

Department of Health & Wellness

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fulton County Government

Fulton County PICH Program Partners Work to Reduce Health Disparities

ATLANTA – April 26, 2016 – During April 2016, which is National Minority Health Month, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH) is raising awareness about health disparities, their causes and the impact they have on minority communities and on the nation as whole. The Fulton County Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH) Program and its partners feel a sense of urgency and determination about helping to move Fulton County forward toward greater health equity.

A look at some health statistics for the City of Atlanta, reported in the 2015 Big Cities Health Inventory, shows why (mortality rates are per 100,000 people):

- The cancer mortality rate in the city's overall population is 159, but it's 208 for blacks compared to 129 for whites.
- For female breast cancer, the overall rate is 26, but 35 for blacks versus 19 for whites.
- Lung cancer rates follow the same trend: a mortality rate of 38 in the overall population; but 52 for blacks compared to 29 for whites.
- While the overall diabetes mortality rate is 19, it's nearly 37 for blacks versus 7 for whites.
- The heart disease mortality rate is 157 overall and 121 for whites, but for Atlanta's blacks it's 209.
- The pattern is much the same with key health factors such as obesity and smoking:
 - While 25% of adults overall are obese, 35% of blacks fall into the category, versus just 15% of whites.
 - A full 16% of adults in the overall population smoke, compared to 20% of blacks and 13% of whites.
- A bright spot: Nearly 29% of black adults in the city meet CDC recommended physical activity levels, slightly higher than the 27% rate in the overall population and almost equal to the 30% of whites who do.

The strategies PICH and its partners are pursuing to reduce these disparities include air quality tests and public opinion research by Georgia State University to measure the impact of smoking in public areas; innovative Physical Education curricula in all Fulton County elementary and middle schools; training and other technical assistance from Georgia Department of Early Care and Adult Learning (DECAL), HealthMPowers and others for County day care center staff on incorporating physical activity and healthy nutrition plans into their operations; PITCH and PLAY events organized by the Fulton County Health Promotion Action Coalition to discuss nutritional and physical activity recommendations for kids and families and community needs; and an Interfaith Active Living Initiative to help faith-based groups create or enhance activities that promote healthy lifestyles and active aging.

About PICH

The Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH) Program is working with community partners to develop strategies and implement programs to promote healthier lifestyles and to reduce both health disparities and the incidence of chronic disease among County residents. The PICH Program is made possible by funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention under cooperative agreement #IU58DP005568-01. For more information, please visit www.fultoncountyga.gov/partnership-to-improve-community-health. To learn more about Fulton County Health and Wellness, please visit www.fultoncountygahealth.org.