

Organization: Community Health Coalition**County:** Durham**Address:** 407 Crutchfield St.
Durham, N.C. 27704**Phone:** 919-470-8680**Website:** <http://www.mczig.com/chc09/>**Project:** Educational Sessions on Minority Health*****Below are excerpts from their final report*****

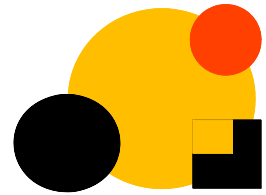
About the Project: With funding from the N.C. Healthy Start Foundation, the Community Health Coalition (CHC) educated African American women in Durham, North Carolina about three vital health issues facing women of reproductive age: the benefits of breastfeeding, the importance of proper diet and exercise and the benefits of quitting smoking, as well as ways to do so.

CHC used existing relationships with two African American churches in Durham in order to identify lay health advisors to reach out to the women of reproductive age within their respective congregations. These women worked with CHC staff to identify and invite appropriate women to participate in a total of three health education seminars designed to educate participants about the benefits of proper nutrition and exercise, smoking cessation, and the benefits of breastfeeding. CHC also capitalized on two opportunities that arose after we received funding from N.C. Healthy Start (both at events hosted by organizations comprised predominantly of African American women), which were Gumbo YaYa, and Links at the Capitol. At these events, CHC staff educated these women about our three chosen health issues.

Lastly, CHC used the extensive reach of its flagship program, Health Sunday in the Black Church, to expand upon the goals of this grant. CHC sends monthly health tips to more than 90 predominantly African American churches in Durham, therefore bringing culturally relevant health messages to more than 5,000 members of Durham's African American community. To further expand the reach of this program, CHC wrote April's Health Tip about the benefits of proper nutrition and exercise, smoking cessation and the benefits of breastfeeding.

Successes: Out of the 104 evaluations that we collected, the vast majority of the women who attended the N.C. Healthy Start/CHC educational sessions learned a lot, and plan to implement what they learned in their daily life. In fact, 97% of respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed that they learned valuable information about diet and exercise. 96% of respondents said the same about the benefits of breastfeeding, and 97% said the same about the importance of smoking cessation and ways to do so.

Perhaps even more importantly, most women reported a commitment to implement the knowledge they gained at these sessions in their own lives, or to share the information they learned with members of their community. 94% of women who were asked reported intent to utilize and/or share information



gained about diet and exercise. 89% of respondents said the same about the benefits of breastfeeding, and 94% said the same about the importance of smoking cessation and ways to do so.

Therefore, this project has increased knowledge about these three important health issues among African American women in Durham through the health education sessions and CHC's April Health Tip. Hopefully this information will continue to spread through this community as women share their knowledge with one another, and will impact the health behaviors of Durham's African American community.

The Community Health Coalition so often focuses our health messages around cardiovascular health and diabetes prevention and management. Funding from the N.C. Healthy Start Foundation allowed us to expand our health messages to specifically target African American women of reproductive age. Women are central in determining the health of their families, and therefore must be healthy themselves. This grant allowed us to reach out to women who are trusted daughters, sisters, mothers and aunts and to ensure that they have all the information and inspiration they need to make healthy choices for themselves and their families.