

HEALTH

spotlight on health

FACTS FROM THE NAACP AND THE NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION

Winning The Fight Against Silent Killers

(NAPS)—They're quietly slinking across the country and they're out to kill. The silent killers currently stalking 60 million Americans are high blood pressure and diabetes. High blood pressure often sneaks up on people, causing no symptoms until a great deal of damage has been done. The end result of uncontrolled high blood pressure or diabetes can be heart attack or kidney failure.



Eating a healthy diet and getting regular exercise are two good ways to protect yourself from such killer diseases as diabetes and high blood pressure.

While diabetes and high blood pressure can happen to anyone, African-Americans are especially at risk. High blood pressure strikes one of four African-Americans, compared with one of six whites, and African-Americans between ages 30 and 49 develop kidney failure related to high blood pressure 20 times more often than whites. Also, while African-Americans make up only 12 percent of the U.S. population, they account for 20 percent of deaths from diabetes.

Yes, there are two killers preying upon unsuspecting neighborhoods, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself. For starters, have your blood pressure checked regularly. If you are diagnosed with high blood pressure and need to take medicine, be sure to take it as directed by your doctor and report any side effects. Also, the following lifestyle changes can improve your health:

- Eat a balanced, low-fat diet
- Watch your weight
- Exercise regularly
- Keep salt intake down
- Don't smoke
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Try to reduce stress

To fight the outbreak of kidney disease due to high blood pressure and diabetes in the African-American community, the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) has teamed up with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). As part of this joint effort, the NKF and NAACP have developed a brochure to educate the public about the

dangers of high blood pressure and diabetes and how people can take control of their health if they have these diseases.

Free Brochure

For a free copy of "Winning the Fight Against Silent Killers," send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to "Silent Killers," c/o the National Kidney Foundation, Inc., 30 E. 33rd Street, New York, NY 10016. The brochure is made possible through an educational grant from Pfizer Inc.

New Study

The Federal Government is also onto these killers and its National Institutes of Health plans to launch the African-American study of kidney disease and high blood pressure. African-Americans who are diagnosed with both high blood pressure and signs of kidney disease will participate in the study. The goal of the study is to find out whether a lower blood pressure level can preserve kidney function and whether certain types of drugs are more effective than others in slowing kidney disease in African-Americans. The drugs which the patients will be taking are Altace, Norvasc and Toprol.

Through the combined efforts of so many, these killers may soon be history!

AAMC FORUM FEATURES COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS THAT INCREASE MINORITY INTEREST IN HEALTH SCIENCE CAREERS

Five innovative partnerships through which medical schools collaborate with either high schools or colleges to increase minority student access to careers in the health professions will be presented at the 105th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) in Boston.

The presentations will be made at a research forum sponsored by Project 3000 by 2000, the AAMC's national campaign to increase the number of underrepresented minority students entering U.S. medical schools each year to 3,000 by the year 2000.

The five medical schools selected to present at the forum include:

- Medical University of South

Carolina College of Medicine, "Factors Related to Retention of African American Students at the Medical University of South Carolina;"

- Yale University School of Medicine, "Teaching of Human Anatomy to High School Students is Enriched by Attending Medical School Gross Anatomy Laboratories;" (profiled below)

- State University of New York at Stony Brook School of Medicine, "A Two-year College University, Medical School Partnership;"

- Mount Saini School of Medicine of the City University of New York, "Predictions of Academic Success for High School Students;"

- University of Hawaii John

A. Bums School of Medicine, "A Partnership Approach of Recruiting Native Hawaiians to Medicine."

"It Made Me Want to Go into Medicine Even More"

Highly motivated students from an inner-city high school in New Haven have learned more about human anatomy, earned higher grades, and increased their interest in the sciences by studying cadavers in Yale University School of Medicine's gross anatomy laboratory.

The program began last year with 35 juniors and seniors from Career High School and their biology teacher, Shirley M. Neighbors, who traveled to Yale twice a month for a 90-minute class. The teenagers met in groups of three to six with Yale

medical students and faculty, and they participated in laboratory experiences which supplemented their public high school textbook and classroom bone studies.

For Julie E. Lim, A 17-year-old senior who is interested in going into medicine, the Yale anatomy program was fascinating. "It made me want to go into medicine even more," she said. "We were working with actual human bodies. We were no longer looking at pictures ... We could feel wrinkles in the stomach and see how smooth muscles really feel. It was really exciting. We also could see how a heart and the muscle fit together, and it helped us understand how everything fits together when you could see it."

William B. Stewart, Ph.D., associate professor of Surgery (Anatomy), is one of four Yale faculty involved in the (See AAMC Forum, Page 23)

AFRICAN AMERICAN TO HEAD AIDS COUNCIL

At the June board meeting, Mario Cooper became the first African-American to assume the chairmanship of AIDS Action Council. Cooper, a former White House staff member in the Carter administration, was elected to lead the council's 29-member board in December.

Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) applauded Cooper's election. "Mario is a terrific choice," she said. "He brings excellent leadership skills to the issue and look forward to working with him."

Other recent changes on the council's board include the resignation of Nancy Campbell, following her resignation from Northwest AIDS Foundation, and the resignation of Jewel Thais-Williams, who held one of two board seats designated to AIDS

Project Los Angeles. That seat was filled by Jimmy Loyce, APLA's new executive director. David Wexler was also elected to another 2-year term.

In addition, two new board members, Leah Daughtry and Sandra Estepa, were selected at the June board meeting. Daughtry is currently executive director of Alonzo Family Life Services in Brooklyn, New York, and served for more than eight years in the government and political arena, including service at the United States House of Representatives.

Estepa is co-founder and first executive director of the Latino Commission on AIDS, a Latino AIDS advocacy group, and brings much expertise in services targeted to Latinos, women and adolescents.



AIDS Action Council's new board chair Mario Cooper

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