

**AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2011 - SESSION 5031**

SESSION HANDOUT

Engaging community gatekeepers in breast cancer interventions within African American populations: Benefits and power of partnerships

ABSTRACT

Margaret V. Davis, BS, Witness Project of LI, State University of New York, Stony Brook, Margaret.davis@stonybrook.edu

Anika Stewart, BA, Witness Project of LI, State University of New York, Stony Brook, anika.stewart@stonybrook.edu

Introduction: The purpose of the Witness Project of LI's outreach program is to increase the efficacy of community-based breast cancer interventions among African American populations by using community gatekeepers and leaders as active partners/volunteers in the interventions. African American women have a 10% lower incidence rate of breast cancer than whites, yet they have a 37% higher death rate than Caucasian women.

Methods: With Preventive Medicine researchers, we adapted for LI an evidenced-based, faith-based breast cancer intervention program, the Witness Project®, through which community gatekeepers work alongside University outreach staff to secure local churches and other “non-threatening” venues to host health education events for their communities. After being provided a two-day, eight-hour, culturally-sensitive training on breast health, breast cancer facts and myths, and the importance of early detection, gatekeepers/volunteers presented this information to program participants through the use of a peer-to-peer education model. Anecdotal illustrations of the value of early detection were also communicated.

Results: From 01/01/2004 – 12/31/2009, we also built capacity as 18 community volunteers enabled presentations to 29 churches (2,307 congregants); 351 requests from non-adherent women for navigation to mammography, or assistance with barriers to mammography access, were received and processed. Program participants expressed great appreciation for peers who understood their community's cultural

dynamics, and addressed their fears and concerns within those parameters.
Conclusions/Implications:

This successful intervention, evidenced by participants' enthusiastic receptivity of early detection information as presented by their peers, advances the manifold benefits of providing health education and awareness through the engagement of community gatekeepers/leaders as intervention partners within diverse communities.

DEFINING GATEKEEPERS

Definitions	
Community	1. populations that may be defined by geography, race, ethnicity, gender, illness or other health condition, 2. groups that have common interest or cause, such as health or service agencies and organizations, health care or public health practitioners or providers, policy makers, or lay public groups with public health concerns
Gatekeeper	A member of a diverse group within a community who is considered <i>by the members of the community</i> to be a leader.
Community Gatekeeper	A most trusted member of the community: he/she may be a member of the clergy, an administrator, an elected legislative representatives, an influential individual or organization.

Source: Margaret V. Davis Nov 2, 2011 for APHA Annual Meeting
session 5031 margaret.davis@stonybrook.edu

A FEW BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCHER-GATEKEEPER PARTNERSHIP

- Cultural/ethnic groups provide community insight that would take months or years to otherwise comprehend
- Researchers bring knowledge of disease or health condition that can help to address concern of the community
- Researchers bring financial resources, assessment tools and evaluation skills that would not be available to the stakeholders and gatekeepers
- Gatekeepers ensure that the community receives information re the ongoing research and that findings will be used to benefit those impacted by issues under study
- Gatekeepers and researchers combine knowledge of the community and develop a more comprehensive picture of its demography, economic status and environment
- Gatekeepers are potential volunteers and focus group participants if relationship of trust is developed with the researchers

PROGRAMS USING GATEKEEPERS

School & Community Gatekeeper Training

http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/suicide_prevention/training.htm

Community-based Participatory Approaches

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/healthpolicy/healthequity/cbpa.htm>

Gatekeepers for Mental Health

Training and Utilizing Non-Professional Caregivers

<http://christina-gleason.suite101.com/gatekeepers-for-mental-health-a56893>

Eliminating Disparities In HIV Disease: Community Mobilization to Prevent HIV Transmission Among Black and Hispanic Young Adults in Broward County, Florida

http://www.hawaii.edu/hivandaids/Eliminating_Disparities_in_HIV_Disease_Community_Mobilization_to_Prevent_HIV_Trans.pdf

CDC - Youth suicide prevention

<http://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/prevguid/p0000024/p0000024.asp>

