

NCPC Team Participates in Strategic Planning for Lead Poisoning in Flint

By Richard A. Gooden, NCPC Director of Communications

A small team of health professionals from the National Center for Primary Care (NCPC) at Morehouse School of Medicine participated in a critical strategic planning meeting on lead poisoning in the black community held on June 21, 2016 at Howard University in Washington DC. Led by Dr. Dominic Mack, director of the National Center for Primary Care, this team was a part of crafting key recommendations exploring steps to address the man-made water-based disaster in Flint, Michigan.

An estimated 40 professionals, including the NCPC Administrator Lora Wills and Director of Communications Richard A. Gooden, worked with experts from various professional sectors to identify solutions at the local, state and federal levels to address the issues in Flint, Michigan, and to identify best practices for dealing with the next preventable disaster.

“What has happened to the people of Flint has had a resounding influence on communities nationwide and we owe it to them to do anything that we can do to help,” said Dr. Mack, who was named director of the NCPC in February 2016. “We hope to use our resources to work with those in Flint and other communities to mitigate the trauma caused by these disasters.”

The strategic planning meeting was coordinated by All Healers Mental Health Alliance (AHMHA) and its chair, Dr. Annelle Primm. This alliance of mental health experts and other health care professionals came to fruition following the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. The goal of the organizations is to establish a local and national network of culturally competent mental health professionals and allied associates to facilitate, screen, identify, refer, monitor connectedness, and track disaster survivors with needs for mental health services using telepsychiatry and other cutting-edge web-based and interactive technologies.

The group identified several recommendations, including launching a series that would allow Flint residents to tell their story and reevaluating the autonomous control of emergency managers established during disasters. Residents of the Flint community were instrumental in the strategic planning meeting and comprised all of the groups developing recommendations.

“I’m tired of people coming in here and telling us what to do,” said Ms. Claire McClinton, a lifelong resident of Flint. “I was glad to be a part of a discussion where I could tell others what we want and what we want to do.”