

## Grant Outcomes Report

### Community Healthcare Navigator Project

#### The Problem:

Disparities in access to health care place a significant burden on the economic, social, and health status of African Americans. African Americans disproportionately suffer from the effects of chronic conditions, such as diabetes, stroke, heart disease, and others. For example, they are twice as likely to die from diabetes and 30% more likely to die from cancer or heart disease than whites.

Nearly 90% of people with newly diagnosed Type 2 diabetes are overweight. Because approximately 80% of African-American women are overweight or obese, they are at an especially high risk for diabetes.

#### Grant Activities and Outcomes:

In September 2008, the New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth) awarded the National Urban League (NUL) a grant to implement and evaluate "Remarkable Woman: That's You!" a community-based model aimed at reducing obesity and diabetes among African-American women living in the Buffalo area. "Remarkable Woman: That's You!" educates and empowers women to strengthen pride in their ethnicity and gender, use pro-social coping and self-management skills, and engage in healthy behaviors. It uses interactive educational group sessions, didactic exercises, homework assignments, group discussions, and group fitness activities to reinforce these attributes. Community health workers deliver the curriculum, connect health care consumers with providers, and establish partnerships with community institutions and agencies. These workers understand the resources available in their areas and incorporate cultural tenets into program activities.

Under a prior grant from the Eli Lilly and Company Foundation, NUL established the Remarkable Woman brand and initiative; however, Buffalo was not an initial site. A grant from NYSHealth

#### KEY INFORMATION:

**GRANTEE**

National Urban League

**GRANT TITLE**

Community Healthcare Navigator Project

**DATES**

September 1, 2008–March 1, 2010

**GRANT AMOUNT**

\$201,065

**FUNDING**

2008 Special Opportunity Grants:  
Large-Scale Impact

enabled NUL to develop a signature Remarkable Woman program for Buffalo area residents, with a new curriculum and new focus areas, including mental health. NUL developed a partnership with researchers at Community Voices: Healthcare for the Underserved and Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) to create and test “Remarkable Woman: That’s You!” Under the grant, staff members:

- developed the “Remarkable Woman: That’s You!” curriculum, implementation, and evaluation manuals;
- trained the community health workers;
- facilitated focus groups and interviewed key informants;
- assisted NUL’s Buffalo affiliate office on strategies to achieve milestones;
- provided training and technical assistance to NUL affiliates at annual trainings; and
- supplied materials and research for additional curriculum areas.

The specific goals of the program were to:

- promote healthy lifestyles among 54 African-American women by increasing their knowledge, improving their outlook, and engaging them in healthy behaviors;
- encourage African-American women to access health care and supportive community services; and
- establish community partnerships and advocacy approaches to influence public policies about health issues affecting underserved and underrepresented communities.

During the grant period, 126 African-American women enrolled in “Remarkable Woman: That’s You!” and 115 completed it, thus exceeding the original expectation of serving 54 women.

Results based on pre- and post-program surveys and tests indicated:

- Participants’ knowledge increased after each session. The biggest increase followed the third session, where participants reported a 23% increase in their knowledge about managing diabetes with a health care team.
- Some 88% of participants had normal blood glucose levels at the end of the program, compared with 77% who had normal levels before the program. Some 12% of participants had prediabetes at program completion, while 19% of participants had prediabetes before the program.
- Stage 2 hypertension decreased from 14% of participants before the program to 2% at the end of the program.

- Almost half of participants had normal blood pressure at the end of the program, compared with 22% who had normal blood pressure before the program.
- Participants lost an average of 3.2 pounds during the program.
- The percentage of obese participants declined.
- High-risk cholesterol levels dropped from 6% to 1% of participants.

NUL staff concluded, "During the six-week intervention, participants dramatically improved their knowledge of curriculum topics, increased exercise levels, decreased obesity and overweight status, decreased hypertension, and continued to see a primary care physician to address health care issues." They also noted, "Appropriate selection of outreach workers who are dedicated to fully immersing themselves into the structure of the program appeared to be an important component that aided in program successes. It was important for community health workers not just to teach and encourage but also to participate as peers with the participants."

## The Future:

The Buffalo Urban League continued to offer "Remarkable Woman: That's You!" classes through April 2011. Though it no longer has grant funding to support the Buffalo Urban League affiliate, it continues to support and provide services and encouragement to the initial group of Remarkable Woman. It has also participated in various Urban League trainings and has been instrumental in sharing stories of success and implementation with all of its new and continuing community health programs.



## Publications:

National Urban League/Buffalo Urban League and Community Voices: Healthcare for the Underserved, Morehouse School of Medicine. "Remarkable Woman: That's You!: A Community Health Worker Program to Prevent Obesity and Diabetes among African American Women."

National Urban League and Community Voices: Healthcare for the Underserved, Morehouse School of Medicine. "Remarkable Woman: That's You!: Understanding Diabetes, A Guide for African-American Women."<sup>1</sup>

National Urban League and Community Voices: Healthcare for the Underserved, Morehouse School of Medicine. "Remarkable Woman: That's You!: Evaluation Guide for Community Health Workers and Implementing Agencies."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Also available at: <http://buffalourbanleague.org/pdf/RemarkableWomanDiabetesManual.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Also available at: [http://www.communityvoices.org/uploads/Remarkable\\_Woman\\_Evaluation\\_Guide\\_may\\_09\\_00108\\_00227.pdf](http://www.communityvoices.org/uploads/Remarkable_Woman_Evaluation_Guide_may_09_00108_00227.pdf)

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

### ABOUT THE GRANTEE

The National Urban League (NUL) has a history of providing health-related services to, and advocacy on behalf of, the African-American community. As early as 1922, NUL has been addressing issues such as infant mortality and malnutrition. It has tackled health problems including sickle cell disease and HIV/AIDS. In 2003, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funded NUL to implement a diabetes education program, and more recently the Eli Lilly and Company Foundation funded it to create "Remarkable Woman: That's You!" In late 2008, NYSHHealth supported NUL's efforts to develop a community-based site for Remarkable Woman in Buffalo, New York. NUL, in concert with the Morehouse School of Medicine, used the opportunity to implement a full scale program for more than 120 Buffalo area women, and update the curriculum, training manual, and program activities to specifically address the concerns, barriers, and needs of African-American women and those living in the Buffalo area. The program developed its own unique and significant components, including mental health; walking clubs; peer activities; incentives; pre- and post-program surveys; health indexes; and culturally appropriate and culturally sensitive images, resources, and messages in program literature and materials.

### GRANTEE CONTACT

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