

## ***DIABETES SUNDAY PROMOTES AWARENESS AND EDUCATION***

*Coalition joins with clergy to reach African Americans with important health information*

### **Public Health Problem**

- Diabetes is a serious problem for African Americans who have higher rates of this disease and three of its major complications: blindness, amputation and kidney failure.
- About one third of African Americans with this disease are not aware they have it and are therefore not getting recommended care.

### **Program**

- The New York State Department of Health funds diabetes coalitions throughout the state to implement steps to prevent and control this condition.
- The Dutchess Coalition for the Prevention of Diabetes partnered with the African American Clergy of Dutchess County to promote diabetes awareness on a designated ‘Diabetes Sunday.’
- Five churches with large congregations offered diabetes-related sessions presented during church services.
- Members of each congregation received the American Diabetes Association risk assessment, a simple test which helps people determine their risk of having diabetes or pre-diabetes.
- Members also received copies of information describing the signs and symptoms of diabetes and how this condition affects African Americans in their community.

### **Impact**

Results of these awareness sessions include:

- Reaching over a thousand community residents with important information to help them determine their risk for diabetes and how to take steps to prevent and control it. For example, a participant from one of the churches told her doctor she had symptoms similar to those she learned about in one of the Sunday diabetes messages. Her doctor was able to diagnose pre-diabetes and refer her to the diabetes program at a local hospital for preventive care.
- Additional requests for presentations and participation in church health fairs, extending the reach of this education
- Opportunities for ongoing health education of church members through requests to participate in the church health ministry and a church nursing guild.

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