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Healthy Sunday Topic: Do not Despair about Disparities

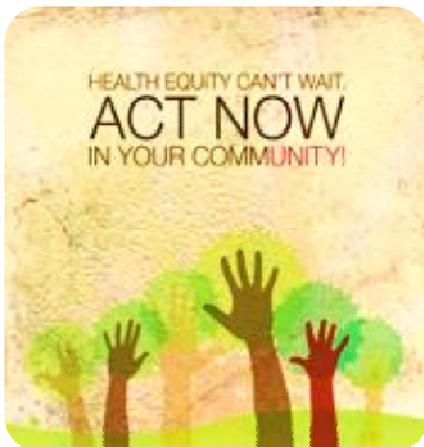
Elaine Hart-Brothers, MD, MPH says "Do not despair about disparities. With families' health knowledge, planning meals, and working together, a healthier community is achievable.

Since 1989, the Community Health Coalition (CHC) has been working to reduce health disparities in Durham and the surrounding communities. Hart-Brothers of CHC was among the first to initiate the Durham, N.C portion of *Healthy People 2000: National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Program*. The goal was to increase the years and quality of healthy life. Hart-Brothers states, "It is now *Healthy People 2020* and no longer should African Americans be striving for just reducing health disparities, but should be striving for health equity; striving for a life full of purpose and promise."

Health disparities are defined as health differences that are closely linked with social and economic disadvantage. For example, African Americans are affected by diseases such as heart disease, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and HIV/AIDS compared to other racial communities. Although few steps have been made to reduce these unfavorable health differences, there seems to be hope in the horizon as the community continues to be educated on health care and how the community can help reduce these differences. We are working towards **health equity** which is the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and healthcare disparities.



Elaine Hart-Brothers, MD, MPH, FACP
Co-Founder & Board President, CHC



What can you do to reduce health disparities?

- Take care of yourself and those you love by actively taking a part in your health care
- Adopt a healthy lifestyle which includes good nutrition and regular exercise
- Educate yourself on health care. Set goals for blood pressure like 120/80; for fasting blood sugar less than 100; cholesterol less than 200
- Participate in health care decisions with your doctor and regularly visit your primary care physician
- Find free and affordable health care facilities in your area
- Track your family health and know your risks

Addressing Men's Health:

- Men are 24 percent less likely than women to have visited a doctor within the past year and are 22 percent more likely to have neglected their cholesterol tests.
- Men are 28 percent more likely than women to be hospitalized for congestive heart failure.
- Men are 32 percent more likely than women to be hospitalized for long-term complications of diabetes and are two times more likely than women to have a leg or foot amputated due to complications related to diabetes.
- Men are 24 percent more likely than women to be hospitalized for pneumonia that could have been prevented by getting an immunization.

Know Your Risks

Know about your “genomics” (all your inheritable traits, especially relating to illness and diseases within your family line). Genomics plays a role in 9 of the 10 leading causes of death including: Heart Disease, Cancer, Stroke, Diabetes, and Alzheimer’s disease. When you get a preventive medical test, you’re not just doing it for yourself; you’re doing it for your family and loved ones. There are multiple ways to track your family health. However, we suggest the use of “My Family Health Portrait.” Here you can enter your families’ health history, print and save it. Their website is: <https://familyhistory.hhs.gov/fhh-web/home.action>.

Affordable Care Act of 2010

- Everyone should read and be familiar with the Affordable Care Act as it seeks to reduce disparities and improve health
- The Act allows for the coverage of health insurance for young adults up to the age of 26 under their parent’s policy
- The Act provides individuals with improved access to clinical preventive services with minimal or no co-pay. Take advantage by getting preventative services through your primary care physician.
- The Act strengthens the vital role of communities in promoting prevention. New initiative opportunities are designed to strengthen partnerships between local or state governments and community groups.



Remember: Always our **B**lessings should be **C**ounted

Act - Eat apples and avocados and be aware of good nutrition,

Be active - Incorporate exercise as your best behavior,

Care for community, church, yourself, and your family.

For more information on health equity and health disparities

www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov – 1-800-444-6472

www.healthypeople.gov/2020

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/healthdisparities

www.blackdoctor.org

Health Tip is a message from your Community Health Coalition, Inc. and is written in partnership with Old North State Medical Society, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, Central Carolina Black Nurses’ Council Inc., The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Durham and Vicinity, and Durham Regional Hospital.

REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!