



September 24, 2002

Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day



Community Tool Kit

Introduction

Welcome to the **Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day** Community Action Tool Kit. Thank you for wanting to learn more about how you can support Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day in your community.

This tool kit has been developed to make it as easy as possible to implement activities at the local level. We have provided samples of various media outreach tools that you may want to use. We strongly encourage you to tailor any and all materials to reflect the specific concerns, health status, and needs of your community. Pick and choose from the Tool Kit as appropriate, and feel free to

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- [The National Kick-off](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Fact Sheet](#)
- [Interview with Tom Joyner](#)
- [Interview with Doug Banks](#)
- [November 2001](#)

Health Messages on ABC Radio

- [Secretary HHS Tommy Thompson](#)
- [Substance Abuse](#)
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- [HIV/AIDS](#)
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Campaign Materials Available This Month

- [View them on the web](#) or call 800-444-6472 for the complete set.
- [Order](#) a "Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day" poster

Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

Health Conditions Facing African Americans

- [Cancer](#)
- [Diabetes](#)
- [Heart Disease](#)
- [HIV/AIDS](#)
- [Immunizations](#)
- [Infant Mortality and SIDS](#)
- [Stroke](#)

Consumer Health Resources

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- [Consumer Health Guides](#)
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conduct/implement activities not included in this Tool Kit. We understand that you know your community best, and that not all activities are appropriate for every community.

In this Tool Kit you will find:

- ["Closing the Health Gap" campaign web page link](#)
- [Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day Fact Sheet](#)
- ["How to Use" section explaining how to use the various components of the tool kit](#)
- [Talking Points](#)
- [Sample Press Release](#)
- [Sample Letter to the Editor](#)
- [Sample Op-ed/Editorial](#)
- [Sample Media Pitch](#)
- [Creating a Proclamation](#)
- [Sample Proclamation](#)
- [Level of Commitment Form](#)
- [List of National Partners](#)
- [List of Community Partners](#)
- [Sample newsletter article](#)

For a complete printable version of the toolkit, the National*, Community*, and State and Local Government Partners* and response forms, and the September 24, 2002 poster, [click here](#). [Note: the complete version of the toolkit is a "zipped file". You will need to use an application such as [Winzip](#) to unzip this file, then extract the individual documents to your local hard drive. If you have difficulty unzipping this file, check with your system administrator, or click on each one of the toolkit documents above, go to the "printable version" link at the bottom of each document, and print out a copy for your records.]

*Partner lists are updated regularly. You may want to review the latest version from our web pages and compare it to the zipped version in order to obtain an up-to-date listing.

The Office of Minority Health would like to

- [Press Release](#)
- [Toolkit](#)
- [View the National Kick-off](#)
- [Complete Information](#)

Campaign Partners

- ABC Radio Sites
 - [tomjoyner.com](#)
 - [dougbanksshow.com](#)
 - [abcradio.com](#)
- [ABC Radio Affiliate stations.](#)
- [Be a Partner, Find a Partner](#)

For further information on the Health Gap campaign, contact the Office of Minority Health Resource Center at 1-800-444-6472 or email HealthGap@omhrc.gov

know what activities you will be implementing in your community. Please send a short note, with contact information, to the OMH Resource Center at healthgap@omhrc.gov with information about your plans for Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day or go to our online form and

If you "Share Your Campaign" online, your information will be added to our database and may be listed on the "Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day" web site.

THANK YOU!

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[Click here for information.](#)

About the Health Gap

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and ABC Radio Networks are working together to sponsor Closing the Health Gap, a national campaign to bring the best health information to African American communities and help African American consumers take charge of their health.

These health tips and resources for further information can help you get started, or continue on the road to a healthier life for you and your family. Information specialists at agencies and clearinghouses throughout the Department are ready to answer your health questions and find the help you need.

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[Find a Health Care Provider!](#)

Take Charge of Your Health!

We can help you take charge of your health, find a health provider near you, check out public programs like Medicare or Medicaid, hear our radio messages online, or simply learn more about [The Health Gap](#) and the health issues affecting African American communities.

We've included some of the most popular web pages to get you started. They cover the various health topics we'll be addressing in the Closing the Health Gap campaign. These include general health pages with information useful to all consumers, pages with consumer information specifically for African American consumers, and the home pages of the major health agencies within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Are You Health Savvy? [Take our Health Quiz](#)

Need the Health Gap PSA audio files? [Download from here.](#)

[Click here](#) for the list of ABC Radio Affiliate stations.

Contact the Minority Health Resource Center

If you don't find what you're looking for here, we encourage you to call the Office of Minority Health Resource Center, and speak to an information specialist about what you need. Just call 1-800-444-6472 (OMHRC), visit www.omhrc.gov on the web, or e-mail HealthGap@omhrc.gov.

Search *healthfinder*[®] and 4woman.gov on the Web

The [healthfinder](#)[®] web site was developed by the HHS with the active participation of Federal agencies and non-federal consumer

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health information specialists, librarians, and others engaged in the provision or use of online consumer health information. 4woman.gov, the web site of HHS' National Women's Health Information Center, can help you link to, read, and download a wide variety of women's health-related material developed by the HHS, other Federal agencies, and private sector resources. Both sites have links to thousands of handpicked, commercial-free, and reliable health resources on the web.

Search the HHS Web Site

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the principal agency charged with protecting the health of all Americans. Comprising 12 operating divisions, HHS' responsibilities include public health, biomedical research, Medicare and Medicaid, welfare, social services, and more. HHS provides a wealth of consumer health information that you can use every day to help improve your health or prevent illness through diet, exercise and preventive activities. Search the HHS Subject Directory, which provides an extensive topic list.

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Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

September 24, 2002

FACT SHEET

What is Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day?

Take a Loved One to The Doctor Day is part of a national campaign by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and ABC Radio which focuses on the health gap between the health of African Americans and the general population. The campaign, "Closing the Health Gap," was launched November 19, 2001. Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day is one component of that campaign. It encourages individuals to see a health care professional on September 24, 2002, or at the least, make an appointment on that day or during that week to see a health care professional in the near future.

By focusing our efforts on a single day, we believe we can help generate a greater understanding of the importance of regular health screenings while at the same time focus on those populations which tend to have the least access to health care. Prior to and after Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, health messages will be aired on some 240 ABC Radio stations across America discussing the health gap and offering specific tips on leading a more healthy life.

When is Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day?

September 24, 2002. But individuals are urged to consider any day as a good day to take a loved one to the doctor. If you can't get an appointment on September 24, then individuals should make an appointment for that week or near that week. The point is to go see a health professional, and begin taking

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charge of your health.

Why is there a Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day?

Research has shown that many individuals need to be motivated to seek out regular health care. Most people wait until there is an emergency before they go see a doctor. Health care professionals understand the value of preventive care, and Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day is an excellent way to screen individuals, and where necessary, refer them for follow-up care.

Where is Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day Occurring?

Events are being planned by local organizations in communities across the country. These will include health fairs, and health screenings at specific locations (shopping malls, local parks), community health forums, local media outreach, and much more. For an idea on what others are doing, see our list of activities at (www.healthgap.omhrc.gov/dractivites.htm)

Whom will Participate in Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day?

Local community-based organizations including health centers and health departments are participating. They are seeing patients, sponsoring health fairs, sharing information about Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, and helping to transport individuals to an appointment. Local civic groups, businesses, and other community-based organizations are also encouraged to participate in any way they can. Magic Johnson is serving as the honorary chair of the campaign. ABC Radio personalities Tom Joyner and Doug Banks will be actively promoting Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day.

How Can I Participate in Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day?

As an individual, it is easy. Identify someone you know who hasn't been to the doctor lately and make an appointment for them. Then take them. Or, if you haven't been to the doctor in a while, consider yourself a loved one and make an appointment for yourself. Ask them where local health fairs or community events are occurring in your community, and go. If they (or you) don't already have a doctor, or don't have health insurance, then contact your local community health center (www.bphc.hrsa.gov/databases/fqhc.) or local health department to ask about free or low-cost care. If you have insurance and don't use it, now is the time to use it.

As an organization, it is easy. Go to www.healthgap.omhrc.gov to see if activities are already being planned in your community. HHS is encouraging local health centers across America to play a leading role in planning local events. Local health departments have also been asked to be part of the planning for Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day. Other organizations in that community can join with them to ensure that those most in need of health care will have access to a health professional on Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day.

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 - doughbanksshow.com
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Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

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How To Use the Toolkit

It is as important how you say something as it is what you say. This section of the Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day Tool Kit explains how to use press releases, fact sheets, background materials, letters to the editors, and op-ed pieces, and contains sample talking points and information on how you may want to pitch your local activities. All information should be tailored to your specific community – and only you can do that. In addition, remember that these are generic concepts and themes, and that you should feel free to make them appropriate to your organization's goal and missions, as well as philosophy. We are providing them here to make it easier to develop and implement activities in your community, but you are free to use, or not use, any and all of them.

How to Use a Press Release

The press release, like the one included in this kit, is your basic tool for communicating with the media. Whether you are publicizing an upcoming event or drawing attention to an important issue related to Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, your release should be provocative and stimulate interest. It should also be connected to something concrete that is happening in your area. Including a local angle to any story greatly increases the likelihood of getting coverage.

If you prefer to develop your own release, begin with an attention-grabbing headline and fill the text with supporting details and a quote from someone in your organization or another local expert or activist. You may find that somebody in

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your group has excellent writing and/or media experience and can help you with this and other media tasks.

When you have completed your release, check to be sure you have included the five "W"s of media - who, what, where, when, and why – of Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day. Then print the release on your letterhead and fax it 2 to 3 days ahead of the release date to all media outlets in your community, including neighborhood newspapers. If possible, identify those individuals who have covered your organization in the past and send it directly to them. You should also do a quick review of your local newspapers to see who has written about health issues in the past, and send a copy of your release directly to them as well. The next day, call the assignments editor and ask if they will be covering the story. Be prepared to offer story "angles" (e.g., you will arrange an interview with a patient going for a check-up; you have a new program that addresses health disparities; your current program has been _____ fill in the blank).

How to Use Fact Sheets and Background Materials

Sometimes you cannot include all the information you want to share in a one-page letter or press release. In this case, you may want to include a fact sheet with your mailing or fax. You may want to use the [fact sheet](#) in this Tool Kit, or you may want to use it as you develop other background materials of your own. For example, you might develop a one-page description of your organization and a list of experts who can speak about your specific Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day activities to have ready for media requests.

Fact sheets can also serve to remind the press generally about the campaign's central theme:

- African Americans are disproportionately affected by the health gap;
- access to health care is important;
- utilization of health services can prolong and increase the quality of life;
- each of us can make a difference in our own lives;
- each of us can impact the health of others by making sure they visit a health care professional regularly.

Fact sheets can also be used as the information basis of a poster, headline, or flier. Bullet points work very well in fact sheets and are easily used in stories. Make sure your facts are accurate and that you can give the source of the fact if asked. If a fact is of extreme importance, you may want to highlight it in the title of the press release.

How to Use Letters to the Editor and Opinion Editorials (Op-Eds)

"[Letters to the Editor](#)" are an excellent way to get your views out to large numbers of individuals quickly. Letters to the editor convey information about a specific topic, concern or issue affecting your community. Most letters to the editor are written in response to a story, editorial, or column which appeared in your local paper. Letters to the Editor should be sent directly to the Editor, no more than one page in length, signed and mailed, hand delivered, emailed, or faxed within a day or two after the story/article/editorial or another "Letter to the Editor" appears. Please check you local paper to see if they have guidelines regarding length of your letter. Assign a good writer to this task.

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An opinion editorial, or op-ed, like the sample provided in this kit, can be written and distributed at any time and does not have to be in response to a specific article or other product. Op-eds should be focused and call attention to specific issues or concerns, and then offer solutions or challenges to the readers. Often, the op-ed is aimed at opinion leaders, elected officials or others who help shape policy. For Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, the op-ed should focus on the health gap within your community, discuss solutions to closing the gap. It should also ask people to participate in Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day, with information on how they can participate. The op-ed piece should be placed on your organization's letterhead over the signature of a representative of your organization. If you decide to write your own op-ed article, read a few samples in your local paper to get a sense of what the paper is likely to accept and to better understand the paper's audience. Follow the paper's rules for length, timeliness and signature requirements.

How to Use Talking Points

This kit provides national Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day talking points, but since you know your community best, you might want to add several specific talking points relevant to your community, including local statistics.

Talking points are used primarily for interviews. The interviews might take place at a press conference during a question-and-answer session or at the end of a press conference during one-on-one interviews with a members of the media. These sessions typically come about in relation to the launch or announcement of a campaign. They can also be used when speaking with elected officials, health department staff, and can later be used when writing grant applications. Talking points can also be used by speech writers who may not be as familiar with the details of a campaign as those directly involved in it. Talking points can also help a speaker target statements to the language, perspectives, problems, and concerns of different audiences, for instance, to a general adult audience and to a youth audience. On some occasions, talking points are shared with the media to make sure that statistics are accurate and that main points are conveyed.

How to Place Public Service Announcements (PSA's)

Almost everyone listens to the radio, watches television, or reads a newspaper at one time or another during the day. The public service announcements (PSA's) being aired by ABC Radio network affiliates as part of the "Closing the Health Gap" campaign are 10, 30, and 60 seconds long ([click here to hear the PSAs being aired](#)). As part of your local planning activities, you should explore working with your local ABC Radio affiliate to promote specific Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day activities in your community. This should be done as soon as possible since local radio public service program planning is often done months in advance. ([To find a list of local ABC affiliates airing messages, click here.](#)) ABC Radio Networks has asked their affiliates to support this campaign at the local level.

You may also consider developing print PSAs, which are similar to other advertising but are generally run as a community service with no charge by the media. PSAs that stand out among other PSAs provide succinct, straightforward, and accurate information, are visually appealing. Print PSAs would

be great for local activities such as health fairs and screenings. When developing your own PSA, determine what formats are acceptable to each outlet. When you are ready to send your PSA, regardless of the format, write a cover letter about the campaign or use a [pitch letter](#), like the one included in this kit, which can be modified to include mention of the accompanying PSA's. If possible, in your cover letter connect the PSA to a local or national issue that is in the news, or a particular time of year, or a specific event. This connection will increase the possibility of placement.

(NOTE: if there is not a local ABC radio affiliate in your community, ABC Radio has agreed to let other stations air the radio PSA's free of charge. Email mmurguia@osophs.dhhs.gov to find out more.)

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Talking Points

Main Messages:

- Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day is September 24, 2002. This is a national campaign tailored specifically for African Americans, but which will benefit all Americans. Communities across America are participating in this day.
- The specific aim of Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day is to stimulate a sense of community awareness of the importance of accessing health care by encouraging individuals and community action aimed at getting people to take a loved one to the doctor or other health care professionals on September 24, 2002.
- The honorary co-chairs of Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day are basketball legend Magic Johnson and ABC Radio personality Tom Joyner. The Day is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and ABC Radio.
- There is a serious health gap that exists between African Americans and the general population. African Americans suffer disproportionately from cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), among many other health issues.
- There are specific activities that individuals can do to stay healthy and become healthier. Taking responsibility for one's own health, and encouraging others to monitor their health, are key components of a healthy community.

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- Taking medication as prescribed, regular check-ups, regular exercise and a healthy diet are steps one can take to contribute to a longer, healthier, happier life.
- Seeing a health care professional is key to knowing your health status and to being treated for an illness.
- The day is aimed at those with and without insurance. If individuals have insurance, they should use it. If the don't have insurance, they should contact their local community health center for assistance – care may be either free or low cost.

Supporting Points:

- [Healthy People 2010](#) (the nation's agenda for health in the next decade) showed key health disparities between African Americans and the general public.
- Community health centers, the local health department and other organizations "from the community" have the greatest access to those most in need and understand the community better than anyone else.
- We all have a role in creating a healthy community. Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day compliments the strength of the family in African American communities and encourages individuals to show their love for a family member or friend by showing they care about their health.
- Community norms are extremely important in determining behavior. "Lead by example" has always been a strong influencer. We are asking people to lead by example by seeing a health care professional and by taking someone they love to the doctor as well.
- If you can't get an appointment for September 24, it is okay. Ask for an appointment for before or after September 24, 2002. The key is to make the appointment, and then keep it.
- Not all people have health insurance. That is where the role of community health centers, neighborhood clinics and the local health department play come into play.
- Many individuals who do have health insurance still don't use it. Regular health care is important, even for those with insurance. Prevention is much less expensive than treatment, especially since many illnesses are avoidable with regular screening. This campaign is also aimed at them.
- The campaign has many national partners. For a full list of national partners, see ([click here to national partners list](#)).

Statistics

See the health disparities [Fact Sheet](#) on the main "[Closing the Health Gap](#)" web page for additional statistics you can use in your press releases, letters to the editor, op-eds and proclamations. If you need additional national statistics, please call the OMH Resource Center at 1-800-444-6472 for assistance. For state level statistics, please contact your [state data coordinator](#). For local statistics, please contact your local health department.

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Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

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Sample Press Release

(Use Your Letterhead)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: [Name of press contact]
[DATE] [Phone number]

"TAKE A LOVED ONE TO THE DOCTOR DAY"

National Campaign Launched

[local organization's name] to Lead Local Efforts

Recognizing that a serious health gap exists between racial and ethnic populations and the general public, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, along with ABC Radio Urban Advantage Network, have launched a national campaign aimed at encouraging individuals to take a loved one to the doctor, and to get a check-up themselves. Why? Because it is much easier and less costly to prevent an illness than treat it. It is also much easier to stay healthy than to be sick.

September 24, 2002 has been declared Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. While this day is specifically targeted towards African Americans who suffer from greatest health gap, the campaign will urge all Americans to take their health more seriously, beginning by going to a health care professional for a check-up. Ervin "Magic" Johnson and ABC radio personality

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Tom Joyner are serving as honorary co-chairs of the day.

Local efforts, led by [local organization's name], will include [list two or three major activities].

- a local health fair on XXXX, XX, from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m at xxix.
- a town forum on the health gap, coordinated by XXX, at XXIX, starting at XX p.m.
- a guest appearance on "Good Day XXX," at X a.m. on ABC radio station 98.X AM.

Research has demonstrated that despite the gains made in life expectancy in the United States over the past century, gaps in health outcomes persist among ethnic groups. For example,

- African American women are 25 percent more likely to die of heart disease and 86 percent more likely to die of a stroke than White women;
- African Americans are 10 times more likely to be infected with HIV;
- Infant mortality rates for African Americans are more than twice as high for Whites;
- In 1999, African-Americans were 40 percent more likely to die of a stroke than Whites;
- African Americans had a death rate due to diabetes that was more than twice that for Whites;
- Cardiovascular disease death rates for Black men age 45 - 54 are four times their White counterparts.

(For additional statistics, [click here](#) for the Health Disparities Fact Sheet).

(Include a quote from the director of a local organization.) "I can't overstate how important it is for individuals to get regular check-ups", said XXX, the director of (local organization). We know that regular health care, good eating, and exercise can keep a person healthy and happy. We know that minorities don't go to the doctor, don't always eat healthily, and don't exercise. We must change that. Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day will help us focus our efforts to change community attitudes about health."

Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services "Closing the Health Gap." Over the next year, a series of health specific, targeted radio spots focusing on diabetes, cancer, immunizations, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, and other health issues disproportionately affecting African Americans will air on 240 ABC Radio stations across the United States. Listeners will be urged to call 1-800-444-6472 for information about specific diseases and to find health centers in their hometown. More information about the Closing the Health Gap Campaign and Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day is available on the Office on Minority Health Resource Center Web site: <http://www.healthgap.omhrc.gov>, or from the local offices of [local organization's name].

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Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

September 24, 2002

Sample Letter to the Editor

African American Health Gap

I recently read where the Department of Health and Human Services has called for a national Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, scheduled for September 24. As the director of XXXX, here in XXXX, I can't stress enough how important it is for people to see a health care professional.

Every day I see first hand the fact that African American babies are dying at twice the rate of non-African American babies. I know that African Americans are 30% more likely to die of cancer than Whites, that they are 30 percent more likely to die of heart disease, and that Blacks are 40 percent more likely to die of a stroke than Whites.

I also know that there is something each of us can do about it, something that will benefit us individually as well as our community. It is as simple as going in for a regular health check up.

While it is true that a lot of people don't have health insurance -- fortunately, there are free and low cost services in place for those with limited or no health insurance, including those provided by my organization (name or organization). But it is also true that many of us who do have insurance don't use it -- at least not until there is an emergency or when we are already sick. We must change this attitude about health care, and that change must come from within our own community.

I urge all your readers to take advantage of Take a Loved One

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to the Doctor Day. Show someone you care and make that appointment for someone you love, be they your mom, dad, brother, sister, good friend or neighbor. Then on Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, go with them to the doctor. If you don't know where to go for an appointment, call (organization) at (phone number) for information about local providers. Or call your health insurance provider and make an appointment for that check up you have been putting off for so long.

The health of our community is our responsibility. Show someone you care and take a loved one to the doctor on September 24.

(Signature)
Name
Address/City/State/Zip
Phone number

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Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

September 24, 2002

Op-Ed/Sample Article

African Americans Can Help Close the Health Gap

by (name here)

How would you react if I told you that African American babies are dying at twice the rate of non-African American babies or that African Americans are 30% more likely to die from cancer than Whites. Would it bother you to know that Blacks are 30 percent more likely to die of heart disease, or that African Americans are 40 percent more likely to die of stroke than Whites.

Despite these grim statistics, there is something we can do about it. Something we can do for ourselves and for our community, and it is as simple as going for regular health check-ups. We know that it is less costly to prevent an illness than treat it. It is also much easier to stay healthy than to be sick.

Yes, it is true that a lot of our people don't have health insurance -- fortunately, there are services in place for those with limited or no health insurance, including (name or organization) right here in (city), which I manage. But it is also true that many of us who do have insurance don't use it -- at least not until there is an emergency or we are already sick. We must change this attitude about health care, and that change must come from within our own community.

Changing attitudes about health is one of the goals behind a new national public health campaign from the U.S. Department

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of Health and Human Services and ABC Radio entitled "Closing the Health Gap," which will be airing health messages on 240 radio stations across the U.S., including (add your local ABC radio station call letters and dial location). A major component of the campaign is Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day scheduled for (date here). (insert the name of your organization here) is actively promoting Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day and we will be conducting free health screenings and health fairs at (list your specific activities with dates, times and locations.)

Join us on (date here.) Better yet, also make an appointment for someone you love, be they your mom, dad, brother, sister, best friend or neighbor, and take them to the doctor as well. If you don't know where to go, call (organization) at (phone number) for information about local providers. Or call your health insurance provider and make an appointment for that check-up you have been putting off for so long.

I urge each of you to take advantage of Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day. Show someone you care and make that appointment, today.

(You may also want to provide a brief description of you and your organization, such as: Ms. Johnson is the executive director of Valley Cares, a community health center serving San Antonio for the past 23 years.)

Please make sure you provide a complete address, phone number and that you sign your name.

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Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

September 24, 2002

Sample Media Pitch Letter

[Date]

Dear [Name of Reporter]:

Did you know that African Americans live on average almost 5 ½ years fewer than Whites? Or that Blacks are 10 times more likely to be infected with HIV? How about the fact that African Americans are 40 percent more likely to die of a stroke than Whites, or that Black women are 25 percent more likely to die of heart disease than White women? Scary statistics, but ones which can be changed if people are educated about the importance of regular health care and healthy lifestyles.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and ABC Radio Networks launched "Closing the Health Gap" campaign aimed at educating African Americans and others about the health gap. It offers tips on how to make lifestyle changes, including seeing a doctor on regular basis. Part of that campaign is Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, scheduled for September, 2002.

(Name of organization), is proud to be part of that campaign and will be hosting the following events:

- (list them out with date, time and location)

I encourage you to develop an article or story on the health gap and how local organizations in (name of city) are working

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to close that gap. Enclosed is information on the Closing the Health Gap campaign, Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, and background information and statistics on the health status of African Americans.

(Name of organization) would be more than pleased to work with you to develop your story, and are happy to provide spokespersons knowledgeable about health related activities in (city).

I may be reached at XXXX to answer any questions.

Signed,

Name
Title

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Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

September 24, 2002

Creating A Proclamation

Proclamations are highly effective way to involve your local mayor in Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day and provide a forum to spread your message.

Proclamations help to focus attention on specific events and or activities, and are a great way to generate local media coverage. It also sets a record on the importance of Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, as well as documents your organization's accomplishments in support of Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day.

A draft proclamation is included in this Took Kit; it can be used as is, but you may want to redraft it to include specifics about your community, making it more applicable to those you serve.

The process for putting forth a proclamation varies from place to place, but generally you follow these steps:

- Contact your Mayor and ask if she/he would be interested in signing a proclamation for Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day;

If the mayor agrees:

- Provide information about Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, including the draft proclamation ([link here](#)), as well as information on local activities that are planned to his/her staff;
- Ask to work with the Mayor's press office to develop and

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implement press related activities around the proclamation;

- Ask to invite other elected officials, our planning partners, other health care providers, and other community leaders to the signing;
- After the signing, work with the Mayor's scheduler to arrange to have the Mayor or other elected officials be available for press interviews, in particular radio interviews;
- Your organization should have a prepared press statement available for distribution at the signing which discusses the importance of the proclamation to the health of the community. Include information about local activities planned to commemorate Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day. Distribute this information to local press, through a press release, and by giving copies directly to the local media which traditionally cover City Hall;
- Follow-up with thank you notes to both the mayor and to members of the press which cover the story.

If the mayor declines,

- Consider approaching a local city council person and ask them to introduce or sponsor a Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day resolution (note: a proclamation is signed only by the mayor; a resolution must be voted on by the City Council).
- Work with the lead councilperson's staff, asking other council members to co-sponsor the resolution prior to its introduction. Your goal should be to have all council members co-sponsor the resolution before it is introduced.
- Follow the same process as above, but make sure to work with the councilperson's aide to coordinate press activities.
- Make sure you are present at the Council session when the resolution will be adopted, and to follow-up with thank you notes.

Remember, mayors and city council members are elected by you, their constituents. Do not hesitate to ask them to issue a proclamation or adopt a resolution, and do not hesitate to generate press coverage of the event for them as well as for your organization.

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Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

September 24, 2002

A Proclamation

Whereas, in the United States there exist a serious health gap between racial and ethnic populations and the general public;

Whereas, African Americans have a life expectancy that is ½ years less than Whites; Blacks are 1.7 times more likely to have diabetes than Whites, Hispanics twice as likely, and American Indians are 2.8 times more likely to have diabetes than Whites. Blacks are 10 times more likely to be infected with HIV than Whites; cardiovascular disease in Blacks aged 45 - 54 is twice as high as in Whites; Stroke is 1.5 times higher Black men than in White men, and 1.3 times as high in women; the incidence of cervical cancer is five times higher among Vietnamese women than White women; and other health issues, such as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, stroke, suicide, violence, mental health and organ and tissue donation are also important issues which are often not addressed.

Whereas, the public health community knows that each individual can make a difference not only in their own health but in the health of others, and that community norms regarding regular medical visits and care are important factors influencing the health of a community;

Whereas, the efforts of local organizations working with partners and volunteers to improve the health status of all Americans has proven to be essential in promoting healthy behavior;

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Whereas, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has engaged in a national "Closing the Health Gap" campaign aimed at encouraging individuals to live healthier lives and to visit a health care professional; and

Whereas, the Secretary of Health and Human Services has declared September 24, 2002 as Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day is aimed at increase access the health care for those most in need;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, (name of mayor) Mayor of the City of (name), by virtue of the authority vested in me by the City Charter and the State of (name), do hereby proclaim September 24, 2002 as Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day. I encourage all citizens of (city name), to observe this day by taking a loved one to the doctor.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this (date), in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

Signed

(Note: the City Clerk will format the proclamation in the appropriate manner and will most likely reword it.)

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CLOSING THE Health Gap



Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

September 24, 2002

Community Partner Levels of Involvement

Your participation in Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day (the Day) is extremely important for it is at the local level where the most impact can occur. We urge you to consider being part of the Day's activities, and to let us know what you will be doing in your community. The Department of Health and Human Services is asking health centers across the country to consider taking the lead in planning local events. However, community groups working together will have the greatest impact. Visit the Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day web page (www.healthgap.omhrc.gov/drday.htm), to see which organizations in your community are involved. Contact them to see how your organization can collaborate. If no group in your city has been identified yet, please consider volunteering to play that role. Please complete this [form](#) and let us know how your organization will participate.

The following levels are just a few of the many ways that your organization might become involved in this campaign. The ultimate goal is to plan activities that increase the number of individuals who visit a health care professional on or near Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day.

Please note that the Deputy Secretary has asked that community health centers across the country serve as the lead for planning local Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day activities. We are asking other organizations to join with them as they plan local activities.

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(There may be more than one community health center in your community – each serving a different catchment area. If that is the case, we encourage one city-wide planning group for city-wide activities, e.g., mayoral proclamation, city-wide health fairs), but it is more than appropriate for each health center to plan activities for their specific catchment area.

Level I: Level I partners endorse the Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day campaign and agree to lend its name to campaign efforts at both the local and national levels.

Level II: Level II partners agree to work with the lead organization in its community and be part of a planning group designing local activities. It will also share information about Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day with its constituents and will actively encourage individuals to take part. Level II organizations will be available to respond to local press inquiries and will encourage other health facilities to participate in activities.

Level III: Level III partners serve as the lead planning organization for city-wide activities, and will coordinate efforts at media, local events, mayoral proclamation and other events. They agree to work with other community organizations and community health centers to promote Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day. They serve as lead spokesperson for Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day activities in their community, involving other organizations to support Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day activities city-wide.

Please call 301-443-5224 if you have any questions about **Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day**.

Thank you.

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- ABC Radio Sites
 - tomjoyner.com
 - doughbanksshow.com
 - abcradio.com
- [ABC Radio Affiliate stations.](#)
- [Be a Partner, Find a Partner](#)

For further information on the Health Gap campaign, contact the Office of Minority Health Resource Center at 1-800-444-6472 or email HealthGap@omhrc.gov



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- [Older Americans](#)
- [Organ and Tissue Donation](#)
- [Quality Health Care](#)

How to Become a National Partner

Be a Partner. Find a Partner

- Our National Partners

- [100 Black Men of America, Inc.](#)

Keith A. Jackson
Vice President
5403 8th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-974-6304/f202-974-6330
Keith.jackson@ucdc.edu
<http://www.100blackmen.org/>

- [Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.](#)

Dr. Norma Solomon White
President
5656 S. Stony Island Ave
Chicago, IL 50537
773-684-1282/f773-288-8251
<http://www.aka1908.com>

- [Alzheimer's Association](#)

Miriam L. Brewer
Associate Director, Diversity/Inclusion Outreach
1319 F Street, NW, Suite 710
Washington, D.C. 20004
202-393-7737 ext. 239
202-393-2109 fax
miriam.brewer@aiz.org

- [Substance Abuse](#)
- [Suicide Prevention](#)
- [Violence Prevention](#)
- [Women's Health](#)

<http://www.aiz.org>

- [American Medical Association.](#)

Arthur Elster, MD
Director, Medicine and Public Health
515 N. State Street
Chicago, IL 60610
312-464-5530/f 312-464-5842
arthur_elster@ama-assn.org

- [Ancient Egyptian Arabic Orders Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, Inc. \(Prince Hall Shrine\)](#)

Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, Inc.
Donald R. Ware, M.D.
Medical Director
3454 W. 48th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90043
323-294-3561/f323-750-5910
dwavemd@ah.net

- [Association of Minority Health Professions School](#)

Dale Dirks
Representative
507 Capitol Court, N.E. Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20002
202-544-7499/f202-546-7105
ddirks@hmcw.org
<http://www.minorityhealth.org>

- [Auxilliary to the National Medical Association](#)

Mauree W. Ayton
President
1012 10th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
202-371-1674/f202-289-2662
mwayton@anma-online.org

- [Black Women's Agenda, Inc.](#)

Anne Pruitt-Logan
President
1090 Vermont Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
202-216-5797/f202-408-9888
<http://www.blackwomensagenda.org>

- [Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc.](#)

Carolyn Moseley, RN, Ph.D.
Supreme Basileus
10331 Brookfield Drive
New Orleans, LA 70127

f504-242-5440
chietapphi@erius.com

- Congress of National Black Churches

Sullivan Robinson
2000L Street, NW Suite 225
Washington, DC 20036-4962
202-296-5657/f202-296-4939
<http://www.cnbc.org>

- Daughters of Isis

Delores B. Ware MSW,CS,FNP
Imperial Directress
11935 Kingshead Drive
Saint Louis, MS 63033
314-653-1004
LDware18@aol.com

- Delmarva Foundation of the District of Columbia

Phyllis A. Lambert
Quality Improvement Coordinator
1620 L Street NW Suite 1275
Washington, DC 20036
202-496-6550/f202-293-3253
Plambert@dfmc.org
<http://www.dfmc.org>

- Delta Sigma Theta

Carolyn McCrea
Director
1707 New Hampshire Ave NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-234-7541/f202-797-7520
<http://www.deltasigmatheta.org>

- Health Concepts International

Jacqueline A. Watson
President
1327 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-650-5310/f301-650-5312
jwhci@aol.com

- Illinois Department of Public Health Center for Minority Health Services

Doris Turner
Acting Chief
535 W. Jefferson, 5th Floor
Springfield, IL 62761
217-782-4977/f217-782-3987

dturner@idph.state.il.us

- [IMIREN Pharmaceuticals, Inc.](#)

Toney E. Means
President
2500 Park Central Blvd. Suite A-6
Decatur, GA 30035
770-593-9097/f770-593-8238
[temeans@ Imiren.com](mailto:temeans@Imiren.com)
<http://www.Imiren.com>

- [Intercultural Cancer Council](#)

Pamela M. Jackson, MS
Director, Outreach Programs, ICC National Network
6655 Travis, Suite 322
Houston, TX 77030
713-798-4617/713-798-6222
Pjackson@bcm.tmc.edu
<http://iccnetwork.org>

- [Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.](#)

Richard Lee Snow
Executive Director
2322 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19132
215-228-7184/f215-228-7181
executive_director@kappaAlphaPsi.com
<http://www.kappaAlphaPsi.com>

- [Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority](#)

Linda Ervin
National 1st Anti Basileus
6331 Danbury Drive
Jamesville, NY 13078
315-446-9483/f315-446-3810
Lrec@aol.com

- [Links, Incorporated](#)

Barbara Dixon Simpkins
President
1200 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20005
202-842-8686/f202-842-9096
linksprez@aol.com
<http://www.linksinc.org>

- [LUV-IT Wellness](#)

Gloria Lovett
President

780 Northpoint Circle North
Jacksonville, FL 32218
904-757-3016/f904-757-3016
glovett@bellsouth.net
<http://www.luvitwellness.com>

- Memorial Health System, Inc. Office of Minority Health

Barbara L. Murphy
Manager, Special Populations Health Services
613 Monroe Circle
South Bend, IN 46601
574-251-6050/f574-251-6060
Minorityhealth@MemorialSB.org

- Micro Credit in Africa (MICA)

Mazie G. Holland
Director for Public Relations
1720 Kenyo Street, NW
Washington, DC 20010
202-265-1191/f202-274-7110
Mholland20010@yahoo.com
Unnigerdc@aol.com

- National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

Adrienne Dern
Deputy Director
927 15th St., NW Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
202-296-8130/f202-296-8134
adern@n4a.org
<http://www.n4a.org>

- National Association of Black Social Workers

Willie Kweku Davis Jr.
Co-Chair
1136 Shepard
Lansing, MI 48912
517-484-7480/f517-318-0908
damany384@aol.com
<http://www.nabsw.org>

- National Association of Community Health Centers

Kellye Nelson, MPH
2001 L Street N.W.
Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-296-1721/f202-296-3526
knelson@nachc.com <http://www.nachc.com>

- National Association of County and City Health Officials

Tom Milne
Executive Director
1100 17th Street Second Floor
Washington, DC 20036
202-783-5550/f202-783-1583
milne@naccho.org
<http://www.naccho.org>

- National Association of Urban-Based HMOs (NAUHMO)

Cheryl A. Townsel
Executive Director
1129 20th Street NW Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036
202-861-1468/f202-861-1477
anuhmo@yahoo.com

- National Black Catholic Apostolate for Life

Fr. Jim Goode, OFM, Ph.D.
Founder/President
440 West 36th Street
New York, NY 10018
212-868-1847/f212-563-0787
tnbcalf@aol.com
<http://www.blackcatholicsforlife.org>

- National Black Child Development Institute

Andrea Young
Director of Public Policy
1101 15th Street N.W.
Suite 900
Washington D.C. 20005
(202) 833 2220/f(202) 833 8222
<http://www.nbcdi.org>

- National Black Media Coalition

Pluria W. Marshall
Chairman
1738 Elton Road, Suite 314
Silver Spring, MD 20903
301-445-2600/f301-946-9381
carmennbmc@email.msn.com
<http://www.nbmc.org>

- National Black Police Association

Ron Hampton
Executive Director
3251 Mt Pleasant St. NW
Washington, DC 20010
202-986-2070/f202-986-0140
Nbpanatofc@worldnet-att.net

<http://www.blackpolice.org>

- National Black Women's Health Project

Lorraine Cole, Ph.D.
President/CEO
600 Pennsylvania Ave, SE Suite 310
Washington, DC 20003
202-548-4000/f202-543-9743
Dwandaw@NBWHP.org
<http://www.nbwhp.org>

- National Consortium for African American Children

Brenda A. Leath
President/CEO
733 Fifteenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
202-347-5810/f202-583-2896
Leathbrenda757@aol.com

- National Dental Association

Robert S. Johns
Executive Director
3517 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20010
202-588-1697/f202-588-1244
rsjohns@ndaonline.org
<http://www.ndaonline.org>

- National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition

Leslie Dunne
Director
121 N. Washington Street Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 223
Idunna@hmhb.org
<http://www.hmhb.org>

- National Medical Association

1012 Tenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202/204-1223/f202/898-2510
Publicaffairs@NMANet.org
<http://www.nmanet.org>

- National Minority Health Month

Robert Bush
Executive Director
1101 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Suite 820
Washington, DC 20024
202-347-3820/f202-347-1822

rbush@avs.americanvisions.com
<http://www.americanvisions.com>

- National Organization of Concerned Black Men

Esther Kaggwa
Director
1816 12th Street NW Suite 204
Washington, DC 20009
202-783-2488/f202-783-2480
ekaggwa@cbmnational.org
<http://www.cbmnational.org>

- National Perinatal Association

Sheila S. Sorkin
Executive Director
3500 E. Fletcher Ave., Suite 205
Tampa, FL 33613
888-971-3295
813-971-9306
npa@nationalperinatal.org
www.nationalperinatal.org

- Nigerian Minister's Council International

Ayodele O. Mobolurin
President
5810 Mentana Street
New Carrollton, MD 20784
301-306-9045/f301-306-1936
amobolurin@ward.edu

- Prosperity Media

Cheryl Lewis Hawkins
President and CEO
1623 Roxanna Road, NW
Washington, DC 20012
202-274-5302/f202-274-5310
cprosperity@aol.com

- Rainbow/Push Coalition

Lydia L. Watts
Director
930 East 50th Street
Chicago, IL 60637
773-256-2701/f773-373-3571
lwatts@rainbowpush.org
<http://www.rainbowpush.org>

- (The) Sanberger Center, Inc.

Karen Moon

Vice President
800 Princeton Place
Rockville, MD 20850
301-424-8623/f301-424-8623
Sanbergercenter@AOL.com

- Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.

Helen Owens
President
62 Alpine Cove
Jackson, TN 38301
731-422-4654/f737-265-4289

- Summit Health Institute for Research and Education (SHIRE), Inc.

Nicole Gaymon
Project Director
440 1st Street, NW Suite 430
Washington, D.C.
ngaymon@shireinc.org
<http://www.shireinc.org>

- Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc.

Peggy Lewis LeCompte
Vice President
212 Bunker Hill Road
Belleville, IL 62221
618-277-9088/f618-277-0731
pllecompte@aol.com

- United Negro College Fund Special Programs

Darlene R. Saunders
Director
2750 Prosperity Ave. Suite 600
Fairfax, VA 22031
703-205-7630/f703-205-7648
darlene.saunders@uncpsp.org
<http://www.uncfsp.org/hope>

- Urban Health Cast

Stephanie Myers
Producer
P.O. Box 70427, SW
Washington, DC 20024
202-863-0056/f202-347-1081
rjpub@earthlink.net
<http://www.urbanhealthcast.com>

- Washington Technology Group, Inc.

Rodney G. Hawkins

President and CEO
1623 Roxanna Road, NW
Washington, DC 20012
202-722-5118/f202-722-5118
rhawkins@washtechgroup.com
<http://www.washingtontechnology.com>

- Women's Missionary Society African Methodist Episcopal Church

African Methodist Episcopal Church
Dr. Pam DeVeaux
Supervisor of Missions
13607 Royal Ct.
Laurel, MD 20708
301-362-1741/f301-362-3768
BishopDev@aol.com

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Be a Partner. Find a Partner

- Our Community Partners
 - Barrio Comprehensive Family Health Care Center, Inc.
Debbora Thompson
Interim Executive Director
1102 Barclay
San Antonio, Texas 78207
210-434-0513/f 210-434-0402
barriocomp@worldnet.att.net
 - Berkeley Youth Alternatives (L1)
Kevin D. Williams, JD, MPH
Director, Development and Policy
1255 Allston Way
Berkeley, CA 94702
510-845-9010
510-849-1421 fax
email: kevinebyaonline.org
 - Columbia Boon County Health Department (L1)
Carla Johnson, Nurse Practitioner
Denise Redman, Community Nutritionist
P.O. Box 6015
600 E. Broadway
Columbia, MO 65205-6015
573-874-7356
573-499-0596 fax
email: cdj@go_columbiamo.com
email: dmredmon@go_columbiamo.com
 - Delmarva Foundation of the District of Columbia
Phyllis A. Lambert
Quality Improvement Coordinator
1620 L Street, NW Suite 1275

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Washington, D.C. 20036
202-496-6550
202-293-3253
email: plambert@dfmc.org
web: www.drmc.org

- Ethiopian Community Development Council
Teklemariam Ayele, MD, MPH
Program Manager, Health Services
1038 South Highland Street
Arlington, VA 22204
703-685-0510
703-685-0529 fax
email: teklemariam.ayele@ecdinternational.org
- First Baptist Church of Vauxhall New Jersey
Bob McAllister
Director of Ministry of Physical Fitness and Preventive Health
S Hilton Avenue
Vauxhall, New Jersey
908-687-3414
973-762-3248 fax
email: qbobmac@aol.com
- Harris Methodist Ft. Worth Hospital
Paulette Golden, MS, RN
Clinical Education Specialist and Congregational Nurse Coordinator
701 Fifth Ave.
Ft. Worth, TX 76104
817-878-5002
817-878-5019 fax
paulettegolden@texashealth.org
- Institute for Urban Family Health
Susan Ghanbarpour
Director, Community Access Program (CAP)
16 East 16 Street
New York, NY 10003
212-633-0800 x 279
212-989-2840 fax
sghanbarpour@institute2000.org
[http:// www.institute2000.org](http://www.institute2000.org)
- Johns Hopkins Community Physicians (L1)
Hilary Sporney, R.N.
Regional Director of Operations
1000 E. Eager Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
410-522-9800
410-955-3677 fax
email: hsporney@jhmi.edu
web: <http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/jhcp>
- Mecklenburg County Health Department
Cheryl S. Emanuel
Community Health Administrator

249 Billingsley Road
Charlotte, NC 28211
704-432-0216
704-432-0217 fax
email: emanucs@co.mecklenburg.nc.us

- **Memorial Health Systems, Inc., Office of Minority Health**
Barbara L. Murphy
Manager, Special Populations Health Services
613 Monroe Circle
South Bend, IN 46601
574-251-6050
574-251-6060 fax
minorityhealth@memorialsb.org
- **Neighborhood S.H.O.P.P. (L1)**
Dominica Alicea
Wellness Community Outreach Worker
953 Southern Blvd., 4th Floor
Bronx, NY 10459
718-542-0006
718-542-0944 fax
- **Northern Utah HIV/AIDS Project**
Sarah McClellan
Program Coordinator
846 24th Street
Ogden, UT 84401
801-393-4153
801-393-5004
nuha846@aol.com
- **Office of Peace and Justice**
Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas
800 W. Loop 820 South
Fort Worth, TX 76108
817-560-3300
- **Prince George's County, MD Chapter of The Links, Inc.**
- **Senior Solutions of SW Florida, an Area Agency on Aging (L1)**
Eileyn Sobeck-Bador
Community Outreach Manager
2285 First Street
Fort Myers, FL 33901
239-332-4233
239-332-3596 fax
email: info@seniorsolutions.org
- **South Coast Business Employment Corp. (L1)**
Connie Croy
Area Agency on Aging (AAA)
P.O. Box 1118 / 93781 Newport Lane
Coos Bay, OR 97420
541-269-2013
1-800-858-5777
541-267-0194 fax
email: ccroy@scbec.org

- **St. Louis County Department of Health (L3)**
Denise L. Chapel, MPH, MS, RD
Community Health Education Supervisor
11 South Meramec Avenue
Clayton, MO 63105
314-615-1625
314-615-6435 fax
email: dchapel@stlouisco.com web:
<http://www.stlouisco.com>
- **Texas House District 95 - Glencrest Community (L1)**
Rochelle Hall, Committee Chairman
Jerime Harvey, Community Affairs Manager
1100 Circle Drive, Suite 200
Forth Worth, TX 76119
817-535-7416 or 817-536-6772
817-535-9987 fax or 817-536-6772 fax
email: shelly77733@sbcglocal.net
- **The Male Involvement Network of Greater New Haven**
Germand A. Kimbro
Project Coordinator
370 James Street
New Haven, CT 06513
203-786-5970
203-786-5974
maleinvolvementnet@aol.com
- **The Sanberger Center, Inc. Karen Moon**
Vice President
800 Princeton Place
Rockville, MD 20850
301-424-8623
301-424-8623 fax
sanbergercenter@aol.com
- **Trident Public Health District**
SC Department of Health & Education
Linda Pranger
Public Information Coordinator
4050 Bridge View Dr. Ste. 600
N. Charleston, SC 29405
843-746-3846
843-746-3814 fax
Email: prangell@nochas20.dhec.sc.us Web:
<http://www.scdhec.net/trident>
- **Union Positiva (L1)**
Luis Penelas, Executive Director
Edith Garcia, Program Coordinator
1901 S.W. 1st Street
Miami, FL 33135
305-644-0667
305-644-0636 fax
email: edithgarcia@hotmail.com
- **Union Township Community Action Organization**
George N. Greaves
Executive Director

2410 Springfield Avenue
Vauxhall, NJ 07088
908-686-6150
908-810-1936 fax
email: ggreaves@utcao.com
web: <http://www.utcao.com>

- Wright Avenue Neighborhood Association, Inc.
Laura Redic, RNC, MA, MSN
Secretary
2022 Marshall Street
Little Rock, AR 72202
501-399-9123
501-374-5152 fax

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Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

September 24, 2002

Sample Newsletter Article

Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day – September 24, 2002

Changing attitudes about health is one of the goals behind a new national public health campaign from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and ABC Radio Networks entitled "Closing the Health Gap," which will be airing health messages on some 240 radio stations across the U.S. A major component of the campaign is Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day scheduled for September 24, 2002. (Your National Organization) has recently signed on as a national partner for the "Closing the Health Gap" and the Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day campaign, and we are encouraging our affiliates to be actively involved at the local level. On Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, individuals are encouraged to take someone to see a health professional or to make an appointment to see a health professional. Imagine the message you send to someone by telling someone you know you care about their health.

"Closing the Health Gap" is targeting African Americans due to the health gap that exists. For example, did you know that African Americans babies are dying at twice the rate of non-African American babies; or that African Americans are 30 percent more likely to die from cancer than Whites? Did you know that Blacks are 30 percent more likely to die of heart disease, or that African Americans are 40 percent more likely

Health Conditions Facing African Americans

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Messages from HHS Secretary Thompson

- [The National Kick-off](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Fact Sheet](#)
- [Interview with Tom Joyner](#)
- [Interview with Doug Banks](#)
- [November 2001](#)

Health Messages on ABC Radio

- [Secretary HHS Tommy Thompson](#)
- [Substance Abuse](#)
- [Flu/Immunizations](#)
- [HIV/AIDS](#)
- [Diabetes](#)

Campaign Materials Available This Month

- [View them on the web or call 800-444-6472 for the complete set.](#)
- [Order a "Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day" poster](#)

Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

- [Press Release](#)
- [Toolkit](#)
- [View the National Kick-off](#)
- [Complete Information](#)

Campaign Partners

- [Quality Health Care](#)
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to die of stroke than Whites?

Despite these grim statistics, there is something we can do about it. Something we can do for ourselves and for our community, and it is as simple as going for regular health check-ups. We know that it is much easier and less costly to prevent an illness than treat it. It is also much easier to stay healthy than to be sick. For individuals without health insurance, local community health centers offer free or low cost screenings and care. For those with health insurance, they are urged to use it and make an appointment.

(State and local affiliates) are urged to log onto www.healthgap.omhrc.gov to learn more about the "Closing the Health Gap" campaign and to sign on as a local partner for Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day. There you will find a [community tool kit](#) to help plan local activities. Chapters are encouraged to work with the local health center to develop activities most appropriate for each community. You will also find the [press release](#) announcing the "Closing the Health Gap" and Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day, a [fact sheet](#) on health disparities, and you can listen to the radio spots being aired.

September 24 is Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day, be a part of it, for our community.

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 - abcradio.com
- [ABC Radio Affiliate stations.](#)
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For further information on the Health Gap campaign, contact the Office of Minority Health Resource Center at 1-800-444-6472 or email HealthGap@omhrc.gov