post survey. This evaluation mechanism will enable us to determine the percentage of at-risk adults in the congregation who have not been screened and how many take action including scheduling an appointment to get checked.

Congressional Support

Congressman Donald Payne, Jr., representing New Jersey’s 10th District, is the Honorary Chair of the Now is the Time Campaign. Representative Payne is a passionate advocate for colon cancer prevention, particularly in the African-American community. Congressman Payne is seeking funding through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the campaign and is reaching out to his colleagues, including members of the Black Caucus, to rally support.

On Sunday, June 14, 2015, the campaign will kick off with Colon Cancer Prevention Sunday in Newark, New Jersey with approximately 200 churches participating. Congressman Payne and representatives of NBCI and the Alliance will hold a press event at a selected church.

Collaborative Partnership

In order for the campaign to receive funding from CDC, as well as other private sources, it is critical that we demonstrate an increase in the screening rate when the mass communication initiatives have failed to do so. We believe that a personalized message from the pulpit and conversation with a fellow parishioner and health navigator will have the impact that no radio, TV or internet spot could accomplish. However, we need to validate and quantify our belief using survey data to address these issues.

Ideally we would like to conduct the campaign in five to ten markets, fairly representing geographical areas and a mix of urban and rural communities. These pilots would enable us to collect evaluation data on pre and post screening rates, as well as other vital information including barriers for those who elect not to be screened. We invite all to partner with us in those efforts to support the expansion into these pilot markets.

We also would welcome the opportunity to meet with congressional and community representatives to discuss the campaign in greater detail. Hearing input from a variety of constituents becomes important in our efforts to be more inclusive and deliberate for our targeted group.

Some highlighted components of The National Strategy follow:

Location of the Initiative

Newark, NJ is the first of 25 cities we plan to implement this bold initiative. Newark, NJ has a population of 278,000.

The Name of the Initiative

National Black Church Initiative and Colon Cancer Alliance National Education and Screening Program

Theme of the Initiative

Now is the Time

Internet Resources

National Black Church Initiative and CCA Colon Cancer webpages

<http://naltblackchurch.com/health/coloncancer-alliance.html>

<http://ccalliance.org/>

The NBCI page will grow along with the growth of the program. NCI contacts and resources would be added to the page

Kick-off Date and Location

June 14, 2015; Abyssinian Baptist Church, 10:30am, Newark, NJ; Reverend Perry Simmons host Pastor.

Six Goals of the Initiative

- Increase awareness of African Americans on the importance of colon cancer awareness.
- Provide comprehensive literature on colon cancer to the African American community.

- Provide critical education around the issues surrounding colon cancer in a systematic way.
- Provide outreach to the entire African American community regarding colon cancer screening.
- Help persuade African Americans to participate in major research and clinical trials around colon cancer.
- Connect African Americans to colon cancer resources on a national, state and local level.

Distribution of Literature

1. The initial distribution of literature will happen during the months of June and July to a minimum of 200 of the 300 churches. Each church will receive 250 each totaling 50,000 copies.
2. There would be two other literature distributions, one noting the resources and the opportunity for screening that the state, federal, city and county offer around the issue of colon cancer. This distribution will total another 50,000 copies.
3. The third distribution of literature will deal with clinical trials, this will total around 50,000 copies.

Host hospital for the initiative in New Jersey

Beth Israel has been identified by the Congressman's office to work with this project only in Newark, NJ.

Project impact based on population

178,000 African Americans will be impacted in the areas of education, outreach, literature distribution, screening and clinical trials.

Number of participating churches

300 African American churches with an average congregation of 325 to 500.

Statistical breakdown of churches / Data Collection

- Number of Churches will identified by zip code.
- Size of the congregation
- The number of parishioners educated
- The number of parishioners who receive literature
- The number of individuals screened
- The number of individuals who follow up with their physicians
- How many were screened

- What are your view on the nature of the program
- Were you satisfy with your experience

Gender demographics

60% female/40% male

Program outline

There are five critical components to this program:

1. Identification of population - Our target population is African American men and women over 45 years of age
2. Education - We will conduct six comprehensive education sessions over the next eight months.
3. Outreach - National Black Church Initiative will provide all outreach through its' congregational based volunteers/health navigators and its' HED health model.
4. Screening - A protocol for screening will be developed and distributed noting the individuals who have insurance and those who have not.
5. Clinical trials - We will work with private and governmental clinical trials. Dr. Owen Garrick will head this part of the initiative.

Comprehensive Educational Sessions

The Colon Cancer Alliance (CCA), NCI and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) will work to create comprehensive colon cancer education modules. They will be delivered online and through live presentations as well as on video.

Screening Efforts

As indicated above, we will create a separate resource literature clearly spelling out for those who have insurance and those who do not how they can be screened for colon cancer. We plan to work very closely with CCA, NCI, state and federal clinics and other potential partners. We plan to convene a round table discussion with all relevant stakeholders headed by Congressman Payne's staff on how to create and sustain a protocol of screening which is the goal of this initiative.

The role of the National Cancer Institute (NCI)

NCI will seek overall technical assistance on this project. We hope to stay in constant contact with key NCI staff members. We plan to consult extensively with literature development concerning screening and clinical trials. We will consult with NCI on the education on developing the education models on colon cancer.

HEALTH EMERGENCY DECLARATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Black Church Initiative's Health Emergency Declaration (HED) is a landmark program initiated by NBCI leadership, making strides to help bring about positive change in the physical health of the African American community. HED aims to institute throughout its 34,000 member churches proven health prevention strategies and models that will begin to alter, transform and eliminate the negative health disparities between African Americans and the majority population of the United States. Launched March 2010 in Baltimore, Maryland, this seven-year commitment pledges to help bring about healthier lifestyles in African Americans through education, promotion of preventative care, improved diet, physical exercise, and clinical trials.

Health disparities between minority populations and mainstream America are a critical problem in our country. African Americans disproportionately suffer from more chronic diseases, suffer from more malnutrition, and lack the resources needed to be properly educated about a healthy lifestyle due to societal structures outside their control. The most compelling reason that catalyzed HED's creation stemmed from the unfortunate circumstance that every major effort by all levels of government, health foundations, and private health organizations has had little to no impact in sustaining good health practices in the black community. Past efforts by these institutions have been half-baked, strategically flawed, and vastly underfunded. This means that having a sustaining impact on the incidence of chronic diseases is nearly impossible and the amount of change in behavior of the individuals that the programs are targeted for is nil. NBCI's HED initiative seeks to help remedy these problems at a pace that is just, fair, and desperately needed in the African American community.

Rev. Anthony Evans, President of NBCI, piloted HED as a health model for the black church. The program is a comprehensive seven year plan aimed at tackling the tragic state of health in the black community. Through the establishment of 35 Health Prevention Communities, HED plans to educate communities across the country and promote preventive healthcare. Because of the church's leading role in the black community, HED will have a greater and lasting impact on the African American community and seriously help to decrease the health disparities that plague it.

HED is designed as an innovative health prevention strategy that has the capacity to accommodate and provide integrative support of existing program systems. It is not designed as a stand-alone system, but will realize the full strength of its unique structure when fully or partially integrated into existing health systems that have proved to be effective in dealing with health disparities. The program's structure is designed with flexibility in order to accommodate forthcoming health reform models. The elasticity of HED will lie in the hands of the 35 Health Panels that will be able to amend their strategic plans and structure to accommodate any significant healthcare system change without compromising on the original intents of HED.

HED is a science-based health model that works within the traditional function of the black church. It promotes education, screening, data collection, clinical trials, and conducts health surveys throughout its 35 health prevention communities. It is grounded in seven Core Values, thoughtfully considered at the program's inception as the primary means to affect the change needed in the African American community. Those Core Values are: Knowing Your Body; Visiting the Doctor; Increasing Fruit and Vegetable Intake; Increasing Physical Activity; Getting Enough Sleep; Reducing Stress by Taking Mental Breaks; and Quitting or Not Starting Smoking.

To accomplish its HED goals, NBCI will strategically redefine its relationship with every segment of the healthcare industry, including government. It will also engage up to 68 percent of African American congregations, touching some 14 million individuals and galvanizing more than 75,000 volunteers. The cost savings of this initiative over the next seven years is still being evaluated by a health economist. The guiding principle for HED is that our program will not participate in any program that does not seek as its primary goal to eliminate the health issues in the Black community, does not try to reduce the number of chronic disease cases in the Black community, or does not attempt to strengthen the existing health models in the U.S.

Due in large part to NBCI's unique and strong ties with the Black Church, HED has experienced measured success in its first several years. Beginning with its launch in Baltimore, HED has implemented a range of advocacy initiatives in over 30 communities across the country. Partnering with such notable firms as Novartis, HED has successfully worked to better African American health around the issues of HIV/AIDS, multiple myeloma, and COPD. With its momentum still in high gear, NBCI leadership looks forward to continuing its HED programming around other critical health issues facing the African American community. NBCI is constantly on the lookout for any health entity or advocacy organization who is an innovator in the field, with the ideas and the passion to help eradicate some of the chronic disease states that are plaguing the Black America today.

The African American community in the United States can ill afford to wait for health reform undertaken by the government, whose effects may not truly take hold for another decade. For detailed information about NBCI's Health Emergency Declaration and its work to close health disparity gaps impacting African Americans across the United States, visit our website at <http://www.naltblackchurch.com/health/>.

