

THE BLACK HEALTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

ENCOURAGING AFRICAN AMERICANS TO

Eat, Move and Test for Health



In the fall of 2005, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation created and implemented a new public health initiative called the Black Health Empowerment Project (BHEP) in response to the growing numbers of obese and overweight African-American adults and youth.

Now entering its fourth year, BHEP is an obesity awareness and health promotion tour that presents free, informative and decidedly interactive one-day community health events in cities across the country. Some of the program's strongest supporters are the Congressional Black Caucus members who agree to host an event in their districts.

Each Black Health event is designed to educate African Americans about obesity's relationship to the chronic health conditions that are prevalent in communities of color. Children, adults and senior citizens alike are encouraged to "Eat, Move and Test for Health" throughout a day that features a Healthy Living Forum and a Health & Fitness Expo.

Nationally- and locally-recognized medical, nutrition and fitness experts and media personalities served as headliners on the health tour, which has attracted more than 4,500 attendees and 350 health organizations and service providers in 18 metropolitan cities and rural communities.

The Foundation works closely with sponsors, respected health organizations, local community partners and the offices of CBC members to positively impact the health knowledge, decisions and quality of life of program participants. For more information about this initiative, visit www.bheptour.org or call (202) 263-2800.

Program Features

*** A morning *Healthy Living Forum*, which includes presentations on obesity, physical activity and nutrition as well as an exercise and cooking demonstration

*** An afternoon *Health & Fitness Expo*, which showcases an Ask the Experts Zone, Children's Activity Zone, free health screenings, fitness demonstrations, healthy food samples, cooking demonstrations, dozens of exhibitors and great giveaways

Program Rationale

*** 80 percent of African-American females are overweight or obese¹

*** 67 percent of African-American men are overweight or obese¹

Overweight and obesity are modifiable risk factors for many chronic health conditions including hypertension, Type II diabetes, heart disease, respiratory illnesses and some cancers

¹ Source: CDC, 2007. HHealth United States, 2007. Table 74.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/has/has07.pdf> [PDF. 475KB]