

A Publication Of
CHEER:
The Consortium For
Health Education,
Economic
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and Research

A NCMHD Exploratory Center of
Excellence in Health Disparities

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Memphis and Shelby County
Health Department



Greetings from the Executive Director

Greetings. Fall is here and the holidays are ahead. This is a good time to take control of our eating habits and take charge of our lives. This issue of the CHEERLeader will present some new information about food availability and preparation in Memphis, as well as HIV/AIDS prevention.

Since our last newsletter, CHEER sponsored the first regional conference on July 30-31. The theme of the conference was, "Health in the City: A Fresh Take on Food." Troubled by Memphis being named the hunger capital of the United States by a recent study, CHEER provided leadership for a community discussion about meeting local food and health needs.

In 2004, Memphis was ranked 12th in the nation in HIV rates. To raise awareness about this epidemic, CHEER's monthly seminars were dedicated to HIV. On June 18, Andrea Williams, MPA, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, presented "Connect to Protect (C2P): HIV Prevention in 38106," discussing how she works with coalition partners to improve HIV prevention efforts in Memphis. Our July seminar was "A Faith-Based Message: HIV and the Church," presented by Noel Hutchinson, DMin, pastor of First Baptist Church Lauderdale. He discussed the church's role in successfully addressing and fighting the increase of HIV and AIDS in Memphis.

Involving communities in shaping health disparities research is also important to CHEER. We invited Leon Caldwell, PhD, Rhodes College, to share ideas about how communities can fully take part in and share their concerns on research about their own neighborhoods. A fascinating seminar presentation was shared by Drs. Phyllis Betts, PhD, and Richard Janikowski, PhD, University of Memphis, who described how getting communities involved in reducing crime should be one of the first steps in trying to increase health in a designated area.

We hope that you will find our third issue of the CHEERLeader informative and useful. CHEER serves as a Memphis and Shelby County resource for transforming health disparities into health possibilities. We are also now on Facebook. Check us out at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=103908536338138>.

Wishing you the best,

Shelley I. White-Means

Shelley I. White-Means, PhD
Executive Director, CHEER



Dr. Shelley White-Means

A Cry for Affordable, Fresh Foods

Healthy eating is good for your waistline but hard on your wallet. A sausage biscuit from your favorite fast-food restaurant might sell for 99 cents while the more healthy fruit and walnut salad is priced at \$2.99.

So Bobbie Richard, a long-time resident of the Douglass community usually does her grocery shopping at Easy Way, Kroger and Wal-Mart – stores that are more than 10 miles away from her home. Since she does not drive, she depends upon her children to provide her with transportation to these stores, which offer better variety and lower prices.

Richard is the matriarch of her family. Her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren visit her often. She likes to have food available to them, especially during summer months when schools are out and meals need to be provided on a consistent basis. She laments that her life would be easier if she didn't have to go so far to get what she needs.

Some very important people in Washington, D.C., are paying attention. Michelle Obama has taken up the challenges of Richard and others like her, making healthy food access and childhood obesity a major cornerstone of her platform as First Lady.

Recently, a diverse group met in Washington at the National Association of Black Journalists Health Disparities Conference to discuss the challenges facing families.

Obesity and diabetes have become part of a disparity in Shelby County over the past six years and the numbers are growing. Obesity rates in Shelby County increased 1.7 percent between 2004 and 2007, compared to a state-wide increase of 3.6 percent and a national rate of 3.2 percent. Some say individuals must accept responsibility, while others suggest that the lack of access to healthy foods and transportation to supercenters give these families little choice.

Federal officials are developing programs to help bring fresh foods to low-income neighborhoods. The Food Desert Oasis Act of 2009, introduced by Rep. Bobby Rush, D-Ill., would designate certain U.S. cities as Food Desert Zones. This bill includes cities such as Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Memphis, Birmingham, Atlanta and many more.

Districts with high concentrations of fast-food establishments, but limited access to the foods needed to maintain a healthy diet, would qualify for the designation. The bill would provide tax incentives to eligible businesses that receive at least 25 percent of gross sales from fresh fruits and vegetables.

This article appeared in The Tri-State Defender. For more information, please visit www.tri-statedefender.com.

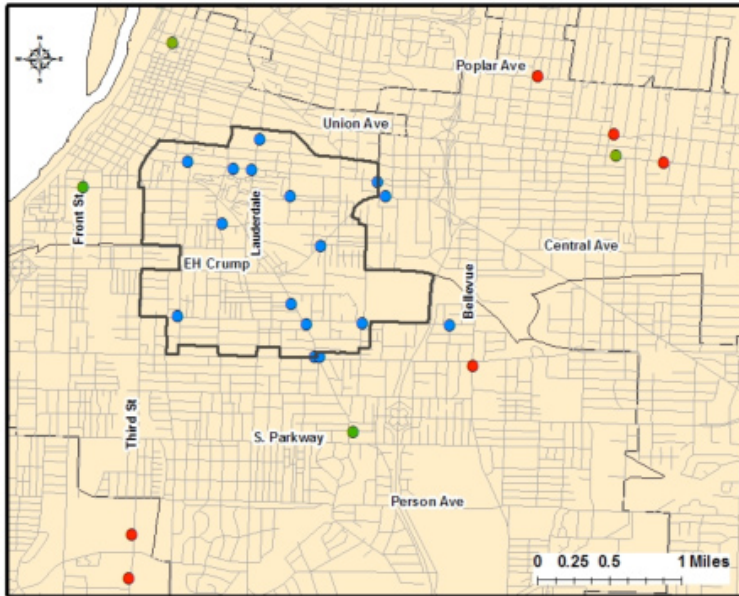
CHEER and Partner Updates

On August 25, CHEER held its second meeting with National Advisory board members Cynthia Boyd PhD, FAAN, Darrell Gaskin, PhD, Beverly Robertson, Harriet Washington, and Lisa McGee, MEd. During the meeting, board members provided insight and feedback about CHEER's accomplishments, dissemination and translational strategies, community engagement, intervention, seminars and conferences. They also recommended suggestions regarding future research directions and efforts.

This fall, the Memphis Housing Authority announced that they will receive \$22 million to revitalize the Cleaborn Homes public housing development. There are approximately 412 families to relocate. Some families will remain in existing public housing and others will receive House Choice Vouchers (Section 8). This project will offer better housing and opportunities for the affected families.

CHEER recently held a seminar on HIV/AIDS presented by Pastor Noel Hutchinson of First Baptist Church Lauderdale. He began with the social and environmental factors that shaped the transmission of HIV starting with the high rates among African-American populations. He also spoke on how the theological interpretations of some churches have prevented them from initially addressing HIV/AIDS, but this is changing. Hutchinson showed how the church is presently engaged, addressing the challenges, created by this epidemic.

Food Stores Scarce in 38126



38126 Convenience Stores: Lauderdale Market, Vance Grocery, Liberty Cash, King of Discount, M & R, Mathew's The Poor Man's Store, Luster's Sundry, Crump Food Mart, Sunshine Food Mart, South Memphis Grocery, Walker Mart and Deli, Triple J Grocery, Lester Grocery, Sam's Food Market, Jet Food Store, Friends Food Market.

Nearby Full Service Grocery Stores: Kroger (Third St.), Save-a-Lot (Third St.), Save-a-Lot (Bellevue), Kroger (Poplar Ave.), Piggly Wiggly (Madison Ave.), Schnucks (Union Ave.).

Nearby Farmer's Markets: Memphis Farmer's Market (Front St.), South Memphis Farmer's Market (Mississippi Blvd.), Midtown Farmer's Market (Union Ave.), Easy Way Food Stores (Main St.).

The map above displays food stores near residents of zip code 38126. The blue dots represent convenience stores that typically carry dry goods, canned goods and snack items. Fresh fruit and vegetables are limited at these locations. The red dots identify full-service grocery stores that carry fresh produce and meat year round. The green dots represent farmer's markets locations. Farmer's markets feature locally grown food items and carry fresh, seasonal produce.

Not having access to fresh foods and vegetables is an issue for many Memphians. For those residents who do not drive, access to healthy foods is a challenge. Individuals with certain health conditions, such as diabetes or hypertension sometimes lack easy access to healthy foods and can struggle with managing their condition.

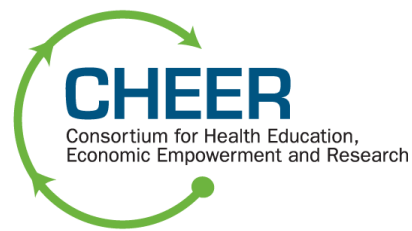
This fall, CHEER used GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping to determine the number of grocery stores and farmer's markets close to 38126. There are no major grocery stores located in that area.

GIS maps provide targeted information about health, crime, business and traffic. The mapping system produced the map above and it lists stores near the area that may be of some service.

If you live far from conventional food stores, are on a budget, or would like to eat healthier, here are some tips to save money and stay healthy:

1. Drink water rather than soda.
2. Eat foods rich in protein and low in fat such as eggs, tuna, beans and chicken.
3. Buy frozen vegetables. These are faster to prepare and cheaper.
4. Cook healthy meals in bulk.
5. Visit farmer's markets. Many foods are cheaper because they are seasonal and local.
6. Start a garden. A pack of fruit or vegetable seeds is usually less than a dollar.
7. Avoid junk food. Chips and candy are nutritionally poor.

**Check out CHEER's new services by visiting
<http://uthsc.edu/CHEER/services>.**



CHEER Holds First Disparities Conference on Food Scarcity

On July 30-31, CHEER hosted its first local conference, “Health in the City: A Fresh Take on Food,” to address health disparities in daily consumption and food access. The conference targeted Mid-Southerners who desire to make health a top priority.

In Memphis, poor diet and difficulty accessing healthy food choices often lead to health issues such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity. This conference informed participants on new ways to access healthy, affordable food that can improve and reduce hunger in the city.

Conference speakers represented a number of prestigious community organizations, public health and academic institutions, including Memphis Inter-Faith Alliance (MIFA), Memphis Food Bank, Healthy Memphis Common Table, Grow Memphis, Memphis and Shelby County Health Department, and UTHSC.

The conference opened with a lecture and cooking demonstration by native Memphian, Bryant Terry. Terry is an eco chef, food justice activist, and author of the critically acclaimed “Vegan Soul Kitchen: Fresh, Healthy and Creative African-American Cuisine.”

For the past 10 years he has worked to build a more just and sustainable food system and has used cooking as a tool to illuminate the intersections between poverty, structural racism and food insecurity. His interest in cooking, farming, and community health can be traced back to his childhood in Memphis, where his grandparents inspired him to grow, prepare and appreciate good food.

“A problem in my community is a problem for me, whether I see it daily or not. We need to consider future conversations and recognize how our habits will impact our families in the future. I have hope that we can turn things around collectively,” Terry said.

Prior to the cooking demonstration, Terry lectured on the importance of food choice and healthy food preparation. He challenged the more than 60 at the G.E. Patterson Family Life Center to join the conversation.

“Everyone can contribute to this conversation regardless of race and position in the community,” Terry said.

“We are addressing this now and there are some cities that have been doing so for a decade. In Memphis, many families had gardens, such as my grandfather in south Memphis. He had an urban farm. He used much of his land to grow vegetables. If you didn’t shuck it, clean it, or shell it, you didn’t eat it.”

The conference closed out with a town hall meeting from community and local government leaders. More than 100 total attendees left the two-day conference with beneficial information and new contacts for developing future partnerships to address food access and security.

For more information about CHEER, visit our Website at www.uthsc/CHEER or contact the CHEER office at (901) 448-1985.



On July 30, CHEER held a conference on food disparities that featured native Memphian Bryant Terry. Terry lectured on the importance of eating healthy and preparing healthy food while conducting a live cooking demonstration.

A NCMHD Exploratory Center of Excellence in Health Disparities

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