

The Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center (MSM PRC) Starts a New Chapter:

# Making Great Strides in Fulfilling its Mission

By Dr. Tabia Akintobi

Following a competitive national renewal application process, the Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center (PRC) successfully began its third cycle of research infrastructure funding from the Centers for Disease and Prevention (2014 -2019), making it the sole Center in the State of Georgia.

The theme of the PRC is: *Risk Reduction and Early Detection in African American and Other Minority Community-Coalitions for Prevention Research*. The mission is to advance scientific knowledge in the field of prevention in African American and other minority communities, and to disseminate new information and strategies of prevention. The Center is led by its Community Coalition Board (CCB), with an established history of successfully setting strategies to address health and other disparities in Metropolitan Atlanta neighborhoods in partnership with dedicated communities, faculty, staff and learners. The Center's prioritized communities reside in Neighborhood Planning Units T, V, X, Y and Z, representing 31 census tracts, with neighborhoods you will learn more about on Page 4. The Center's core research is titled *A Multi-Method Approach to STI and HIV/AIDS Prevention among Urban Minority Youth* and is led by Rhonda Holliday, PhD that you will also learn more about on page 3.

The PRC leads the Community Engagement Core of the Center of Excellence on Health Disparities (CEHD), which is led by Ronald Braithwaite, PhD. The CEHD includes three research projects that focus on second-hand smoke exposure among children, empowering parents to model healthy lifestyles and environments for their children and HIV risk reduction among incarcerated women, respectively. Research leads report their progress to the CCB and consult with project review teams to ensure community relevance and benefit.

**Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health Initiative (REACH-HI)** is among our new projects funded from 2014-2017. The vision of REACH-HI is to Transform Metropolitan Atlanta Communities through Prevention, Primary Care Linkages and Policy Change. It was developed in response to the community health needs assessment led by the CCB and partner communities through which community residents, state and local health departments identified diabetes and cardiovascular disease among top health priorities and challenges. REACH-HI will improve access to quality healthcare and reduce risk factors including poor nutrition, physical inactivity and lack of access to chronic disease prevention, risk reduction and management opportunities. The well-recognized significance of mental and behavioral health integration is a central component of this project.

The initiatives detailed above are just a few examples of the Center's current efforts. They are well-aligned with the Morehouse School of Medicine's mission-*Leading in the Creation and Advancement of Health Equity*. This mission requires an expanded village working in step to not just explore but to understand health disparities. This village will require an increasingly diverse CCB, an expanding, unified faculty and staff, learners who are at the cutting edge of social media and innovation, and a new repertoire of partners, advocates and decision-makers. We are on a mission and the best is before us!



Mr. LaShawn Hoffman and Dr. Tabia Akintobi along with Morehouse School of Medicine President Dr. Valerie Montgomery Rice and President of the Atlanta City Council Ceasar C. Mitchell, present an award to Mrs. Ella H. Trammell during the 4th Annual MSM PRC Community Meet and Greet.

# Healthy Heart Coalition

## Galvanizes Community Fight Against Heart Disease

*Ms. Cornelia King*

When Cornelia King first applied for a PRC mini-grant to bring the community together to explore, understand and combat cardiovascular disease, she never dreamed the project would be such a success.

Thanks to that mini-grant, Ms. King created The Healthy Heart Coalition and, working with Director and Associate Dean, Prevention Research Center & Community Engagement Dr. Tabia Akintobi and Vice Chair, Family Medicine and Assistant Dean Clinical Affairs Dr. Michelle Nichols, they began a powerful transformation that continues to impact the day-to-day lifestyles of entire communities.

The Coalition was launched by 21 organizations committed to reducing heart disease and health disparities in Fulton County by connecting women of color to critical lifestyle changes. They created a curriculum to reduce the risk for heart disease in schools, the workplace and interfaith communities. Ms. King said, "Never in the history of our community has a partnership of this magnitude impacted so many people."

The results speak for themselves. The Coalition's pre- and post-assessments showed significant improvements in attitudes about healthy foods and fitness routines, while impacting knowledge, literacy and behavior. And those results are being noticed. The Coalition was proud to host a visit from U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy and Deputy Sharon Ricks, Regional Health Administrator, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "We are so proud of the Coalition's collective success – we are establishing a national and local model that truly changes the game," said Ms. King.



*Pictured from left to right: Nick Gibson (rising 8th grade student at Eagles Landing Middle School and member of the Jr. Healthy Heart Coalition), Dr. Tabia Akintobi (Prevention Research Center Principal Investigator, Director of Evaluation and Institutional Assessment and Associate Dean for Community Engagement), Dr. Michelle Nichols (Medical Director for Comprehensive Family Healthcare Center, Vice Chair in Family Medicine, and Assistant Dean for*

*Clinical Affairs), Ms. Cornelia King (Chair of the Healthy Heart Coalition), Dr. Zenobia Day (Morehouse School of Medicine Alumni in the MD and MPH program, and a MSM Family Medicine Residency Alumni), Ms. Yolanda Reid (counselor at Eagles Landing Middle School and the Project-Based Service Learning Director), Sharise Holt (Northside Hospital).*



*Our weekly "Surgeon General's wake up calls" have inspired all of us to become even more passionate about our efforts, purposeful in our intentions and determined to make a difference. The Coalition was proud to host a visit from U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy and Deputy Sharon Ricks, Regional Health Administrator, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*



*A group of students, staff, private and public partnerships and parents working in a dynamic collaboration as a national Service Learning Model through, the Healthy Heart Coalition.*

**Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Res**

# Is HIV/AIDS in Your Top 5 Health Issues?

By Dr. Cecil Powell

*Are sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in your top 5 health issues? How often do you think about either?*

Honestly, most of us do not think about HIV/AIDS or STIs. But, they are very serious problems in our community. Georgia ranks in the **top five** in the country for new HIV/AIDS cases. Georgia is in the **top 10** for other STIs. African Americans are **8** times more likely to become infected with HIV than white Americans. In addition, teens between the ages of 15 and 25 are among the fastest growing population of new HIV infections.

*What is the Prevention Research Center doing about this problem?*

Project **HAPPY** (HIV/AIDS Prevention Project for Youth) is a five-year Centers for Disease Control (CDC) funded project for 14 – 18 year olds and their parents. One of the goals of project HAPPY is to help reduce the rates HIV/AIDS and STIs in our community through awareness and education. The project will come into the community and work directly with teens and their parents in Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU) T, V, X, Y, and Z. We will conduct workshops that are fun, exciting, and packed full of useful information.

**If you would like to learn more about Project HAPPY, contact Dr. Lamonte Powell at 404-752-1924 or via email at cpowell@msm.edu.**

CBS 46. (2015, June 24). Atlanta zip codes with highest HIV rates. Retrieved from <http://www.cbs46.com/story/29399121/atlanta-zip-codes-with-highest-hiv-rates>.

## Curious About NPUs?

By Adrienne Proeller

What's an NPU and do you think you might have one? If you live in the City of Atlanta, you do! Back in the 70's, Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, divided the city into 25 groups of neighborhoods called Neighborhood Planning Units or NPUs for the purpose of improving community engagement with the City of Atlanta. For example, NPUs advise the Atlanta Mayor and City Council on the community's viewpoint on zoning, liquor licenses and on pending legislation.

The Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center focus is on community-engaged research within NPUs T, V, X, Y, and Z. These NPUs encompass more than 40 neighborhoods, which are largely south of downtown Atlanta. Attend your next NPU meeting and learn about the important issues facing your community and let city officials know what issues are important to you!

### *NPU T Meeting*

*Terry Ross, Chair*

Second Wednesday of the month, 7 pm  
KIPP STRIVE Primary, 1444 Lucile Ave  
Atlanta, GA 30310

### *NPU V*

*Stephanie Flowers, Chair*

Second Monday of the month, 7 pm  
Locations vary. For this month's location contact [stephanieflowers@bellsouth.net](mailto:stephanieflowers@bellsouth.net)

### *NPU X Meeting*

*Michael Hopkins, Chair*

Second Monday of the month, 7 pm  
Metropolitan Library, 1332 Metropolitan Parkway  
Atlanta, GA 30310

### *NPU Y Meeting*

*Russell Hopson, Chair*

Third Monday of the month, 7 pm  
Locations vary. For this month's location contact [rhopson2@gmail.com](mailto:rhopson2@gmail.com)

### *NPU Z Meeting*

*Anne Phillips, Chair*

Fourth Monday of the month, 7 pm  
Rosel Fann Recreation Center 365 Cleveland Ave  
SE Atlanta, GA 30354

# Our Community Health Worker

## Travie Leslie

Travie G. Leslie is a 27-year veteran of community and neighborhood development. Among the projects she has worked on is the Accountable Community Healthy Together (ACHT) which targeted NPU V neighborhoods to empower residents on nutrition, environmental, mental health and stabilization of seniors and single mothers. While working at Morehouse School of Medicine, she assisted in creating a Resource Manual that listed free or reduced Health Clinics, Gyms, Food Pantries, Clothing/Food and Furniture Banks. She also attended Community and Leadership Development classes with the Annie E. Casey Foundation.



## Sabrina Mobley

For nearly two years now, Sabrina Mobley has served the PRC as a Community Health Worker assigned to a number of key projects centered on Women's and Children's Health, including Second Hand Smoke, Safe and Secure Children, as well as Patient Centered Medical Homes and Neighborhoods and HIV/AIDS Prevention. She is a resident of NPU T and serves on the board of the Summerhill Neighborhood Development Corporation. She enjoys working and living on the Southside of Atlanta with her brother and little dog Tina.



## Adrienne Proeller

Adrienne Serrano Proeller joined PRC as a Community Health Worker in July 2015, but she is no stranger to the PRC or to the community. Following a 32 year career in PR and marketing communications at Turner Broadcasting and Georgia Tech, this summer she decided to pursue her real passion – working within the neighborhoods of in town Southwest Atlanta. Adrienne is President of Capitol View Manor Neighborhood Association, an active member of NPU X and is involved in numerous other projects aimed at improving the lives of her neighbors.



## Community Coalition Board Member Highlight

### DAPHNE BYRD

Daphne Byrd is CEO & Executive Director of the Southeastern Primary Care Consortium, Inc., Atlanta Area Health Education Center (SPCC Atlanta AHEC), a non-profit health education center. She is a long serving PRC Board member, having worked as a public health professional for more than 30 years. Ms. Byrd is a leader in her community, where she provides guidance on urban and minority health workforce and healthcare issues. Ms. Byrd holds a master's degree in education and also serves as an adjunct faculty member for The Morehouse School of Medicine.

The SPCC Atlanta AHEC mission is to improve access to quality healthcare by expanding the pool and distribution of health-care professionals, and to improve outcomes for the medically underserved. Each year, the Center coordinates clinical training for more than 200 health professional students and continuing education for more than 700 health care providers and their staff. More than 2,500 k-12 youth, college students, and displaced workers are exposed to opportunities in healthcare through Center initiatives.

Recently, the organization engaged students from New Schools of Carver and Tri-Cities high schools in a new mentoring program. This program, "Break N Bowl," provides the opportunity for students to bowl and converse with doctors, pharmacists, nurses, and public health professionals about their careers. SPCC Atlanta AHEC has received several requests to offer Break N Bowl in other schools and communities. Plans are underway to offer another program in a PRC community later this year.

