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Making Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day

A Success in Your Community

2003 Community Toolkit

Making Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day a Success in Your Community

Welcome to the Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day [toolkit](#). This toolkit has been developed to make it as easy as possible to implement activities at the local level. (For "Suggested Partner Activities" for national partners click [here](#). We have provided suggestions for planning your health event and 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, culture*, and needs of your community. Pick and choose from the toolkit as appropriate, and feel free to conduct/implement activities not included in this toolkit. We understand that you know your community best, and that not all activities are appropriate for every community.

Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day is an opportunity to take initiative in your community to help address racial and ethnic disparities in health. It is part of the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Closing the Health Gap information and education campaign, which focuses on major areas in which racial and ethnic minorities experience serious disparities in health access and outcomes, some of which include diabetes, heart disease and stroke, cancer, infant mortality, child and adult immunization, and HIV/AIDS.

Regular health care, including preventive care, can enhance and extend the lives of the individuals living in your community. By using Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day as a launching point, you can play an essential role in encouraging people to visit a health professional-or at least make an appointment to visit one. For more information on Closing the Health Gap and minority health information, visit <http://www.healthgap.omhrc.gov/> or call 1-800-444-6472.

*For information on culturally and linguistically appropriate services in health care, please visit: <http://www.omhrc.gov/cultural/index.htm>)

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In this Toolkit you will find:

2003 Dr. Day Toolkit

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Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*?

Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day is a key part of a national campaign, Closing the Health Gap, co-sponsored by HHS, ABC Radio Networks and Radio Unica. The campaign focuses on the disparities between the health of racial and ethnic minorities and the general population.* *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* encourages individuals to visit a health professional (a doctor, a nurse, a nurse practitioner,

physician assistant, dentist, or another health provider), make an appointment for a visit, attend a health event in the community, or help a friend, neighbor, or family member do the same. HHS and its partners also encourage communities around the country to organize health events on this day.

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 highest disease burden and 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 and Radio Unica nationwide discussing the health gap and offering specific tips on leading a healthier life.

When is *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*?

This year, *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* is September 16. Leading the effort for a second year as honorary chair is ABC Radio Networks Personality, Tom Joyner. *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* occurs on the third Tuesday of each September. But individuals are urged to consider any day as a good day to take a loved one to the doctor or another health professional. If you can't get an appointment for September 16, then make an appointment for that week or near that week. The point is to see a health professional and begin taking charge of your health.

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

Many people wait until there is an emergency before they go see a doctor. The campaign highlights the importance of prevention and early detection and encourages individuals to seek regular health care. 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?

Health activities are being planned by HHS, ABC Radio Networks, radio Unicanational, state and local organizations in communities across the country. These activities include health fairs, and health screenings at specific locations (shopping centers, local parks), community health forums, local media outreach, and much more. ABC Radio will be promoting *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* at the **2003 Essence Music Festival** in New Orleans, at the Tom Joyner Family Reunion in Disney World, at 9 sky shows, and on his morning show. Radio Unica, in partnership with HHS, will be hosting 12 large health fairs in Walmart parking lots. These events will take place across the country in the months leading up to and after *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*. [Click here](#) for an idea on what others are doing, see our list of activities or call 1-800-444-6472.

Who 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

their appointments. Local civic groups, businesses, national organizations, and other community-based organizations are also encouraged to participate in any way they can. ABC Radio Personality Tom Joyner and Radio Unica will be actively promoting *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*. If you would like to partner in *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*, [click here](#).

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

As an individual, it is easy. Think of someone you know who hasn't been to the doctor lately, make an appointment for them and then take them. Or go to one of the local health fairs or community events occurring in your community. If you haven't been to the doctor in a while, make an appointment for yourself. 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 and make the appointment.

Community Health Centers can provide health care regardless of ability to pay, immigration status, or insurance coverage. They offer sliding scale fees based on income and family size for the uninsured. If you have insurance and don't use it, now is the time to use it. If you need assistance finding a health provider or free or low cost health care, [click here](#) or call 1-800-444-6472 and ask to speak to one of our information specialists.

As an organization, it is easy to participate. Go to www.healthgap.omhrc.gov to see if activities are already being planned in your community. HHS is encouraging local health centers across the United States 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. Organizations in those communities can join together 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. We encourage you to collaborate with other organizations or partners in your community. And don't forget to [share your campaign](#) with us and contact your local [ABC Radio Affiliate stations](#) and Radio Unica stations.

*For more information on the Closing the Health Gap Campaign, view the [Fact Sheet](#).

Doctor Day Community Toolkit: Getting Started:

Planning a Health Activity in Your Community

Why Should You Participate?

Your participation can really make a difference in the lives of people in your community. You can help raise awareness about health disparities, motivate people to think about health issues and make health a daily priority, and encourage people to visit a doctor, nurse, physician assistant or other health professional. We know that prevention and early detection can save lives.

That is why the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is encouraging community health centers across the country to serve as the lead for planning local

Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day activities and to work with other organizations to plan local activities to encourage people most in need of health care to make and keep an appointment with a health professional. However, any organization who wishes to coordinate a local activity is encouraged to do so. Last year, many local, civic organizations played a leading role in their communities' Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day activities.

For communities with more than one health center or organization planning an event, you may wish to establish a citywide planning group for large-scale activities. It may also be appropriate for each health center or organization to plan activities for its specific service area.

What Can You Do?

First, you will need to choose the level of involvement that works best for you and other organizations in your community:

Level I: Level I partners endorse the *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* campaign and agree to lend their organizations' names to campaign efforts at both the local and national levels.

Level II: Level II partners agree to work with the lead organization in their community and be part of a planning group developing local activities. These partners also will share information about *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* with their 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 organizations for citywide activities and will coordinate efforts in planning media and local events, mayoral proclamations, and other events. These partners 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 spokespersons for *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* activities in their community, involving other organizations to support citywide activities.

How Do You Get Started?

The key to planning a successful *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* is to determine what type of event you'll want to launch — Will it be a one-day event? A week or month of events and activities leading up to the day? Or will you use this opportunity to begin a year-long initiative. There are ideas later in this section for events that you can adapt to different formats for participating in *Take A Loved One for the Doctor Day*.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Identifying Your Target Audience

Identifying Your Target Audience

Your target audience is anyone in your community who needs access to health care services, but who is not getting them and people who are not getting them when they should, especially African Americans, Hispanics/ Latinos, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Where can you learn about your target audience?

- Community health centers are often valuable source of information about the needs in your community, gaps in health and/or treatment services, disadvantaged populations, and rehabilitation services. You also may have information on developing programs and may be able to offer suggestions on how other organization can play a role in those programs.
- Local health departments, hospitals, clinics, and health maintenance organizations are good places to learn about existing health education programs that may participate in Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day. You may also contact program coordinators at local voluntary, community, and faith-based programs and talk about how you can work with them to improve community services to address your activity.
- Many national health, professional, fraternal and service organizations have volunteer and educational components. Contact their state and local representatives to gather information about where your target audience lives, works, gathers, worships, and celebrates. Several national organizations have already partnered in Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day. (For a list of national partners, [click here](#) or call 1-800-444-6472.)
- Most communities have local organizations that are not part of a national organization. These local organizations usually develop programs to meet a need in the community and can serve as program intermediaries for your program at the same time by adding a Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day activity. Your local Chamber of Commerce and even the Yellow Pages are good resources for making contact with these groups.
- Check data from the [US Census Bureau](#), your local health department, social service agency, or planning agency to find out the number of people in your community who are in your target population and where large numbers of them reside. Then determine where they work, play, worship, meet, and socialize. Talk with community leaders about the best ways to reach your audience and about any perceived gaps in health care service or education.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Working With Others

Working With Others

Contact your HHS Regional Director's Office for assistance on Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day events. They can provide you with information on Doctor Day events and introduce you to organizations that may partner with you. To find contact information for the HHS Regional Director in your region, [click here](#). (Contact the RD within the Immediate Office of the Secretary.)

No single person or organization can do it all. Educating a community about health can be a large, broad-based effort, or a smaller, more targeted one. Either way, by forming partnerships, you multiply your resources, reach more members of your target audience, and avoid duplication of effort.

Begin with a planning document - either a short one with the major points outlined or a more detailed one. As you develop it, keep in mind that your initial contacts likely will become your supporters. They are critical to your success.

Gather information about the culture, needs, and expectations of the community leaders, businesses, and organizations with whom you will be working and address them in your plan. This interaction will make it easier for them to support your program and help ensure your success. Here are some things to keep in mind as you develop your plan:

- Review how other collaborations have worked out in your community to avoid past mistakes and build on past successes.
- Anticipate how the collaboration can be mutually beneficial to all of the participants.
- Avoid competing agendas.
- Cultivate personal relationships with each support group to maintain your leadership role, keep the focus on the objective at hand, and avoid unrelated issues among individuals.
- Assign roles that don't overlap into others' areas.
- Maintain a communitywide perspective that addresses cultural, socioeconomic, and other value-centered issues throughout the process.
- Value all contributions of all intermediaries equally, from the individual shopkeeper to the corporate giant, their input will help you focus on the ideas that best serve your community.

Most meetings with potential intermediaries will begin with a phone call to where they work. Be professional. Review the FAQs and the Talking Points here in this toolkit before you call. While your purpose in making contact remains clear — to ask for help with *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* — make sure you first let them know that you are calling because you want to work with them to benefit the community.

Once you have made initial contact, write down some ideas from the talking points section of the toolkit on how to position appropriate information for the appointment you have set up. Do not cover too much information - keep the conversations focused and efficient.

At the meeting's end, let the person know that you have appreciated his or her time. Mention that you will call back for more input as you develop your program. At this time, you may want to set up another appointment for when would be a good time to

call back.

Keeping these issues in mind, the following suggestions will help you decide who will make good partners for *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*.

- Determine your own resources in terms of staff, funds, facilities, expertise, and contacts and then outline your needs.
- Consider collaborating with organizations already implementing health promotion and education programs.
- Select intermediaries to fill a specific gap in your resources. Some organizations may offer to let you use their meeting rooms for your meetings. Others may have expertise, staff, services, or financial support programs to share.
- Find out about local charities and endowments. Local nonprofit health organizations; social service organizations; civic and volunteer groups; fraternities and sororities at local schools, colleges, and universities; associations; and businesses of all sizes like to see the direct results of their contributions in their communities. They often donate funds, volunteers, and services. Many view their involvement in community service activities as "good will" advertising. Let them know how vital their contribution is to the success of the program. Make sure they know their group will be credited in your materials.
- Check with local agencies that serve your target audience about adding Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day messages to their education materials and statistics on health disparities in your community. Offer local statistics that are meaningful to their work and the audience they serve.
- Consider forming a planning or advisory committee to help you get started. You may want to form subcommittees to help with specific aspects of the program, such as evaluation, resource development, and involvement of health professionals like geriatrics specialists, community health providers, or pediatricians.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Activities For A Successful *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*

Activities For A Successful *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*

The list of specific activities below includes ideas for reaching members of your target audience where they shop, work, worship, socialize, obtain health care, and access information. You can find materials such as health information, and *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* posters and Save the Date Cards, to help you implement your program at www.healthgap.omhrc.gov or call 1-800-444-6472.

Health centers may be taking the lead in your community, but community groups working together can have the greatest impact. Choose your activities after considering the strengths and resources of the people you have in mind for each activity. Review the suggestions in the previous section, "[Working With Others](#)." Each contribution is helping to get your message out. Most importantly, keep your long-term goal in mind. Be willing to start small and build on your successes.

Based on your resources, some activities may be more appropriate than others. You will probably think of many other activities that will work well in your community.

Use these suggestions to stimulate ideas of how you and others in your community can participate in *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Community Health Centers and Organizations: Take the Lead

Community Health Care Centers and Organizations: Take the Lead

- Develop a brochure to distribute to patients explaining how businesses can get involved in Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day. Include information about what their health center is doing and other activities. For example, last year a community health center collaborated with a diner to offer \$20 gift certificates if a patient brought in a loved one to the doctor.
- Hold a community forum to discuss the health gap, why it exists in your community, what is being done about it, and what else needs to be done.
- Encourage local health education programs to incorporate Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day messages in their existing programs, particularly those programs for people with health problems that put them at higher risk for more serious health problems.
- Ask health centers, hospitals, and local health departments about heart disease professionals, diabetes educators, and other health professionals who would be available to speak before civic, employee, cultural, faith, and fraternal groups.
- Ask all local community-based organizations (health and non-health related) to promote Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day in their newsletters.
- Ask local churches and other faith-based organizations to talk about Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day from the pulpit and to include information about it in the church flyers/newsletters. Have flyers available to hand out with information on local events that you have planned, including information on scheduling appointments.
- Develop in-service training seminars for medical, health, and social service agencies to get them planning ahead for Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day.
- Record and play public service announcements (PSAs) for callers who are put on hold at health care centers, clinics, and hospitals. You may also use the PSAs created for the Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day/ Closing the Health Gap campaign. Visit www.healthgap.omhrc.gov and click on Health Messages on ABC Radio and Radio Unica.

- Play the Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day PSAs on the televisions in patients' rooms and waiting areas at health care centers, clinics, and hospitals.
- Provide copies of the Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day brochures to pharmacies in hospitals and other pharmacies. They can be put in prescription bags, especially with prescriptions for diabetes, high blood pressure, and other appropriate medications. The brochures also can be displayed for people to take. Also ask if the pharmacist can print messages on prescription receipts.
- Develop a tri-fold, wallet-size "checkup card" that includes dates for dental, medical, and vision care appointments for you and your loved ones. The card could have an exercise chart and blood glucose or blood pressure chart on the reverse side. Include a section that allows people to write down their test results such as: blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, or last date of prostate exam, mammogram, or pap smear exam.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Special Events: Get People Involved

Special Events: Get People Involved

- Schedule smaller events that coincide with other health observances leading up to *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*.
- Work with local providers to organize health screenings and fairs at salons, barbershops, places of worship, community events, family reunions, or other major gathering places. Consider working with health providers, community health centers, and hospitals to refer those patients who will need follow-up care.
- Take advantage of community events such as local health fairs, parades, festivals, sports events, and walk-for-health events. Focus on special events and festivals involving groups that attract people at risk for cancer, diabetes, heart disease or high blood pressure, stroke, HIV/AIDS, infant mortality, and those who need child and adult vaccinations.
- Distribute *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* pledge cards to people who visit exhibits or booths. These cards can be found on the blackamericanweb.com website: [Download a card](#) or [Pledge online](#).
- Community events such as parades, local health fairs, athletic games, and festivals provide a great opportunity to distribute information about your program. For example, you could set up a table at the entrance gate of a sports event, popular shopping center, or festival and pass out information related to health care services. You can prepare a scoreboard or loudspeaker announcement.
- Invite speakers. Presentations can take place at parent group meetings, youth

service organizations, libraries, club meetings, recreation centers, community hospitals, places of worship, and work sites. For example, you might want to invite a local sports celebrity to your recreation center to speak about the importance of regular health care in doing your best in sports and other activities.

- Ask your local colleges or universities to host forums on health disparities and to promote Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day on campus. Work with them to identify topics and speakers.
- Ask your mayor, governor, or city councilmember to proclaim *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* (see the [Sample Proclamation](#) in the Getting Started: Promoting *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* section of this toolkit) on September 16. Invite local news media to cover this event.
- Ask places of worship to put *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* ads into their bulletins or to make materials available after services or social events.
- Ask your local library to set up a special services health exhibit or to organize a special reading section.
- Ask high school clubs or art classes to design and construct banners or portable exhibits for use at community events.
- Consider inviting representatives from your state or city department of health to your event to provide information about Medicaid, Medicare, or SCHIP.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Community Leadership: Getting Noticed

Community Leadership: Getting Noticed

- Contact the office of your governor, mayor, or city council member. Explain the critical health gap for people in your community. Ask him or her to proclaim September 16 as *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*. Be sure to have members of your target audience present for the reading of the proclamation. This can be an event of its own, or it can be part of activities to last throughout the day, week, or month. Guidance for creating a proclamation is provided later on in this toolkit. To find contact information for your mayor, [click here](#). (Several Mayors have endorsed *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* at the US Conference on Mayors. Ask your mayor if he or she has done so.)
- Ask your mayor or other local elected officials to send a letter/memorandum/ email to all city employees telling them about *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* and encouraging them to participate in the day.
- Ask your local government's citizen's assistance office to send a note out to all

boards/commissions/task forces, asking for their assistance in promoting *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* to their members.

- Ask local fire departments and police departments to distribute brochures at their community events. Add local emergency numbers to the brochures.
- Help a mall, community center, library, local airport, or other public place host a *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* essay, poetry and/or poster contest (for students) or an art exhibit (for senior citizens) and offer donated prizes. The event could offer vision or blood pressure, cholesterol screenings and information about health disparities.
- Contact public transportation companies (buses, subways, and taxis) and ask them to offer free rides to and from a doctor visit. For example, last year a community organization partnered with a taxi company to transport patients to the doctor.
- Recommend that worship centers in your community sponsor vision disability support groups or tie in vision problems with other support group issues.
- Work with the local cable company or the video curriculum at a local college to develop a public service announcement that could be played on the scoreboard at home-team games-either pro or semi-pro.
- Get your local cable provider to help you create a PSA for your event featuring a local celebrity. Or ask them to feature a billboard, voice-over or other notice to air. Cable providers can often provide free or low-cost production services as well as free air time. Plus, cable companies can make sure your PSA will reach your target audience.
- Implement a *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* speakers program to get businesses, social, fraternal, religious, and civic organizations involved. Find a speaker within your health care community. You can set up lectures at senior centers, places of worship, libraries, club meetings, recreation centers, community hospitals, worship centers, or schools.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Get Businesses Involved

Get Businesses Involved

- Ask local businesses to reprint *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* materials. In exchange, the businesses can include their name on the materials. This addition does not always need to be done by a printing company; many businesses have "in-house" printing capabilities. These businesses can create personalized messages for their employees and print them in house.
- Develop a "bounce-back" program with merchants and health care professionals.

Merchants can distribute coupons for discounts on exams or other services such as blood pressure or glucose tests or vision screenings.

- Ask your local electric and gas companies, local banks and shopping centers to put a *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* notice in their bills, statements and circulars.
- Develop a *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* placemat/tray liner design that printing companies can offer to their restaurant customers. Include the names of participating merchants and community activities or develop a month-long calendar of activities leading up to September 16. Include "steps" to going to the doctor, like calling for an appointment, scheduling time off for the day, arranging for childcare, etc. A special placemat could be designed for children, with a coloring game or maze that includes a *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* message.
- Ask local merchants to put *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* messages on receipts, placemats, take-out food containers, and cups. You're more likely to be successful with local restaurants than large chains that get their materials from a national printing source.
- Ask your city's largest employers to include notice of *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* in their next company newsletter or as a pay stub message.
- Encourage retail businesses to play your PSA on their public audio systems reminding customers about *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* activities and specials.
- Encourage businesses to allow flex scheduling on *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* so that employees will not have to lose pay to see the doctor, and offer other incentives such as contributions for child care, transportation, or other costs of visiting the doctor that are not covered by insurance.
- Develop a tri-fold, wallet-size "checkup card" that includes dates for dental, medical, and vision care appointments for you and your loved ones. The card could have an exercise chart and blood glucose or blood pressure chart on the reverse side. Include a section that allows people to write down their test results such as: blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, or last date of prostate exam, mammogram, or pap smear exam.
- Provide businesses and associations with the [Sample Newsletter Article](#) in this toolkit to include in their in-house newsletters. You could send the article out with a letter signed by the mayor, governor, or the head of your State HHS department.
- Participate at health fairs sponsored by a shopping mall. If your local mall doesn't already have one, suggest that it would be a great public service to have a health fair — and can draw in lots of customers! You could start small by asking a mall to allow you to set up a small exhibit or information table.

- Provide *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* information to supermarkets that they can give to their customers who take nutritional tours. (Tours are often offered for customers with health concerns such as high blood pressure and diabetes to learn healthy shopping skills and to new parents and people who shop with food stamps to help them make healthy food choices.)
- Encourage retailers, supermarkets, and other businesses to set up appointment desks with a resource list of health care professionals and services in the area. Arrange for a social service or health care representative to help them determine their professional health care needs and their insurance coverage, and help them make an appointment while they're at it.
- Arrange to have a company that produces or sells business-related novelties, such as pens and mouse pads to produce some *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* promotional materials. In exchange for a production discount, include the donating business' name on the products and in your print and media materials.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Employers Can Get Involved

Employers Can Get Involved

- Use this toolkit to help businesses to establish a *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* information or health screening center in the workplace.
- Arrange a cooperative program between a business and a health care center. The health care professional can conduct an onsite screening and the business can offer incentives for employees to get doctor visits (e.g., paying for part of employees' exams).
- Ask personnel directors to distribute brochures at annual employee health seminars and include *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* information at pre-retirement planning seminars.
- Work with insurance coordinators to help employees understand how to get the most out of their coverage and add on cost-effective options such as an eye health component for employee health education or benefits programs.
- Offer to arrange health care seminars for employees. A representative from the local insurance or social services agency can direct employees to doctors who will work with their insurance or financial concerns.
- Distribute materials that encourage employees to practice good preventive practices such as taking the stairs and making healthy lunch choices.
- Encourage employers to establish flex-spending accounts for employees and educate their employees to the use and benefits of flex-spending accounts. Also,

have businesses with flex-spending accounts already established remind employees to use up their medical flexible spending money by the end of the year.

- Encourage service organizations or unions to include *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* messages in their newsletters.
- Provide artwork for inserts that employers can include in paychecks and other communications materials.
- Recommend that employers send *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* messages to employees through their company listserv or mailer, along with other health benefit updates.
- Suggest that businesses post messages on their company intranet promoting *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* in conjunction with other health observances throughout the year, such as Healthy Vision Month. These messages include reminding employees to include eye exams for their children in their back-to-school checkups and reminders about exams for people with diabetes during National Diabetes Month.
- Insert a *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* reminder or pledge card in employee pay stubs for the month of September.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Schools and Youth Programs Can Get Families Together

Schools and Youth Programs Can Get Families Together

- Ask a local health care professional to speak at your September PTA meeting.
- Publicize *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* at student/parent orientation in September.
- Invite a health care professional to speak on "career day" in September.
- Have students sign a pledge to Take A Loved One to the Doctor.
- Hold a walk, marathon, or sports tournament for adults and youth to raise awareness about health. Other possible events include a mini-golf tournament, 5K race, basketball tournament, softball or baseball tournament, car wash, or bicycle race. The proceeds would go to providing health care services.
- Hang *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* posters in schools and community locations like libraries, recreation centers, and government offices. You may also wish to try having your own poster contest! Consider using the design for a bookmark or a t-shirt. To order *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* posters,

visit www.omhrc.gov.

- Hold a "Doctor Day" Fair. This can be a fun event of games with health messages, health prizes, information, and a photo booth where you can get a picture of yourself as a doctor.
- Have a *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* Flag Raising Ceremony. A flag could be designed through an art contest and raised on September 16 at the city hall, a school, or another public venue with a ceremony, speakers, and a proclamation of *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*.
- Sponsor an essay contest. Choose a theme and invite local students to write an essay on *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*. Come up with a great prize like breakfast with the mayor.
- Hold a poetry contest. Choose a Doctor Day-related theme and invite local students to write poems about it. Then hold a poetry reading. You may want to tie in this activity with a health fair in your local community.
- Invite local sports figures or celebrities and others to give presentations on the importance of *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* in being your best at whatever you do.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Planning Events

Planning Events

Community events are useful for spreading the message about the importance of *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*. As suggested above, you can involve local businesses, organizations, schools, faith communities, families, and individuals. You could hold a health or children's fair, festival, walk-a-thon, spaghetti dinner, or other activity. Whatever you choose, be sure the event will be attractive to your target audience.

Once you've decided what type of event to have, it's time to start planning. The key to your event's success is to prepare, prepare, prepare! Preparation is especially critical if you seek funding from agencies and organizations. You should develop your own checklist to cover the specific details of your community event and include a timeline to help you get everything done!

The following checklist contains sample items that may help to guide you through the event-planning process. It is followed by a useful task assignment list and an event planner. Checklist for Planning an Event:

Getting Started

c Visit www.healthgap.omhrc.gov to get ideas for an event.

- c Determine what type of commitment and resources you need to get the message of *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* publicized.
- c Assess community needs and identify a target audience for your efforts.

Getting Others Involved

- c Establish a planning committee.
- c Hold initial organizing meeting.
- c Appoint someone to coordinate all of the elements of the event and/or to coordinate outreach for the program.

Getting Resources

- c Determine your own resources in terms of staff, funds, facilities, expertise, and contacts.
- c Solicit help from other organizations such as local nonprofit groups, civic and volunteer groups, and businesses.
- c Visit www.healthgap.omhrc.gov or call 1-800-444-6472 to obtain health materials, "Save the Date" cards, and posters.
- c If funds are required, try to get donations from area businesses and retailers.
- c Secure commitments from participating organizations.

Firming Up the Details

- c Select the date, time, and duration of the event (if an event is planned).
- c Register and share your campaign/ event online at www.healthgap.omhrc.gov or call 1-800-444-6472.
- c Secure the venue for the event.
- c Design the event program.
- c Monitor costs.
- c Invite and secure speakers for the event.
- c Tailor related materials in the resource guide to match the needs of your event.

- c Create event flyer or poster and distribute them.
- c Contact your ABC radio affiliate station local Radio Unica station and other local media organizations to secure promotional opportunities.
- c Send out a promotional mailing to potential participants (organizations and individuals).
- c Follow up with press efforts to publicize the celebration.
- c Send out announcements to community calendars.
- c Assign staff to help coordinate activities.
- c Confirm date with speakers.
- c Reserve equipment needed for the event.
- c Send out complete event update with speakers list, celebrities, activities, etc.
- c Follow up with vendors, speakers, and activity coordinators to make sure the schedule is followed.
- c Double check with press contacts if needed.

Day of Event

- c Have fun promoting *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* in your community.

After Event

- c Send thank you notes.
- c Evaluate your event to see what worked and what you need to change for next year's event.
- c Share your event successes with the HHS Office of Minority Health calling 1-800-444-6472 or email healthgap2003@omhrc.gov.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit: Task Assignments (Sample)

Task Assignments (sample)

Lead Event Coordinator(s) (oversees all event tasks):

Media Outreach Coordinator (handles all media contact before, during, and after the event):

Games and Activities Coordinator (creates all games and activities for youth):

Promotion Coordinator (works closely with Media Outreach Coordinator on event promotion):

Facilities Coordinator (works with mall personnel and others on crafting the event space):

Speaker Coordinator (works with other organizations to locate a good guest speaker):

Contest Coordinator (obtains judges, publicizes the contest, arranges for prizes):

Stage Show Coordinator (finds entertainment):

Partnership Coordinator (coordinates partnerships with other agencies and organizations):

Doctor Day Community Toolkit: Event Planner (Sample)

Event Planner (sample)

Who Is the Audience?

Is it one particular age group or community, or is it a family or communitywide event?

Finding a Location

Will your event be inside or outside? Holding the event in a mall or civic center is ideal because (1) you don't need a rain plan; (2) it allows you to attract shoppers or people who are in the area for other activities; and (3) there usually is a good mix of public parking and public transportation at malls and civic centers.

Making a Schedule

Think of a few "anchor" events that will attract people who need to be thinking of going to the doctor, those who can encourage them to go, and those who can take them. Here is a sample schedule for the day:

10:00 a.m. Event begins with proclamation by governor

10:30 a.m. Stage performance (e.g., local theater group, band, or puppet show)

11:30 a.m. Guest speaker or celebrity appearance

1:00 p.m. Stage performance

*Health screenings 10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m.

Stage Show Prospects

Try to get a local or television radio personality to host the event. Recruit a teen club or youth group to write and perform a cultural show, ask a local repertory company or a high school drama club to do a skit from their current play, or ask a church choir to sing on stage. Consider holding a healthy cooking contest or a healthy family reunion with some type of physical activity.

Guest Speaker

Recruit a guest speaker to make a presentation or to award a prize for a contest during the *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* event. Find a celebrity with family in your area, and ask them to invite their relative to participate. Remember, celebrities can be astronauts, athletes, or heroes as well as actors. Also consider local TV and radio personalities or perhaps Veterans.

Activities

Choose activities that are appropriate to your audience. Arrange with local businesses to provide prizes and incentives for participating. If many age groups will be attending, try to make activities that appeal to all age groups.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit: Promoting Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day

The Media Can Help Spread the Word

There are many different media that can promote *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*. Here are some ideas and instructions that may be helpful in promoting the campaign

and raising awareness about health disparities in your community.

Linking to Closing the Health Gap Website

Linking your organization's Website to the "Closing the Health Gap" site is an easy and effective way to support *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*. There are many ways that you can feature this link. You may choose to create a section on your homepage dedicated to minority health or health disparities and include the Closing the Health Gap link as a referral site for more information. You may also have a "Spotlight" section where you include the link. Whatever you decide, including a link can be a good way to let browsers learn more about the campaign and your organization's involvement.

Here is what you should do:

1. Place your mouse over the Closing the Health Gap logo you wish to place on your web site.
2. Click your right mouse button.
3. A window will open. One of the options is "Save Picture As" (if using a Windows application)
4. Another window will open as ask you to give the picture a filename on your system.
5. You can call it the same name as our web site or give it any name you prefer.
6. After giving it a name, go to the directory in this window where you want to save the image and click the Save button.
7. Once the image is saved to your computer open the html file you wish to place this image.
8. Go to the section in your document where you want this link to appear and type the following html code:

```
<a href="http://www.omhrc.gov/healthgap"></a>
```

This will put the image on your web site and once clicked, will link to the main Closing the Health Gap home page.

When you sign up to be a partner in the campaign, your organization's website will also appear on the Closing the Health Gap website in the "Be a Partner. Find a Partner" section. To visit this section, [click here](#).

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Media Pitch Letter

How to make a media pitch

A media pitch letter can be a useful publicity tool for *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* national, state, or local event. The letter provides the editor with a story idea or a proposed article for his/her publication, and local writers and reporters are always

looking for positive local stories. You want to create a letter that is personalized to the editor, grabs the editor's attention, incorporates a topic that appeals to the audience, and is short and to the point. Also be sure to include a contact where the editor can get more information.

Sample Media Pitch Letter

[Date]

Dear [Name of Reporter]:

There is an important story that affects people right here in our (neighborhood/city/town). Here are the facts. African Americans on average die more than five and one-half years earlier than Whites. In 2001, the proportion of AIDS cases among African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos was nearly 70 percent. American Indians are almost three times more likely to develop diabetes than Whites. Cancer is the leading cause of death of Asian women. (Include local statistics for your community) Scary facts, but ones that can be changed if people are educated about the importance of regular health care and healthy lifestyles.

September 16, 2003 is *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*. It is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and ABC Radio Networks and Radio Unica, Closing the Health Gap campaign aimed at educating African American, Hispanic American /Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native communities, and others about the health gap between these groups and the general population of the United States. Closing the Health Gap also offers tips on how to make lifestyle changes, including seeing a doctor on regular basis. That's why *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*, scheduled for September 16, 2003, is so important.

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, Hispanics /Latinos, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, American Indians and Alaska Natives. (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).

(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 to close that gap through campaigns such as *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*. The message needs to be heard so that people can start taking a more active role in staying healthy.

I may be reached at XXXX to answer any questions.

Signed,

Name

Title

Doctor Day Community Toolkit: Press Release

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 also should 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 press 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 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 media "W"s — 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 two to three 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 also should 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 checkup; you have a new program that addresses health disparities; etc.).

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

HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson and ABC Radio Networks Personality Tom Joyner have declared September 16th, 2003 *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* as part of

the Closing the Health Gap Campaign. Radio Unica has also joined in this effort. Our organization is participating in this campaign because we know that disease prevention and regular health care can enhance and extend a person's life. We also know that Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day is vital because too many racial and ethnic minorities are dying prematurely and suffering from preventable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, infant mortality, and vaccine-preventable diseases. Together, through education and by helping people access the health resources of HHS and (any services provided by your organization/communities), we can go a long way toward changing this state of affairs.

The focus of the day is to encourage individuals to take charge of their health by visiting a health professional (a doctor, a nurse, a nurse practitioner, or another health provider), making an appointment for a visit, attending a health event in the community, or helping a friend, neighbor or family member do the same. HHS and its partners also encourage communities around the country to organize health events on this day.

While Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day, is specifically targeted towards racial and ethnic minorities who suffer from greatest health gap, the campaign will urge all Americans to focus on prevention and early detection, beginning by going to a health care professional for a check-up. ABC Radio personality Tom Joyner is serving as honorary chair 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,

- (ADD STATISTICS/ HEALTH ISSUES FOR YOUR COMMUNITY)

(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 help keep a person healthy and happy. We know that many diseases can be prevented and that it is important for minorities to the doctor early enough to detect diseases in their early stages, eat healthily, and exercise. Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day will help us focus our efforts to encourage communities to lead healthier lives."

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 cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke, HIV/AIDS, immunizations, infant mortality and SIDS, and other health issues disproportionately affecting racial and ethnic minorities will air on 240 ABC Radio Network and Radio Unica 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: www.healthgap.omhrc.gov, or from the local offices of [local organization's name].

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(END OF PRESS RELEASE)

How to use fact sheets and background materials

Don't over crowd your press release. If you can't include all the information you want to share in a one-page letter or press release, include a fact sheet with your mailing or fax. Use the FAQ sheet or Talking Points in this Toolkit, or use them to 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 also can serve to remind the press generally about the campaign's central themes:

African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native communities 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 affect the health of others by making sure they visit a health care professional regularly.

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

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Letters to the Editor, Op-Eds

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 that appeared in your local paper. Letters to the editor should be sent directly to the Editor and should be no more than one page in length; they should be signed and mailed, hand delivered, e-mailed, or faxed within a day or two after the story, article, editorial, or another letter to the editor appears. Check your local newspaper to see if they have guidelines regarding the length of your letter. Assign a good writer to this task.

Sample Letter to the Editor

Closing the 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 16. 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 compared with Whites, American Indians and Alaska Natives are almost three times as likely to have diabetes, and African Americans and Hispanics are twice as likely to have this disease; that African Americans are 30 percent more likely to die of heart disease, and that in 2000, cancer was the leading cause of death for Asian women. It was the second leading cause for African American, Hispanic, and American Indian men and women.

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 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 16.

(Signature)

Name

Address/City/State/Zip

Phone number ###

(END Letter to the Editor)

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 and should discuss solutions to closing the gap. The Op-Ed also should 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.

Sample Op-Ed/ Sample Article

Make An Appointment And A Difference On September 16

By (your name)

On April 18, 2003, Luther Vandross, singer, songwriter and legend, suffered a stroke just two days before his 52nd birthday. He went into a coma and spent nearly two months in intensive care. And, he's not alone. Compared to Whites, African Americans tend to have strokes earlier than whites and are four times more likely to die from them.

Hispanics in the same age group are nearly one-third more likely than whites to die from stroke. But there's something we can do about it. (Use a celebrity or personality who is well known in your population/ community. For example, Celia Cruz made PSAs to show Spanish-speaking women without health insurance how to obtain free breast cancer screenings. And talk show host Cristina Saralegui recently made Spanish-language on HIV/AIDS and STDs.)

There's also something we can all do about our health — on September 16, take a loved one to the doctor. September 16, 2003 is important because it's *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*, an annual campaign to help us get healthy and stay healthy.

ABC Radio Networks, Radio Unica and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have teamed up to bring us Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day. ABC Radio Networks will be airing health messages on its 240 radio stations. Radio Unica will also be airing health related messages and hosting 12 health fairs around the country in collaboration with HHS. And ABC morning radio personality Tom Joyner will again be the honorary chairperson for the event.

It's easy to participate. All you have to do is, on September 16, take a loved one to see a healthcare professional such as a doctor, nurse or nurse practitioner. You could, on Tuesday, September 16, make an appointment for you or a parent, grandparent, child or sibling to see a healthcare provider. Or on that Tuesday, you and a neighbor or friend could go to one of the local health events planned.

Last year, more than 400 national, state and local partners in more than 200 communities participated in the day. *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* is part of HHS' Closing the Health Gap campaign, an initiative that addresses the health disparities among minority groups. And because last year was so successful, the day is being expanded to address even more minority groups than ever before.

Locally, we'll have (insert description of local event — name of event, time of day, place. Include special activities i.e. blood pressure screening etc. Last sentence, include contact info: contact name, phone, e-mail and Website.)

Many people with adequate healthcare coverage don't take advantage of it. Many people feel they can't afford health care. Many people are simply afraid that they might be really sick. There are ways to address costs, and if you're sick, you need treatment to get well. When compared to white populations in general, minority groups in the United States endure lower life expectancies, higher rates of diabetes, certain cancers and higher rates of HIV infection.

Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day is an effort to change our attitudes toward our healthcare and our involvement in our own health. If you're not sure where to go or what to do, call (local organization and number) for more information about local service providers. Or call your health insurance provider and make your appointment. For more on Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day, visit www.healthgap.omhrc.gov.

You can make a difference, but first you have to make the call.

###

Feel free to include a brief bio with Your name, title and organization, as well as a brief description of your organization's mission. i.e. Ms. Jones is the director of community outreach for the Johnson Medical Center, a community-based health provider serving central Texas for more than 30 years.

You must include accurate contact information, name, title(s), address, phone, e-mail if available, for the media/vehicle and sign your name.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit: Talking Points

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, including local statistics, that are relevant to your community.

Talking points are used primarily for interviews. The interviews might take place at a press conference, during a question-and-answer session, at the end of a press conference, or during one-on-one interviews with a member of the media.

These sessions typically come about in relation to the launch or announcement of a campaign. They also can be used when speaking with elected officials and health department staff, and later can be used when writing grant applications. Talking points can 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 also can 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.

Sample Talking Points

Main Messages:

- *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* will be the third Tuesday of each September, and is a key element of the Closing the Health Gap campaign. This year, HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson has declared September 16th Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day.
- *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* is a national campaign that encourages individuals to visit a health professional (a doctor, a nurse, a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, dentist, or another health provider), make an appointment for a visit, attend a health event in the community, or help a friend, neighbor, or family member do the same. Communities across America are participating in this day.
- The campaign is aimed at African American, Hispanic /Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native communities to seek regular health care and engage in disease prevention activities, but all communities will benefit.
- The honorary chair of the campaign is ABC Radio Networks Personality, Tom Joyner.
- *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and ABC Radio Networks and Radio Unica.

- *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* is vital because too many racial and ethnic minorities are dying prematurely and suffering from preventable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, infant mortality, and vaccine preventable diseases. Together, with education and by helping people access the health resources of HHS, we can go a long way toward changing this state of affairs.
- We know that disease prevention and regular health care can enhance and extend a person's life. Thus, community-based health centers, local health departments, community organizations, national organizations, sororities, fraternities, and a host of other organizations concerned about the health of their community will be planning activities to observe *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*, including:
 - neighborhood health fairs;
 - health screenings at local malls and community centers;
 - enhanced information dissemination efforts;
 - extended hours of operation; and
 - disease specific programs
- Last year, more than 400 national, state and local partners joined the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and ABC Radio Networks in this important cause. Partners were from more than 200 communities in 47 states, DC, and Puerto Rico.
- 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.
- 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 you have insurance, use it. If you don't have insurance, contact your local community health center for assistance - care may be either free or low cost. If you need help in finding free or low cost care, call 1-800-444-6472.
- Remember — September 16 is Doctor Day.

For more information on *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*, or to become a partner in the campaign, access information on health conditions facing minorities, the Dr. Day toolkit, or consumer health materials, or order posters visit www.healthgap.omhrc.gov or call 1-800-444-6472. Spanish and English language information specialists are standing by.

Supporting Points:

- [Healthy People 2010](#) (the nation's framework for health in the next decade) showed key health disparities between racial and ethnic minorities and the general public.
- The Closing the Health Gap campaign supports HHS' efforts to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities and the goals of Healthy People 2010, the nation's agenda for improving public health.
- The Closing the Health Gap campaign and *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* advance HHS Steps to a Healthier U.S. program and the President's Healthier U. S. Initiative, which aim to provide the public with the health information it needs to live healthier lives.
- 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, Hispanic / Latinos, Asian American and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native 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 16, it is okay. Ask for an appointment for before or after September 16, 2003. 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. If you need assistance in finding free or low cost health care call, 1-800-444-6472.
- 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.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

ABC Radio Stations and Radio Unica Stations

Working with your ABC Radio Stations and Radio Unica Stations

Once you have decided what type of event you want to do, visit the Closing the Health Gap website and share your campaign. This can help with promoting your event and your organization. Also consider contacting your ABC Radio Networks Affiliate and your Radio Unica Station. Your affiliate station may also help in promoting your event on the air, by participating in your event, or include health information in your area. See below for information on placing health PSAs on the air. ABC Radio is encouraging its affiliates to:

- Incorporate a health angle into existing van hits and street promotions this summer
- Provide listeners valuable and entertaining information relating to health through on-air programming
- Develop media exposure with your local newspaper or television station by creating a joint campaign
- Create a health event or collaborate with existing partner activities.

If there is no ABC Radio Networks Affiliate or Radio Unica coverage in your area, feel free to work with another media partner to help promote your local campaign.

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Public Service Announcements

How to place public service announcements (PSAs)

Almost everyone listens to the radio, watches television, or reads a newspaper at one time or another during the day. The PSAs being aired by ABC Radio Network affiliates and Radio Unica 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 often is 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 also may 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 provide succinct, straightforward, and accurate information and 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 PSAs. If possible, in your cover letter connect the PSA to a local or national issue that is in the news or to a particular time of year or event. This connection will increase the possibility of placement.

Contact a local advertising agency and ask if they would be will or able to do pro bono work to help get your PSA produced and distributed. If they're unable to help, ask for a recommendation for another agency who can help.

You may also contact local TV stations and cable-service providers to find out how they can help with production and distribution of your PSA, and often for free!

(NOTE: If there is not a local ABC Radio affiliate or Radio Unica station in your community, ABC Radio has agreed to let other stations air the existing radio PSAs free of charge. E-mail yjohns@osophs.dhhs.gov to find out more.)

Doctor Day Community Toolkit: Creating A Proclamation

Creating A Proclamation

Proclamations are highly effective way to involve your local mayor or governor 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 toolkit; 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 or governor and ask if she/he would be interested in signing a proclamation for Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day. The US Conference on Mayors and several mayors have already endorsed Doctor Day. Ask your mayor if he or she is doing anything to support the campaign. (Find contact information for your mayor at www.usmayors.org/uscm/meet_mayors/)

If the mayor or governor agrees:

- Provide information about *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day*, including the draft proclamation (see below), as well as information on local activities that are planned to his/her staff
- Ask to work with the mayor's or governor's press office to develop and 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 or governor'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 the mayor, governor and to members of the press which cover the story.

If the mayor or governor 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.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

TAKE A LOVED ONE TO THE DOCTOR DAY

SEPTEMBER 16TH 2003

Sample Proclamation

WHEREAS: In the United States there exists a serious health gap between racial and ethnic minority populations and the general public; and

WHEREAS: African Americans, American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders suffer from serious disparities in health status and outcomes;

WHEREAS: Heart disease and stroke, cancer, diabetes, infant mortality and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, HIV/AIDS and lack of immunizations against disease are major causes of the health disparities; and

WHEREAS: Prevention, early detection of disease, and prompt referral to quality health care are essential steps to reducing these and other health disparities;

WHEREAS: The Public Health Community knows that all individuals can make a difference not only in their own health but in the health of others, and that community norms regarding medical visits and care are important factors influencing the health of a community; and

WHEREAS: The efforts of local communities working together with partners and volunteers to improve the health status of all Americans have proven to be essential to promoting healthy behavior; and

WHEREAS: The United States 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 16, 2003 as "Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day" to focus attention on 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 16, 2003 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 subscribed my name and caused the great seal of (city name) to be affixed on this (date), in the year of our Lord two thousand three and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty and twenty-seventh.

Signed

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

Doctor Day Community Toolkit:

Measure Your Success

Measure Your Success

You can benefit from lessons learned and improve your efforts for next year's *Take A Loved One to the Doctor Day* by collecting information about your activities:

- Track the number of materials distributed to your audience, the media coverage of your activities, and the number of people who attend or respond to your promotional activities, and the number of people that received health information materials or health screenings.
- Check to ensure that deadlines are being met and resources are used efficiently. Look for more effective methods.
- Ask intermediaries, organizations, volunteers, and other participants what worked well, what improvements can be made, and what they would be willing to do next.
- Share your successes and lessons learned. Modify procedures and shift resources or look for more effective ways to distribute materials to improve where necessary.
- Send a summary of your event to the HHS Office of Minority Health by sharing your campaign online at www.healthgap.omhrc.gov/shareform.cfm, via e-mail at healthgap2003@omhrc.gov or call 1-800-444-6472.
- Publicize and promote your success with a press release, or show your appreciation to sponsors and participants through an awards ceremony. Add other types of activities and repeat those that work best. Tell potential sponsors about your successes and ask for their help in the next phase of your program.

Revisit the original information sources you used to develop your community needs assessment and see if there have been any changes to report. If your local health department does not track heart, HIV/AIDS, infant mortality, cancer, diabetes, or vision problems, ask them to include tracking in the future.

Measure Your Success: Sample Summary of Event

Lead Organization:

Contact Person:

Address:

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code:

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail:

Location of Event: _____ Date/ Time:

Name of Campaign/ Event:

Community Targeted

(African American, Hispanic/ Latino, Asian American/ Pacific Islander/ American Indian/ Alaska Native, Elderly, Youth, etc.)

Brief Description of Event:

Success Stories:

Health Activities Offered (screenings, etc):

Partnering Organizations:

Organization	Contribution

Media Presence: Yes _____ No _____ Type: Newspaper, Television, or Radio

Name of Media Partner:

ABC Radio Affiliate: Yes _____ No _____ Radio Unica Station: Yes _____ No _____

Article/ PSA/ News Story Created as a Result: Yes _____ No _____

Mayor/ Governor issued a Proclamation: Yes _____ No _____

	Goal	Actual
Number of participants in the health event		

Number of health information materials distributed (you may wish to specify by the health issue area)		
Number of screenings performed (List by type of screening)		
Number of referrals made to a health professional for those who need follow-up care		
Number of pledge cards distributed/ Number of people who pledged to take a loved one to a doctor or other health professional		
Number of partnering organizations		

Considerations for next year (Include challenges/ strengths):
