FIT FOR THE KINGDOM: UHF/NMF DIVERSE MEDICAL SCHOLARS

Ashley Matthews
Louisiana State University Health Sciences, School of Medicine
New Orleans, Louisiana
June 10, 2014
Among the top 5 leading causes of death in African-Americans are diseases of the heart, malignant neoplasms, cerebrovascular diseases, diabetes and unintentional injuries.

As a parishioner and health professional, these and other health disparities evident in New Orleans were directly mirrored in my religious organization, and furthermore were quite concerning and unchanged over my tenure at my church.

87% of African Americans noted that they belonged to a religious group, with 64% belonging to historically black churches in the South - hence, a church assembly would serve as an appropriate target audience.
Many of the modifiable risk factors that lead to the major causes of death in Blacks such as hypertension, high cholesterol, tobacco use, obesity, lack of physical activity and poor diet are exacerbated by lack of health literacy, low educational level and socioeconomic status.

Anxiety associated with seeking health care often precludes patients from visiting the physician.

The impact of meeting patients were they are, and bringing care to them, can often be underscored.
Convenient presentations and open dialogue about hypertension, diabetes and women’s health
Positive reinforcement of participation with health conscience prizes
Integration of healthy food alternatives for social gatherings
Weekly healthy-food cooking demonstrations
Workshops on interpreting nutrition food labels
Gratuitous exercise program, Zumba
Screening health fair
RESULTS

- Increased participation in community fitness programs
- Choosing healthier food options
- Increased understanding of risk factor modification
- Knowledge of self monitoring of chronic disease
CONCLUSION / DISCUSSION

- Importance of targeting specific subpopulations
- Incentivizing health outcomes can be beneficial
- Interactive sessions increase participation
- Importance of health literacy
THANK YOU
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- United Health Foundation/National Medical Fellowships Diverse Medical Scholars Program
- Mrs. Gloria S. Johnson
- Corinthian Missionary Baptist Church #2
- Robert Maupin, MD
- Rev. Sam J. Johnson
- Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center-School of Medicine in New Orleans