



## HEALTH EQUITY PROJECT GRANT RECIPIENTS

### **Omega Men of Horry County (OMHC) in Partnership with Iota Tau and Upsilon Beta Beta Chapters of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc**

The “No Excuses - Promises (NEP)” – Staged Interventions to Reduce Cancer Disparities Among African American Men project will focus on staged interventions to reduce anxieties among African American men related to early cancer screening. The staged interventions will focus on colorectal, lung, and prostate cancers. According to reports by the Cancer in African American Men in South Carolina (2018) and Cancer In South Carolina, 20-year Trends in Incidence, Mortality, and Survival, with DHEC’s South Carolina Central Cancer Registry (SCCCR) Lung Cancer is far and away the leading cause of cancer death in SC. While Colorectal Cancer for both incidence and mortality rates, continue to be substantially higher in African American men. Prostate Cancer - surveillance data for in SC reveals strong downward trends, but incidences and mortality rates among African American men remain much higher compared to other races. This project will focus on staged interventions to encourage project participants to engage in early cancer screening that might prove successful in reducing incidences and mortality rate among African American men.

### **Lowcountry Healthwise Initiative**

The proposed project addresses the incidence and prevalence of lung cancer in Beaufort, Jasper, and Hampton counties through 1.) offering free low-dose CT screening to low income, uninsured adults that meet American Cancer Society (ACS) criteria, 2.) assessing the level of understanding about low-dose CT screening in the African American community through quantitative and qualitative data collection, and 3.) developing culturally appropriate educational materials for dissemination at community-based screening events through the Healthwise Screening Initiative (HSI). African American males residing in rural areas of Beaufort, Hampton, or Jasper counties will be the primary focus of this project. However, individuals who meet the screening criteria will not be excluded from participation.

The goal of the project is to provide an opportunity for low income uninsured adults to be screened for lung cancer through low-dose CT screening at Beaufort Memorial Hospital. Concurrently, this project will be leveraged as an opportunity to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the understanding and acceptability of lung cancer screening when financial barriers are removed. Low-dose CT screening will be available through two avenues: 1.) on enrollment or recertification in AccessHealth Lowcountry, and 2.) to participants in the Healthwise Screening Initiative. Collaborators include AccessHealth Lowcountry (AHL), Beaufort Memorial Hospital (BMH), Mt. Carmel Baptist Church Med-I-Assist program which coordinates the HSI events, and SC DHEC Lowcountry Region (SCDHEC), which will conduct the proposed focus group.

Specific activities include 1.) obtaining comprehensive smoking history from clients enrolling or recertifying for AHL, 2.) identifying participants in the HSI who meet ACS screening criteria and offering free screening, 3.) establishing referral criteria for patients of the free clinics and Beaufort Jasper Hampton Comprehensive Health Services (BJHCHS) for screening through AHL, 4.) collection of quantitative data related to screening participation or refusal, qualitative data collection from focus group with individuals who obtained screening and those who refused screening; 5.) synthesizing of qualitative data will lead to development of culturally appropriate educational materials for dissemination at HSI community events.



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### **Darlington County Men's Health Initiative**

The Darlington County Men's Health Initiative, DCMHI, is an innovative and inclusive project designed to improve health equity for African American men through community mobilization/advocacy; community awareness/marketing campaign; education; and access. Darlington County First Steps, DCFS, will serve as the community convener, bringing together a wide range of community partners to address the burden of cancer and health disparities in African American men. The support of our Community Partners is key to ensuring successful outcomes for this project. The DCMHI is a collaborative endeavor of caregiving, faith-based, fraternal, clinical, and other community partners coming together for the sole purpose, goal, of reducing health disparities and increasing health equity for African American men.

The DCMHI Project will focus on identifying underinsured and underserved African American men and is designed to endow African American men with the information, knowledge, resources and supports needed to seek care and advocate for themselves while facilitating their connection to health care providers.

Research clearly indicates health disparities among men in general, with men having shorter life expectancy than women and suffering with more life-threatening diseases than women in general. According to the Men's Health Network, "There is an on-going, increasing and predominantly silent crisis in health and well-being of men. Due to lack of awareness, poor health education, and culturally induced behavior patterns in their work and personal lives, men's health and well-being is deteriorating steadily." African American men are at-risk of early death and being a fatality of health disparities. According to Keith Elder, Robert Wood's Foundation, "He is missing from the health care system. He is less likely to hold a job that provides health insurance. Otherwise, he is underinsured. Despite chronic poverty that cries out for relief, he often slips through the cracks of a frayed social safety net. Medicaid, focused on pregnant women and children, rarely includes him. He bears a disparate burden of disease. He dies early and struggles frequently against structures that render him invisible. He is the invisible man." The life expectancy for African American men is 6 years less than white men. Dr. Sherman James, a Hartsville native currently Research Professor at Emory University, published a study titled, "John Henryism and The Health of African-Americans". According to Dr. James, John Henryism provides a cultural as well as historical context for how African American men and women struggle to free themselves from pervasive and deeply entrenched systems of social and economic oppression. Hence, the John Henryism Hypothesis, which is synonymous for prolonged, high effort coping with difficult environmental stressors. Dr. James' research indicates John Henryism is a major contributor to racial and socioeconomic and health disparities. Dr. James advocates for creating identity-safe environments to promote health equity among African Americans. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps lists Darlington County as 35th worse out of 46 counties on health outcomes and 40th worse on life expectancy. DCFS's holistic approach to working with families and their children coupled with our work with young fathers clearly emphasizes the need to address health disparities among African American men, if we are to accomplish our vision: Strong Families—Healthy Communities.

### **University of South Carolina, College of Nursing**

To design and evaluate a 'train-the-trainer' (TTT) program to address health disparities in African American men in South Carolina (SC), using simulation-based education as a conduit. Our primary project objectives are to 1) develop the TTT program, and 2) train two individuals on our TTT program with at least 80% proficiency by 3Q21.



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### **Be on Top of Your Health Prevention Program**

**Be on Top of Your Health Prevention Program** is a community-wide initiative creating environments that promote good health for all-reducing disparities among the African American, Hispanic, homeless, and low-income minority populations in Greenville County. Our key program under the direction of our Coordinator offers access to health & wellness initiatives-aimed at teaching primary cancer prevention. Our program offers positive health behavior changes, including physical activity, nutrition programming, overall health screening, and providing low-income minorities access to cancer screening and diagnostic services-with the goal of increasing early detection, prevention of breast, cervical, and colon cancer. Our proactive outreach activities include encouraging screening & targeting clients due for screening with culturally appropriate materials, mobile mammography unit referrals, and promotion. Additional platforms include social media communication about risk of cancer & safety of screening procedures, several resources on our website and Facebook page, video library, and recorded webinars on COVID-19 and cancer screenings, raising awareness, providing public and provider education, addressing barriers to screening and motivating minority populations to get screened.

Our prevention initiative brings critically important breast health, cervical and colonoscopy screening resources & referrals to the uninsured, underinsured, churches, and community centers through our outreach strategies. Our strategies are evidence-based, community-based, informed by community need, executed in collaboration with community partnerships, culturally appropriate, and a combination of multiple interventions.

### **Butler Heritage Foundation**

Butler Heritage Foundation's attack on colorectal cancer will provide a community-based center for education, prevention, and screening. The targeted areas will be Darlington County uninsured and the underserved. Through partnering and collaboration with local and state health care community-based organizations, the project will organize awareness and screening events, followed by any necessary navigation services.

Our plan for prevention screening is a key component for an overall colorectal cancer control plan. Primary focusing on increasing screening not only prolong life considerably but ensure a good quality of life. Through early detection, at an early stage, the treatment is more effective and therefore curable.



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### **SC Center for Fathers and Families**

Health Education and Active Living (HEAL) is a project designed by the SC Center for Fathers and Families (the Center) to strengthen and enhance our existing Men's Health curriculum and improve health outcomes and lifestyle choices of low-income noncustodial fathers. While intervention strategies will remain important, we will shift our health access approach from education and treatment to an increased emphasis on prevention and wellness. During our Health Equity Project, the Center will update our existing five-week health component and increase it to six weeks by expanding the focus on disease prevention, nutrition, and physical activities and integrating health assessments and health screenings. The Center will contract with a nutritionist or other health professional to revise the health curriculum, add content focusing on major diseases impacting men such as cancer, and address how a healthy lifestyle that includes healthy nutrition and active living can reduce disease risks. Comprehensive health screenings will be offered in the sixth week of the curriculum, and cancer risk questionnaires and resources for cancer screening referrals will be provided. The curriculum is delivered in weekly peer group sessions facilitated by fatherhood staff, our Nurse Practitioner, or outside experts. Individual follow-up and consultation with referrals to medical partners for treatment and establishment of a medical home will be provided.

The Center is a statewide non-profit that addresses the root causes of poverty by reconnecting low-income, noncustodial fathers to their children financially and emotionally. We serve a population that is at greater risk for poorer health outcomes than the general population, and one that has limited access to health education and services. For more than 20 years, the Center has been committed to re-engaging fathers and strengthening relationships with their children to improve overall childhood wellbeing and reduce poverty. We have served over 20,000 fathers in this time with the majority being low-income and African American. We are a voice for fathers and their children and are committed to providing men the tools and resources they need to be great dads. Our expert team leads a growing, statewide network of fatherhood organizations and partners that extends into 15 counties. We offer education and services through local programming uniquely tailored for fathers trying to rebuild their lives and families. Our six-month curriculum encompasses Men's Health, Economic Stability, Healthy Relationships, Parenting, and Job Readiness. Since 2007, under the leadership of a Nurse Practitioner, we have offered a Men's Health curriculum as part of our overall fatherhood program.

### **SOS Care**

SOS Care will partner with a healthcare professional and the Little River Medical Center to provide training to adults with intellectual disabilities and help remove the barriers to cancer screenings that puts these adults in an at-risk category for late-stage cancer diagnosis and higher mortality due in part to their low screen rates. These barriers may include inaccessibility to screening exams, preconceived notions by healthcare providers, communication barriers, and cost barriers. Additionally, people with disabilities are more likely to be obese, smoke, and be sedentary, which are conditions that may also contribute to their increased rate of cancer incidence.

The healthcare professional will provide monthly workshops via zoom to program participants and their families. Workshops will include topics such as the importance of annual exams and cancer screenings, early indicators of lung cancer, colorectal cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer, and melanoma, the importance of fitness and nutrition, and what to expect during cancer screenings. The program coordinator will help each individual adult set up appointments for screenings as necessary, provide transportation if needed and provide information/training to health care providers on the best way to work with the patient to maximize the comfort of the individual as well as the provider and ensure a successful visit.

The goal of our program is to increase knowledge of cancer screenings, early warning signs, and steps individuals can do to reduce their risk for cancer. Assist individuals to remove the barriers that typically prevent them from receiving cancer screenings. Increase the number of screenings for individuals in the program. Decrease certain risk behaviors that may lead to cancer.