

Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center Celebrates 20 Years!

By Tabia Henry Akintobi, PhD, MPH

The Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Centers (MSM PRC) is twenty years old! Established in 1998, the PRC was founded on principles, values and research criteria designed to flip the script toward community residents and leaders not just participating in, but leading initiatives designed towards thriving, healthy communities. The theme of the PRC is: Risk Reduction and Early Detection in African American and Other Minority Communities: Coalition for Prevention Research.

Over the last two decades, MSM PRC has led or supported initiatives with a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach. The leadership of the Community Coalition Board (CCB) has influenced all that we do. Composed of leaders representing three-member types: neighborhood residents (16 seats; always in majority number), academic institutions (3 seats), and health/social service agencies (4 seats), the CCB is the community-based participatory research driven, policymaking board of the MSM PRC (not an advisory board) and steers health priority setting, research agenda development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination. Partnerships have focused on prevention of HIV infection, teen pregnancy, violence, substance abuse, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and oral health. We have also been keen on elevating the importance of attending to the physical environment through ozone monitoring, asthma education and proper tire disposal, as well as the importance of greenspace.

Our CCB model has scaled up and out to lead the citywide Atlanta Clinical and Translational Science Alliance (2007-2017) and the statewide Georgia Clinical and Translational Science Alliance (Georgia CTSA) (2017-present). This leadership supports community-university research partnerships, obtains community input into university research, and increases health research in community settings that is responsive to the health needs of the community. Save the date for the Georgia CTSA Community Engagement Forum scheduled for April 25-26, 2019! This statewide forum

will bring together policy research and practice leaders to discuss best approaches to the partnerships that advance healthy communities.

In this issue we celebrate the life of Ella Heard Trammell, CCB Chair Emerita, who regularly reminded us of our mission to conduct research, train and partner with learners and leaders with her sentiments in mind, "Research is good, but what do you do with the research after you get it?" (See back cover). On Page 2, you will learn about improving mental health among blacks living with epilepsy in Georgia from the MSM PRC Special Interest Project. Finally, in the pull out section, you will find results from the Community Health Needs and Assets Assessment, developed with and guided by the CCB and community leaders and many of you. MSM PRC will use the results to plan and carry out community-driven research, disease prevention, health promotion, policy, and evaluation initiatives, both for our Center and for you as community leaders. This year, look out for workshops and trainings designed to help you use these results to plan and carry out programs most important to you.

At just twenty years old, we have grown up with many lessons learned, as well as developed tried and true partnerships. We look forward to celebrating, learning and growing with you this year and beyond!



MSM PRC receives Community Campus Partnerships for Health Award in 2002

Improving Mental Health Among Blacks Living with Epilepsy in Georgia

By Rakale Collins Quarells, PhD and Davelle Heath, MSM MPH Candidate

Morehouse School of Medicine and Emory University Rollins School of Public Health have set sights on improving the health of Blacks with epilepsy. Project UPLIFT (Using Practice and Learning to Increase Favorable Thoughts) is a telephone-based program that has been shown to improve quality of life in people with epilepsy. The primary purpose of the program is to teach people with epilepsy mental health skills for handling stress, anxiety, and depression. Project UPLIFT uses the practice of meditation and mindfulness as well as cognitive therapy to teach mental health skills that can be used throughout many aspects of life.

In order to determine if Project UPLIFT was culturally appropriate for the Black community, the Epilepsy Study team developed an Epilepsy Community Advisory Board (E-CAB) consisting of Blacks with epilepsy, family and friends of a Black person with epilepsy (support persons), epilepsy community advocates, and healthcare providers that treat Blacks with epilepsy. In addition, through focus group discussions and interviews, we explored the perceptions of Blacks with epilepsy along with their support persons. After completing the group discussions and interviews, we determined that Project UPLIFT was culturally acceptable and worth testing to see if it works as well in Blacks with epilepsy. The team is currently recruiting people to test Project UPLIFT. If you know of someone with epilepsy or would like more information about the Project UPLIFT study, please contact the study staff at 404-756-8848 or epilepsystudy@msm.edu. You can also like us on Facebook (@Project UPLIFT Morehouse School of Medicine).



L-R: Demetrius Geiger, MPH, Rakale Quarells, PhD, Ambiiir Gray, MSM MPH candidate and Brenda Stanford, PhD, ECAB member at the 2018 Magnolia Run and Walk for Epilepsy.



Epilepsy Community Advisory Board members, which consists of persons with Epilepsy, healthcare providers, support persons, and advocates, at one of the bi-monthly meetings.

Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Res

MSM PRC Student Engagement

The Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center thrives through the support of our student interns and graduate research assistants. During Spring and Summer 2018, MSM PRC had the pleasure of welcoming the following scholars to engage with the Center's research and community-based initiatives:

Nijah Burris

*Morehouse School of Medicine
MD Year 2*

Focus of Work: Examining the Association between Anxiety and Epilepsy in African American Participants from Project UPLIFT

Jade Chambers-Blair

*Emory University Rollins School of Public Health
Master of Public Health Candidate*

Focus of Work: Epilepsy Self-Management in African American Adults Living with Epilepsy and Depression

Demetrius Geiger

*Morehouse School of Medicine
Master of Public Health Graduate*

Focus of Work: Commonalities among Marginalized Subpopulations of People with Epilepsy

Ambiir Gray

*Morehouse School of Medicine
Master of Public Health Candidate*

Focus of Work: The Associations between Mental Health Status (Anxiety and Depression) and the Medication Management Skills of African Americans with Epilepsy

Ashley Harrison

*Morehouse School of Medicine
Doctor of Medicine
1st year of MD program*

Assisted with AECF Violence Prevention Evaluation, developed & administered community survey, analyzed and presented survey data

Jasmine Hawkins

*Georgia State University
Master of Public Health Candidate*

Focus of Work: Determining Differences in Medication, Lifestyle, and Information Management Impacting Seizure Frequency among African Americans with Epilepsy

Davelle Health

*Morehouse School of Medicine
Master of Public Health Candidate*

Focus of Work: Project UPLIFT Social Media and Communications Management

Darryl Howard

*Morehouse School of Medicine
Master of Public Health Candidate*

Focus of Work: Project UPLIFT Rural Recruitment and Social Media Strategy

Jada Lee

*Furman University
Bachelor's in Public Health
Junior*

Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center Risk Reduction and Early Detection in African American and Other Minority Communities

Angel Scandrick

*Mercer University
Bachelor's in Biology
Junior*

Developed NPU specific infographics displaying CHNAA results

Kirat Sandhu

*Morehouse School of Medicine
Second year MD program*

Georgia Clinical and Translational Science Alliance Community and Academic Researcher Assessment Project

Curtis Tyger

*Georgia Institute of Technology
Master in Planning
1st year in Master's program*

Assisted with CHNAA data entry and found secondary data & developed maps from secondary data

Stephon Williams

*Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University
Master in Public Health
Final Year (2nd year) of MPH program*

Assisted with CHNAA data collection, data entry, data analysis & presentation

Honoring Mrs. Ella Heard Trammell

The legacy of Mrs. Ella Heard Trammell, Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center (MSM PRC) Community Coalition Board (CCB) Chair Emerita, brings many fond memories to mind. She was vivid, dynamic, and brilliant. Upon reflection, these attributes best describe my experience of her contribution during my 12 years of serving together in support of the Prevention Research Center.

Mrs. Trammell worked tirelessly to ensure that our work focused on the communities we served in Atlanta's Neighborhood Planning Units (NPUs) T, V, X, Y, and Z. Her ability to use storytelling to convey her thoughts and values was a strength that was unmatched. By using this gift of sharing history, Mrs. Trammell helped us to understand the struggles she faced as a civic leader and educator. She was an engaging leader; through her stories, she was able to share realities of the past to ensure we had enough context to make the best decisions for our community in the future.

In my last interaction with Mrs. Trammell, she reminded me that faith should always be the cornerstone of our lives. Faith prepares us to serve others, faith compels us to love others, and with faith, we collectively work to improve the lives of the neighborhoods we serve through community development and public health education.

Mrs. Trammell's work and life is an inspiration to us all. I am reminded of the scripture that reads, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9 ESV). Please join me in doing good work that will honor the life and legacy of Mrs. Ella Heard Trammell, for we will not give up!

LaShawn M. Hoffman
Chair, Community Coalition Board
MSM PRC



*The Late Mrs. Ella Heard Trammell,
MSM PRC Community Coalition Board*



*Mrs. Ella Heard Trammell and Morehouse School of Medicine
Team Chair Emerita*