



Buncombe County Health and Human Services

Public Health ~ Adult & Children's Protective Services ~ Economic Services & Work Strategies
Parks, Greenways & Recreation ~ Human Resources, Services Support & Finance

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NEWS RELEASE

Public Health Series – Improving Minority Health in Buncombe

A variety of local organizations are partnering to improve health equity in Buncombe County by addressing access to care and chronic disease management for minority populations in our community. Health Equity is based on the belief that everyone in our community should have the opportunity to make the choices that allow them to live a long, healthy life, regardless of their income, education or ethnic background. The North Carolina Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities awarded Buncombe County Health and Human Services and key organizational partners with a three-year grant to improve the health outcomes in underserved and minority populations locally. In 2008, an African American resident under age 75 was 54% more likely to die than a white resident. Additionally, the infant death rate for Buncombe County for 2006-2010 is 4.7 for whites versus 11.7 for African Americans. Given these persistent health disparities in our community, this team of local organizations felt that increased focus needed to be made on promoting health within the minority population.

Since the start of this project in July 2012, Buncombe County Department of Health in partnership with the Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement (ABIPA), YWCA, Land of Sky, and Mt. Zion Community Development and UNC-Asheville have been working to coordinate outreach events for health education and screenings; provide chronic disease self-management courses; and find innovative ways to improve the health of all community members.

A primary focus of this project is the promotion of the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP), also known as the Living Healthy course. Living Healthy and Living Healthy with Diabetes are highly participatory workshops that take place once a week for 6 weeks. Each session is 2 ½ hours long, and all workshops are facilitated by 2 trained leaders (many of whom are volunteers) who follow a detailed manual, so that each workshop is consistent. These programs are not designed to help people to learn more about chronic conditions, but rather to learn the skills and tools to better manage chronic conditions. Participants learn about and practice skills related to eating healthy, managing stress,

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pain management, appropriate use of medication, ways to include exercise in daily life, and how to meet their goals.

The increased collaboration has been beneficial to all organizations involved in the grant funded project, with each of the partners having their own specialty. Land of Sky works primarily with the Living Healthy course, coordinating classes as well as training program leaders. The YWCA has two classes centered on diabetes – the Diabetes Wellness Program and the Diabetes Prevention Program. The Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement (ABIPA) provides outreach to different communities around Asheville/Buncombe County, with services that range from blood pressure screening to cancer prevention. Mt. Zion Community Development operates Project NAF (Nurturing Asheville Families) and Project EMPOWER, which focuses on teen pregnancy prevention.

Through this project, we hope to make healthy living easier within the minority populations of Buncombe County as well as those who are at-risk or living with chronic disease. For more information on the different programs offered through our project partners, please visit their websites at the links below:

- ABIPA: <http://www.abipa.org/>
- Mt. Zion Community Development: http://www.mtzionasheville.org/mt_zion_cdc
- YWCA: http://www.ywcaofasheville.org/site/c.7oIEJQPxGeISF/b.8131591/k.A7A9/Preventive_Health.htm
- Land of Sky: <https://sites.google.com/site/agingwelllearningnetwork/evidence-based-health-promotion/living-healthy>

Physician Testimonial: "The CDSM Program known as Living Healthy is a fantastic 6 week course that has helped my patients with diabetes and other chronic illnesses improve their ability to make positive changes, such as eating better, exercising more often, and managing stress. I highly recommend this program for anyone who is living with health problems and wants to try a more proactive approach to better health."

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