High blood pressure affects large numbers of African Americans and puts them at risk for stroke, heart attack and early death. Jacquelyn Taylor, who earned her doctorate in nursing from Wayne State University, wants to know why African Americans suffer from high blood pressure more often than Caucasians.

Dr. Taylor will launch a pilot program across three generations of women to determine if a tendency to develop hypertension is inherited because studies have shown that immediate relatives of persons with high blood pressure are 50% more likely to develop high blood pressure themselves.

The study is currently recruiting 60 groups of grandmothers, mothers and daughters. Some participants will be recruited from the Participant Resource Pool of the Healthier Black Elder Center (HBEC). Participants will be interviewed, have their blood pressure taken, body mass index measured, and the inside of their mouth swabbed for DNA collection. “We try to make our procedures as comfortable and convenient as possible for subjects,” Dr. Taylor said.

Study results that define the role of inheritance will help health care professionals target persons who will benefit most from control related to diet, weight and exercise. “With increased knowledge of their conditions and behavior changes, participants may never need medication,” Dr. Taylor said.

If you are interested in volunteering for this study, please call Karen Daniels at (313) 577-2297.
Community Health Forum Series

The Healthier Black Elders Center (HBEC) has begun another new chapter in its commitment to connect Detroit’s seniors and their families to current knowledge about aging and health. This year, HBEC’s FREE community forums have expanded to include new locations with a broader list of speakers and topics. Our community health forums include three presentations by experts on various health topics, a brief overview of the HBEC and its resources, and ends with a question-and-answer segment. Forum participants say they especially appreciate being able to interact with doctors, health educators and HBEC/MCUAAAR staff in a relaxed setting. We also serve free refreshments.

The forums are held from 10-11:30 a.m. on a weekday at various metro locations. This year, forums are scheduled on Thursdays; February 16, March 16, April 27 and October 19, 2006, with a broader array of topics plus repeats of the more popular subjects.

For details on the Community Forum schedule and topics, please contact Ms. Karen L. Daniels at (313) 577-2297 or visit us at www.mcuaaar.iog.wayne.edu

Participant Resource Pool

Historically, many African Americans have been reluctant to participate in health-related research projects. Older African Americans were often abused and neglected by a prejudicial health care and medical research system, which fostered a deep distrust that lingers even today. This is unfortunate, since the life expectancy of African Americans continues to trail behind all other races.

Recent research reveals that the older adult population in Detroit is dying at a dramatically higher rate than their counterparts living elsewhere in Michigan. African Americans also suffer and die from hypertension, diabetes and heart disease at higher rates than other groups.

With early diagnosis and treatment, these diseases can be controlled but more research is required. African American elders, especially, are desperately needed to participate in research related to promoting good health and the prevention of diseases that disproportionately affect their population. In 2002 the HBEC created the Participant Resource Pool to help researchers recruit participants willing to participate in research focusing on their aging and health issues.

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