

Community Health Coalition, Inc.

407 Crutchfield Street P.O. Box 15176

Durham, NC 27704

Phone: (919) 470 - 8680

Fax: (919) 470 - 8688

Email: Healthcoali@aol.com

Website: www.chealthc.org



Date: April 22, 2012

Health Sunday Topic: **Health Equity Can't Wait. ACT NOW.**

Dear Community:

This letter is written to you to express the importance of the Healthy People 2020 initiative and to celebrate Minority Health Month as we raise awareness about the importance of health equity.

HEAR YE! HEAR YE! While we are not the judicial system, what we have to share is just as important. Did you know that April is National Minority Health Month? The Community Health Coalition along with several federal and state agencies, local groups and partners has launched strategic plans aimed at reducing racial and ethnic health disparities. **Health disparities** are defined as significant differences in the health status and healthcare between one population and another. African Americans continue to have more disease, disability, premature death than whites, and still lag behind in many health outcome measures. They are less likely to get the preventive care they need to stay healthy, more likely to suffer from serious illnesses such as diabetes or heart disease, and when they do get sick, are less likely to have access to a personal healthcare professional. Disparities are documented in many conditions, including: cardiovascular disease, childhood and adult obesity, diabetes, infant mortality, flu, cancer, HIV/AIDS, kidney disease, asthma, immunizations, injury deaths, violence, behavioral health and oral health.

No longer should African Americans be striving for reducing health disparities, but should be working toward health equity; striving for a life full of purpose and promise. **Healthy equity** is defined as equal access, opportunity and justice for all people (irrespective of ethnic or socio-economic status, sex or age) to develop and maintain health through fair and just access to health resources. **The Community Health Coalition's mission is a clear vision to Healthy People 2020**

The Affordable Care Act offers the potential to address the needs of racial and ethnic minority populations, by bringing down health care costs, investing in prevention and wellness, supporting improvements in primary care and creating linkages between realms of health and social services.



Authorities in the public, private and professional sector have long described the excessive burden of disease experienced by African Americans as a national health concern. I, Elaine Hart-Brothers, strongly feel that all action plans to eliminate racial and ethnic minority health and healthcare disparities require dedicated teamwork, increased patient-centered outcomes research, and supporting the goals of Healthy People 2020.

Elaine Hart-Brothers, MD, MPH, FACP
Co-Founder & Board President, Community Health Coalition, Inc.

The Partnership for a Healthy Durham's six newly adopted 2012-2014 health priorities:

1. Obesity and chronic illness
2. Poverty
3. Education
4. Access to medical and dental care
5. Mental health and substance abuse
6. HIV and sexually transmitted infections.

Interventions to improve self-management for African Americans should recognize the influences of spirituality, general life stress, multi-care giving responsibilities, and the psychological impact of a chronic disease. Thus, family-centered and church-based approaches to chronic disease interventions are important.

Action Steps to Health Equality and Equity include:

- Become an active participant in managing your health. Lead a healthy life. Your emotional health is as important as your physical health.
- Exercise regularly, and stay active. Physical fitness starts with you. Make healthy food choices based on a low glycemic index (GI) diet. Foods with carbohydrates that break down slowly, releasing glucose more gradually in the bloodstream tend to have a low GI. Low GI foods include: Fruits, vegetables, whole and minimally processed grains and legumes. Eat just enough for you.
- Learn about weight loss and obesity, smoking and tobacco, drinking and alcohol, and injury and accident prevention. Control your lifestyle and your blood pressure. Avoiding or stopping risky behavior will help you get healthy and stay healthy.
- Get your vaccines. Vaccines/immunizations are recommended based on age, health, or specific circumstances.
- Learn which test you need to monitor your health. Get routine screenings. Get a checklist to take with you to your next healthcare practitioner visit, ask questions and follow-up test and screening results.

Remember Your ABC's: **A**ctive participation supporting healthy initiatives to reduce health disparities. (**A**lways eat smart, move more, increase your physical activity). **B**ecome involved and invested in reducing minority health disparities. **C**elebrate your health and celebrate Minority Health Month as we raise awareness about the importance of health equity. Act Now!

For More Information, contact: U.S Department of Health & Human Services at www.HHS.gov; Healthy People 2020 at www.healthypeople.gov; Healthy People 2020 and Partnership for a Healthy Durham at www.healthydurham.org; Community Health Coalition, Inc. at www.chealthc.org

Sincerely,



Elaine Hart-Brothers, MD, MPH, FACP

A message from Elaine Hart-Brothers of the Community Health Coalition in partnership with North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham & Vicinity and Durham Regional Hospital.

***REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!
A Healthy Durham Includes 'YOU'***