This brochure outlines two of the community outreach activities of the University of Mississippi Medical Center, the Community Health Advocate Training Program and Healthy Living Program. The medical center realizes the importance of educating the public about the various health issues facing the state of Mississippi. Most importantly, we recognize the importance of educating lay persons. The information contained in this brochure is intended for churches, community-based organizations, places of business (both public and private), and others who are interested in creating a healthier Mississippi through the use of community empowerment.

These programs are sponsored by the Healthy Linkages (HL) and Southern Remedy Programs of the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Healthy Linkages is a collaboration between the University of Mississippi Medical Center, the Mississippi State Department of Health, and the 21 Federally Qualified Health Centers in the state of Mississippi. The ultimate goal of Healthy Linkages is to ensure the most vulnerable citizens of the state have adequate access to medical homes and specialty care. Southern Remedy is a collaboration between the University of Mississippi Medical Center and Mississippi Public Broadcasting. The ultimate goal of Southern Remedy is to ensure the citizens of Mississippi are educated about the various health care issues facing the state.
What are Community Health Advocates?

Community Health Advocates are lay persons trained to assist individuals and communities to adopt healthy behaviors. Community Health Advocates can be extremely effective in linking patients in a supportive environment to health care systems, since they are familiar with the community and its people. They are important to the coordination of disease prevention activities including screenings, dissemination of reading materials, health fairs, and oral presentations in a manner that is culturally appropriate for the community in which the individual lives. (Source: Partners in Health, 2011).

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the University of Mississippi Medical Center’s Community Health Advocate Program is to train individuals to become Community Health Advocates in their community. Doing so will lead to increased health awareness and literacy, which may lead to an improved health status of individuals within the community.

Training will focus on the identification and prevention of many of Mississippi’s major health problems, access to care, and the appropriate role of health advocates. Content includes the following topics:

- What are Community Health Advocates
- Roles and Responsibilities of Community Health Advocates
- Privacy
- Health Literacy
- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Portion Control and Weight Loss
- Interpreting Instructions on a Prescription Label
- Communicating with a Health Professional
- Reading an Appointment Card

Individuals are also taught skills such as measuring blood pressure, blood glucose, and body mass index.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is targeted at adult lay and professional individuals interested in improving the overall health status of their community.

WHAT ARE THE DELIVERABLES OF THE CHA PROGRAM?

CHAs are first and foremost advocates for healthy living and healthy choices within their local church congregations and communities. To facilitate this goal, they are trained and equipped to optimize the use of disease prevention and treatment resources for their clients. The end result will be healthier congregations and communities with fewer emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and hospital readmissions by their clients.

TRAINING PROCESS

Individuals are usually recommended by their pastor or community leader and are identified as potential candidates for the program. Individuals are trained by staff from the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Once trained, individuals work under the auspices of his or her organization (e.g. church, civic organization, place of business).

WHAT TO DO IF INTERESTED OR IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS:

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HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAM

We have access to unlimited quantities of inexpensive, tasty, high calorie, processed and fast foods that are rich in salt, sugar and fat. Easy access to these foods leads to overeating and weight gain. Our sedentary lifestyles make keeping a healthy weight even more difficult. We know that obesity is associated with seven years of life lost and a host of cardiovascular and other major medical problems. Most Americans need a weight management program. Southern Remedy, with the assistance of physicians, pharmacists, dieticians, and nutritionists, has constructed this one. We hope you find it helpful and that you will share it with others. The Healthy Living Program is a key component of the Community Health Advocate training program and is also available to medical providers, health advocates, churches, civic, and social organizations interested in changing Mississippi’s health for the better.