



# Mary Amelia Douglas-Whited Community Women's Health Education Center

## Community Partnerships: A New Era in the Healthcare of Post-Katrina New Orleans

Essential to the mission of the Mary Amelia Douglas-Whited Community Women's Health Education Center is the commitment to excellence in women's healthcare and the development of ideas that facilitate the spirit of that mission to the surrounding community.

One way that Mary Amelia has cultivated this component is through partnerships. We believe that in order to truly impact, inspire and educate women, we must seek and present the best opportunities that will enhance women in our communities.

Some of our most recent ventures include a basis of change in establishing



a bilingual health clinic for the Vietnamese American Community in New Orleans East, a grant proposal with Johnson and Johnson that researches stress and mental health awareness, and increasing knowledge by engaging students and emerg-

ing healthcare leaders in various workshops and symposiums.

Because the city is so diverse, and its population so varied, the benefits of partnerships have a tremendous impact on its progress.

Truly a city like no other, the tenacity of the city has been demonstrated in scope of its endeavors and its willingness to stand in an effort to build a better New Orleans. Community partnerships have become a way to usher in the new New Orleans.

## A Message from the Director

We are pleased to introduce the second Mary Amelia Douglas-Whited Community Women's Health Education Center (Mary Amelia Center) Newsletter.

With spring, comes revitalization, rebirth, and refreshment. Mary Amelia Center stands at the threshold of this change ready to birth new strategies, incentives, and resources into the lives of our surrounding community.

We realize the value in empowering the lives of

women. This is an incredible effort that often requires a team approach. In this issue, you will find information on the many partnerships we have utilized to foster growth and development of not only the Mary Amelia Center initiative but also women as a whole.

Stress and depression management, breastfeeding advocacy, as well as the use of needs assessments as an opportunity for change are but a few of the highlights in this issue.



Thanks for your support.

**Jeanette. H. Magnus, MD, PhD**  
Professor & Director,  
Mary Amelia Douglas-Whited Community Women's Health Education Center

Spring 2007

## XUVA College of Pharmacy Sponsors Disparity Symposium

The Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education office at the Xavier University's College of Pharmacy sponsored a national conference addressing healthcare disparity.

The event took place on March 4-6, 2007 at the Intercontinental New Orleans hotel here in New Orleans, Louisiana. The mission of the symposium was a commitment to defining those values that are integral part of the system of care. Ideas that will aid in changing the present

state of care for underserved individuals were discussed. One particular component cited an objective to, "characterize the complex interplay between social, cultural and biological factors as determinants of health disparity." Another aspect of the agenda was to incorporate the ideas of race and its role in health outcomes, the importance of cultural competency in addressing issues, and also how health literacy affects patient care. Using a foundation of successful, evidence-based modeling and a format of information sessions the symposium sought to fulfill its goal: **Building Partnerships** to

Eliminate Health Disparities: Translating Integrated Approaches to Achieve **Improved Health Outcomes**.

*The Health Resources and Administration defines health disparities as "population – specific differences in the presence of disease, health outcomes, or access to healthcare."*

## Cultural Competency: Outreach in New Orleans East

Past efforts in obtaining a public health assessment of the Vietnamese Community in New Orleans East have been modestly successful. However, recent efforts by TUX-COE and the Mary Amelia Center have been successful in gaining entry thereby breaking years of traditional

isolation. Meetings and outreach activities were organized and implemented.

An assessment of the women's stress response and coping mechanisms in response to Hurricane Katrina was gathered through the use of focus groups. The difficulties associated with access to healthcare facilities that are culturally and

linguistically sensitive were also discussed. The sessions indicated a need for the establishment of a free, bilingual health clinic in New Orleans East.

Collaboration with students of Vietnamese ancestry ensures that work will continue with the Vietnamese Community and Mary Amelia Community Health Education Center.

## Shawna Herbst takes a "STAND"

**STAND**—*Stress and Depression Awareness in Louisiana's Hurricane Affected Areas Program*—is a 3-year project, funded by Johnson and Johnson, with a mission to build awareness of stress and depression in Katrina and Rita-affected areas through training of lay health educators in both regions of the state of Louisiana.

The lay health educators will be community women interested in reaching out to other women in their communities through informal "kitchen table" talks about stress and depression, with the idea that these women will take these messages home to their families and

other loved ones.

Through this awareness-building, serious mental health problems due to post-disaster stress and depression will be prevented as women will learn tools to help themselves and others in their respective communities through a "self-care" model.

Self-care is important now given the fact that many communities lost healthcare infrastructure and lack mental health services as well.

The first phase of this project is to conduct focus groups to learn



about how people are experiencing stress and depression at this time and what may be important to include in our training.

"We are planning to recruit women at PTA meetings in several schools, churches, and other community organizations in Jefferson, Plaquemines, Orleans, and St. Bernard Parishes", says Herbst.

For more information please contact Shawna Herbst MSW, MPH at (504) 988-8826 or [sherbst@tulane.edu](mailto:sherbst@tulane.edu)

## Breastfeeding: A Call to Action

A workshop on breastfeeding for public health students, professionals and members of the community was held in February 2007. Dr. Ashley Chin was the guest speaker.

The mission was to discuss barriers that prevent women from breastfeeding, to initiate breastfeeding advocacy, and to evaluate the current breastfeeding practices and policies within the United

States.

A major area of focus was the influence that hospitals have on whether mothers decide to breastfeed. Louisiana's GIFT (Guided Infant Feeding Techniques) program was highlighted as a recent effort to increase breastfeeding among residents. Representatives for West Jefferson Medical Center were in attendance. West Jefferson Medical Center is the first hospital in the state to be-

come GIFT certified.

Overall, there were over 32 attendees, including students from Tulane's School of Public Health and School of Medicine, Xavier University's School of Pharmacy, and La WIC.



## Guest Speaker Highlight

**Dr. Ashley Clark Chin** is a native of Mobile, Alabama. She received her bachelors and masters degrees in Exercise Physiology from the University of Alabama. She went on to pursue an MPH and PhD in Epidemiology at Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Currently Ashley is a CDC/CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellow assigned to the Louisiana Office of Public Health Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Section. Her areas of research interest include data linkage, evaluation, and breastfeeding. Ashley is married to Christopher Chin, and they have two sons, Noah and Jonah.

## Mary Amelia Celebrates National Women's Health Week May 13-19

Every year, the Office on Women's Health and all the Centers of Excellence in Women's Health as well as the Community Centers of Excellence in Women's Health celebrate the National Women's Health Week.

This year's activities at Mary Amelia will include

- ♦ Women's Health Research Marathon Day May 14th
- ♦ Mary Amelia open house and student presentations on a variety of women's health issues May 15-16th
- ♦ Women's Health Leadership Seminar May 17th



**Happy Mother's Day!**  
**May 13th, 2007**



# Monthly Health Observances

**February** is Heart Disease Awareness and Prevention Month. Heart Truth is a campaign that aims to educate and empower women to take steps to prevent disease. Check out <http://www.womenshealth.gov/hearttruth> for more info.

**March** is National Nutrition month. The American Diabetic Association is committed to incorporating nutrition into healthy living. Take time this month to re-evaluate current dietary habits and to also consider new ones.

**April** is National Women's Eye Health and Safety month. A vision screening can help identify individuals at risk for eye disease. Remember, a proper eye health program is essential for maintenance of vision.

- ◆ April 2-8, 2007 is National Public Health Week. This year's theme will focus on mothers as a resource for preparing plans to protect the family from public health emergencies.

**May** 13-19 is National Women's Health Week. This year's activities will include a TUXCOE open house and student presentations on a variety of women's health issues.

- ◆ May is also National High Blood Pressure Prevention Month. Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of arteries and when blood pressure is too high it can cause the heart to be overworked. Find out your pressure status.

Enhancing women's health and well-being through

- ◆ **Communication**
- ◆ **Empowerment** and
- ◆ **Prevention**

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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# Women's Health Activities this Quarter



- ◆ Monthly Mind, Body, Medicine LA Chapter meetings at East Jefferson Medical Center
- ◆ Monthly Health Education and Women's Health committee meetings at St. Anna's Episcopal Church Community Center
- ◆ Healthy Eating Presenta-

tion at Israelite Baptist Women's Group March 28th, 2007

- ◆ Monthly Mental Health committee meetings at Israelite Baptist Church
- ◆ DHHS' Office on Women's Health Site Visit to TUXCOE March, 2007
- ◆ Babies R Us Baby Fair April 14th, 2007
- ◆ Greater New Orleans Breast-feeding Awareness Coalition Meeting, April 2007
- ◆ National Women's Health Week Activities at Mary Amelia, TUXCOE and the Louisiana Office of Public Health May 13-19, 2007

Marathon Day May 14, 2007



- ◆ Women's Health Research

**To learn about future activities  
Call the Editor Antor Ndep Ola at  
(504) 988-4637  
or visit our website:  
[www.womenshealth.tulane.edu](http://www.womenshealth.tulane.edu)**