

## **BARBER SHOPS FIGHT KIDNEY DISEASE IN AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES**

*Providing prevention information and social support for health behavior change*

### **Public Health Problem**

- African Americans are at high risk for chronic kidney disease partly due to high rates of diabetes and high blood pressure.
- Chronic kidney disease can lead to complete kidney failure, requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant to maintain life. About 45% of the dialysis population in Michigan is African American.
- Almost three-fourths of chronic kidney failure cases can be delayed or prevented with proper treatment, saving up to \$60,000 a year on each case.
- Barbers in the African American community often have established relationships with their clients making them trusted providers of important prevention information.

### **Program**

- The Dodge the Punch: Live Right™ program trains barbers as lay health advisors to talk with clients about the impact of uncontrolled high blood pressure and diabetes on their kidneys and to promote preventive steps related to activity, nutrition, smoking cessation and medical care.
- The Michigan Department of Community Health and the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan partnered on this project which has reached about 100 barbers over two years using funding from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, PHHS Block Grant.
- Barbers receive six hours of training to develop skills in educating clients to make health behavior changes and to keep track of changes clients make. Clients receive ongoing support and education from their barber.

### **Impact**

- This program implements an important recommendation from the Michigan Strategic Plan to Prevent Chronic Kidney Disease “to expand educational outreach efforts to high risk populations in Michigan, using the lay health advisor model ....to provide education on diabetes, hypertension and CKD prevention.”
- Almost half the clients tested by their doctors as a result of this program have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, diabetes, and/or kidney disease allowing them to take steps to control their condition before it leads to complete kidney failure or possibly a heart attack or stroke.
- Over half of the more than 2,800 clients reached have made healthy behavior changes, such as increasing their physical activity, their fruit and vegetable intake, limiting their salt intake, or taking steps to see a doctor.
- A barber and a client explain the value of the program: *“The barbers I work with are truly committed to helping their clients stay healthy. It’s not always easy to get people to make a lifestyle change but when the advice is given by someone just like themselves they take it to heart”* says Detroit barber Oliver Milton. And a client - *“I never would have known I have high blood pressure without this program. Now I can deal with my blood pressure and get it under control.”*

### **Contact**

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