Legislative Breakfasts prove to be successful tool

The Arkansas Minority Health Consortium is a collaboration of approximately 30 entities united to increase awareness of minority health and community issues that impact minority health.

During the 88th Arkansas General Assembly, the Consortium members are hosting weekly breakfast forums for our legislators to educate and inform them about the minority health policy initiatives being proposed during the 2011 session. The breakfast forums are held every Tuesday from 7 am to 8 am at the Capitol Café.

The members that have hosted breakfast forums are:
- Arkansas Minority Health Commission (January 18)
- Coalition for Tobacco Free Arkansas (January 25)
- Center for Healing Hearts and Spirits (February 1)
- AARP of Arkansas (February 8)
- Department of Health STARHealth Program (February 15)
- Arkansas Cancer Coalition (February 22)
- Arkansas Legislative Taskforce on Sickle Cell Disease (March 1)

The breakfasts have had extraordinary turn-out by legislators, Governor’s staff, Consortium members and general public. If you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive information regarding the remaining breakfast forums, please email Kendal Booker at kendalbooker@gmail.com.
Arkansas Minority Health Consortium Vision

The Arkansas Minority Health Consortium is commissioned to:
* Influencing the development of policy;
* Leveraging opportunities to maximize our affect on eliminating minority health disparities in Arkansas;
* Enhancing the quality of life for under served communities through effective outreach and broadening collaborations; and
* Strengthening all Arkansans through education of the vast resources available to their holistic care, physical, mental and social conditions in the treatment of illness.

More than 100 child advocates and children symbolically cut red tape to encourage passage of bill to streamline health insurance enrollment. Arkansas Kid Count Day was held Tuesday, February 8th by Minority Health Consortium member partner, Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families.

AMHC attends Gov. Mike Beebe’s Black History Month press conference in the State Capitol Rotunda on Feb. 17

LtoR: Kendal Booker, Michelle Smith, Senator Linda Chesterfield, Willa Black Sanders and Pamela Hayes after SB 119, sponsored by Chesterfield, passed the House Committee on Feb. 16. SB 119 would establish the Commission on the Status of Women. However, the bill failed the full house.
Surprising concerns raised at AMHC public forum

On January 24th more than 60 Pulaski County residents attended our third health fair and public forum of the fiscal year. The Public Forum uncovered a deep concern for mental health in minority communities. The issue was raised that seeking professional help for psychological or emotional concerns is often met with cultural stigma and language barriers.
Approximately 500 residents from El Dorado and surrounding counties heard the message of HIV/AIDS prevention and education Saturday, Feb. 12 in honor of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. AMHC sponsored a faith leader workshop, health fair and gospel celebration with the legendary gospel artist Twinkie Clark of the Clark Sisters. Dr. Oveta Fuller and Pastor Edwin Sanders facilitated the faith leader workshop that focused on addressing HIV and AIDS in the congregation.
By 2015 everyone will be required to have Electronic Health Records (EHR). The work required to reach this goal is expected to create a high demand in several types of Health Information Technology (IT) professions.

National Park Community College has implemented a non-degree educational program designed to provide a pool of qualified workers with both medical and information technology knowledge. The electronic health record project will provide quality and efficiency, while maintaining privacy and security of medical information.

The HealthIT program is designed to be completed in six months or less for full time students and it allows the student to focus on workforce roles such as:

- Practice Workflow/ Information Management Redesign Specialist
- Clinician/Practitioner Consultant
- Trainer
- Implementation Support Specialist
- Implementation Manager
- Technical/ Software Support Staff

The HealthIT program is being taught by AMHC Medical Director, Dr. Creshelle Nash, who is teaching Racial-Ethnic Health Disparities: Theory, Experience and Elimination at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. This elective course, offered in the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health, explores racial and ethnic health disparities in the United States. Students examine disparities literature and measurement issues; historical and social structural determinants of disparities; the role of genomics; and strategies for reducing disparities. This service learning course includes learning time both in the classroom and in the community.

Interested in a career in Health Information Technology?

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Students will need to meet pre-assessment criteria before entering this program and will need previous experience or training in either the healthcare/medical field or information technology. The cost of the program is $500 but will be returned in the form of a stipend upon completion of the program. Additional information and requirements can be found at http://npcc.edu/community/health/healthIT.hm. AMHC will contribute half the tuition for minority students representing underserved/underrepresented communities. This is an excellent career development opportunity!
Coming Soon!
Arkansas Minority Health Commission’s Fitness Camp for Girls ages 10-14

On June 19th through June 25th AMHC will host the first ever Fitness camp to combat obesity in young girls. The location will be at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center. Forty fortunate girls will be selected to participate in the camp free of charge. The campers will participate in activities and workshops focusing on fitness, nutrition, and self-confidence.
We cordially invite you to attend the
Arkansas Minority Health Commission’s 20th Year Anniversary Gala
Saturday, April 23, 2011
7 p.m.
Peabody Hotel
Three Statehouse Plaza
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
Hosted by Comedian Bruce Bruce
Featuring Rodney Block and the Music Lovers

We will present awards to a cross-sector of Arkansas’s most stalwart “Minority Health Heroes”—those who have worked tirelessly to improve the health of Arkansans at the local, regional and state levels. The Minority Health Hero honorees are:

Member Organization: AARP- Maria Reynolds-Diaz
Corporate Innovator: Pfizer
Stalwart legislator: Senator Jack Crumbly
Grassroots champion: Elroy Brown
Visionary in Public Health: Dr. Thomas Bruce

If you have any questions about the event, please email Lindsey Johnson at arminorityhealth@gmail.com or call (501) 686-2720.

All of the proceeds will benefit the AMHC’s First Annual Fitness Camp for girls!
Health Care Access:
28% of nonelderly African Americans and 40% of nonelderly Hispanics are uninsured in Arkansas.
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

82% (114,844) of black children live in low-income families

Quality Health Care:
More minorities state that people like themselves are treated less fairly when seeking health care, specifically, 40% of urban blacks, 29% of rural blacks and 25% of Hispanics.

42% (199,879) of white children live in low-income families

Behavioral:
More than 73% of African Americans are overweight or obese; compare to 66% of all Arkansans.
Source: 2008 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System-Arkansas

Tune in March 15th for the next show! March 10 is National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

We will have special guests who will discuss the disparities in HIV/AIDS among women and girls in minority communities.

Listen as we give legislative updates on activities pertinent to minority health such as what bills passed/failed in February.