

Healthy Communities, Healthy People Program Success Story

Title	Parish Nurses Gives Health Ministries a Boost in Lee County!
Public Health Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diabetes rate of adults in Lee County is 10.4%; the rate of adults diagnosed with hypertension is 32.6%. • Three zip code areas in Lee County (33916, 33901, 33905), have the highest number of uncontrolled diabetes and hypertension rates. • Residents in the targeted geographic area perceive that health care providers are biased and treat them differently than people living in more affluent areas. • Language barriers cause difficulty in patient/provider communication • Residents in the targeted geographic area tend to follow cultural and traditional eating patterns including: high fat, high sodium, high sugar, low fiber foods. • Targeted residents live a largely sedentary lifestyle. • Minority populations often places trust in its faith leaders. • Faith based institutions were used as an entry point to reach target audience.
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified minority faith leaders willing to initiate a counseling and education program with their parishioners. • Program coordinator educated the faith leaders on program benefits, built trust with health care providers in the congregation, identified nurses interested in health ministry, and enrolled nurses in the Parish Nurse Program. • Partnered with a variety of faith based institutions with large African American and Hispanic congregations, as well as a health care provider to bring the Parish Nurse training to the churches.
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two nurses completed the Parish Nursing certification training program and now actively serve their congregation in that capacity. • Three nurses are serving as Health Ministers in their churches. • Nurses and nurse ministers provide glucose screening, cholesterol screening, measure Body Mass Index, offer nutritional counseling and refer clients to health centers as appropriate. • Faith leaders have embraced the concept of health ministries. • The reach of the program with the churches involved is approximately 5,000.
Lessons Learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The faith based communities have the trust of the minority public. • Health ministers move slowly through the process to implement change to insure it is appropriate for the church and the congregation they serve. • Education and counseling is required for each language the target population speaks. • Culturally diverse parishioners would benefit to begin with healthier lifestyle substitutions rather than directives.