



Healthy Congregations

Joining forces to Create Healthier Communities

Annual Guide for Health Ministries

www.Healthycongregations.info

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Healthy Congregations

Our goals are to:

- (1) Raise awareness about the impact of obesity on the lives of children and adults;
- (2) Rally the faith community and build our capacity as Voices for Change that will help create healthier communities for all;
- (3) Provide on-going support to enable people to eat smart and **move more.**

Members of the Board for Healthy Congregations in Mississippi:

- Dr. Michael O. Minor, Chair -Pastor, Oak Hill Baptist Church
- Cheryl Denley, Asst. to Supt. Senatobia District, United Methodist Church
- Jeannine Gaudet, RN- Faith Community Nurse; Health Ministry Coordinator, Holy Spirit Catholic Church
- Loretta Miller- Dean, NE MS State Education Congress
- Tom Pittman, CEO & President, Community Foundation of NW Mississippi
- Rev. Vickie Sizemore-Baldwin -Supt., Senatobia District, United Methodist Church
- Dr. Bessie Tables- State Director, New Educational Baptist State Convention
- Rev. Hylon Oliver- Moderator of Tunica County Baptist Association
- Rev. Marion Coleman, Pastor First United Christian Community Church, Batesville
- Rev. Reginald Griffin, Pastor Pleasant Hope M.B. Church, Lambert
- Wilma Wade, Former CCSD Supt., First Baptist of Clarksdale

We thank the Rising Sun Usher Federation of NW Mississippi and its president, Pastor Bernard Montgomery, for allowing us to adapt their annual congregational health guide concept. It has been the joy of Pastor Michael O. Minor to edit the guide for the last decade and now to introduce its concept to a larger audience. To God be the Glory!

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Good health is a vitally important issue that transcends any particular religion or creed.

While this guide incorporates tenants of the Christian faith, all who find it useful are encouraged to adapt its implementation to their own belief systems while preserving the integrity of accurate health information.

Healthy Congregations

Healthy Congregations is a multi-denomination coalition captained by partners in the faith community and joined by medical professionals, other organizations that promote health and wellness, and concerned citizens who champion health for all.

Vision

We see a day when all Mississippi children will live healthy lifestyles in healthy families.

Mission

We, the faith community, will achieve this vision by educating and inspiring our fellow Mississippians to commit to healthier lifestyles and to create healthier communities in Mississippi.

Greetings

We are delighted to share our annual health ministry guide and certainly hope that the contents are beneficial to you in the great work of health ministry. We hope that you gain ideas to begin or enhance health ministries in your congregations. Members of the Healthy Congregations coalition are all a part of an interdependent circle of those committed to healthy congregations in Mississippi.

Health is the integration of the mind, body and spirit that results in a sense of well-being and freedom from factors that contribute to preventable chronic diseases. We seek to be of assistance to enable each person to live life more fully and to develop and draw strength from others in their congregations and communities.

We believe that each congregation would profit greatly from a vibrant health ministry. Healthy people are able to live, give and serve with a greater capacity and to become the catalysts for changes needed to improve the quality of life for all in their communities.

The Health Ministry

The role of the Health Ministry to provide accurate and meaningful education, programs, activities and focus to address health issues pertinent to each congregation and the community it *serves*.

Health Ministries may be made up of professional healthcare workers (RN's and LPN's, Doctors, Pharmacists), and committed lay people who champion healthy personal choices and are committed to helping create healthier communities.

Health Ministries may be as simple as a monthly health feature in your bulletin or as comprehensive as healthy meals in congregations, church or community gardens, walking clubs, small group studies or official faith community nurse programsthe list of possibilities is long! Budgets can be minimal and funding should not be viewed as a barrier since most aspects of the ministry will depend on compassionate, sacrificial service by team members.

Options for Health Ministry Implementation

There are several options for implementing a health ministry in houses of worship. One of the most popular vehicles for implementation has been Ushers/Hospitality/Greeters. See the section on Ushering: The Ministry of Hospitality.

Health ministries may also be housed in "seasoned" womens' ministries like the Deaconess and Mission Society. Since there is often already an active outreach or service component, health ministry can be a natural extension. With its educational components, a health ministry may also become an intricate component of Christian Education ministries complimenting Sunday School, weekly Bible study and Vacation Bible School.

Active health ministry work is attuned to the energy generated within Youth and Young Adult ministries. Moreover, there are great opportunities for intergenerational sharing with ministries composed of older members. Congregational health ministries are much more likely to be self-sustaining as part of existing ministries. Remember that when some task is viewed as "everyone's" responsibility, more often than not, it becomes "no one's" responsibility!

What Are Congregational Health Ministries?

The purpose of the health ministry is to help the congregation care for one another...to attain, maintain and/or regain the best possible whole person health-wellness of body, mind, and spirit.

Health professionals and interested lay members in a congregation form a health ministry committee or cabinet. In this way, they combine their knowledge and experience with their willingness to *serve*, support the pastor as he cares for the spiritual health of the congregation, and respond to the unique health needs of the congregation and the community. Roles may include:

- Health Educators and Counselors
- Referral and resources lists
- Facilitator
- Integrator of Health and Healing
- Advocate

Whatever activities are needed to improve health outcomes of members of the congregation, the job of a health minister is to facilitate the use of available resources in the congregation and the community rather than providing "hands on" health care services. A health ministry team does not seek to provide nursing or medical services, but seeks to creatively bridge the gaps through education and facilitating connection with resources in the health education and care delivery system already available.

The Health Ministry Team can make a difference...

- In the **local church** by raising awareness of the benefits this ministry can offer to the spiritual, interpersonal, emotional and physical health and quality of life of members.
- To the **pastor** by introducing wellness programs in support of the pastor's ministry of Christian growth in the congregation.
- To the **community** by becoming advocates for change that will create healthier communities and reaching out to provide members of the community at large with supportive services and information.

What is Congregational Health Ministries?, The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod

Hospitality Opens the Door for Ministering to Others

According to Microsoft Encarta's Online Dictionary, hospitality is "kindness to visitors." Hospitality is evidenced by a friendly welcome and is kind or generous treatment offered to guests or strangers.

Review the following checklist of an effective hospitality ministry to be sure your congregation has a welcome mat out.

Signs of Hospitality in the Congregation

- ❖ Ushers and greeters seem genuinely glad to see visitors
- ❖ Members go out of their way to speak with visitors
- ❖ Nametags are available
- ❖ A packet of information about the congregation is available
- ❖ Visitors are contacted within a week after attending for the first time and perhaps presented with a small gift, such as a lapel cross or healthy home-made treat
- ❖ Signs point visitors to entrances, classrooms, and the sanctuary
- ❖ Facilities are handicap accessible
- ❖ Sign language interpreters are available

Making people feel welcome opens the door to opportunities for meeting their other needs.

Ushering: The Ministry of Hospitality

Mission

The mission of the usher is to be a Minister of Hospitality. Ushers must serve the worshipping community with joy, dependability, kindness, and reverence.

The Ministry

As a minister of hospitality, the usher is a person chosen to reflect warmth and welcome. Ushers are friendly people who are attracted to all age groups and personalities. Ushering is open to all - women and men. Couples and families should be encouraged to join this vital ministry. Ushers can handle emergency situations with courage and calming assurance. They carry themselves with dignity even when performing necessary menial tasks.

Duties of Usher Ministry

As people enter, they may need a guiding hand and a warm smile to show them to a seat. The usher is there to give everyone a friendly greeting and assistance to all. Ushers play an important role in helping not only the pastor, but also everyone in the congregation.

Many members may only be aware of the visible usher roles of seating people, taking up the collection, assisting parishioners during worship, and distributing bulletins. In addition to these vital functions, the dedicated usher arrives well before most members of the congregation to perform many additional duties including:

- ❖ Turning on lights
- ❖ Unlocking doors
- ❖ Checking heating and cooling comfort of the building
- ❖ Helping members of the congregation with questions about dates and times of services and other activities
- ❖ Making sure visitors know the location of restrooms, nursery, classrooms, and offices.
- ❖ Discussing needs with the pastor, and
- ❖ Being alert for emergency situations

Even when services conclude, the role of the usher continues:

- ❖ Final greeting of worshippers
- ❖ Straightening or collecting reading materials in pews
- ❖ Turning off lights
- ❖ Locking doors and securing the building

Faith Community Health Initiative

Remember that a health ministry does not practice medicine or provide medical care, but is educational and empowering. The Health Ministry's goal is facilitating access to accurate information and finding our voice to address disparities. Bringing a specific health issue to the forefront each month throughout the year is one way to ensure coverage of a wide range of health topics of interest and concern to your congregation.

There is a wealth of information available from health organizations and non-profit agencies on line and in print to support these monthly health observances.

What *should* ministry members do?

1. Ask God for guidance and His blessing.
2. Gain the blessing of your congregation's leader.
3. Emphasize wellness and prevention.
4. Follow a monthly guide of health observances.
5. Provide brochures, handouts, worship service bulletin inserts and activities to promote health.
6. *Involve* other members of the congregation and the community.
7. Take pictures; keep a scrapbook.
8. CREATE EXCITEMENT!!!

In the next section, there is an overview of monthly health observances. For observances marked by **, more information may be obtained at the What Health website:
www.whathealth.com/awareness.

Ideas for Monthly Health Observances

JANUARY

- **National Volunteer Blood Donor Month**
Sponsor a "Post Holiday Blood *Drive*" at your church in partnership with Lifeblood/Mid-South Regional Blood Center

FEBRUARY

- **Heart Disease and Women 1st Sunday of the Month- Wear Red Day-** Info at www.goredforwomen.com
- **American Heart Association "Choose to Move"** Physical Activity Challenge. Encourage women to follow the AHA's 12-week "Choose to Move" free physical fitness activity program -for details go to www.choosetomove.org

MARCH

- **Taste Test Sunday** to promote healthy meals at church functions and a collection of tasty recipes with limited fat and sugar for a Healthy Cookbook. Have desserts prepared in accordance with guidelines for diabetics and persons at risk for diabetes and invite the congregation sample them after worship. Promote a contest among members to collect recipes with healthy substitutions for compiling a Healthy Cookbook

APRIL

- **World Health Day**
- **National Donate Life Month**
Engage your teens in a community service project like a demonstration to promote health and fitness with the "I Won't be Silent" campaign or feature a presentation about fitness by your Praise Dance team.

Ideas for Monthly Health Observances (*con't.*)

MAY

- **Breast Health Awareness**

2nd Sunday Mother's Day "Bells for Remembrance"

"Bells for Remembrance" is a public awareness campaign designed to highlight the importance of good breast health and assure that women are aware of resources within the community for screening, information, treatment and support. Health Ministries are asked to ring a hand-bell, organ or chime:

- Once in support of prevention through annual mammograms, clinical breast exams and month breast self-examination;
- Twice in support of those struggling with and surviving breast cancer; and
- Thrice in memory of those who have lost their lives to breast cancer and in support of their families and loved ones.

- **Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month**

Help your congregation understand how obesity impacts a child's lungs using information in the center of the guide.

JUNE

- **Cancer Awareness, National Cancer Survivor's Day**

Start a small group study utilizing the National Cancer Institutes "Body and Soul" curriculum. Free materials are available at www.bodyandsoul.nih.gov

Monday: National Cancer *Survivors Day*® is an annual, worldwide Celebration of Life that is held in hundreds of communities throughout the United States, Canada, and other countries. Participants unite in a symbolic *event* to show the world that life after a cancer diagnosis can be a reality. Recognize cancer *survivors* in your congregation and/or community.

Ideas for Monthly Health Observances (*con't.*)

JULY

- **Rethink Your Drink-** Utilize this national campaign from the Centers for Disease Control to promote healthy beverage consumption versus sugar loaded juices and sodas as one of the ways to maintain a healthy weight.

www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/drinks.html

Consider asking your local elected officials to make sure school playgrounds are safe and accessible for children to play during summer months.

Promote ways for families to stay active during hot summer months including making church facilities available for active family nights indoors and out!

AUGUST

- **Cataract Awareness Month**
Cataracts are the leading cause of blindness in the world. Poor vision restricts physical activity for many and contributes to less quality of life. Go to www.aaopt.org for more information.
- **Healthy Start for the School Year-** August means back to school.

SEPTEMBER

- **Prostate Cancer Awareness Month**
Encourage all men over 50 to take a prostate exam. Prostate cancer is a common and **very treatable when detected early!** Go to www.zerocancer.org for more information.

Ideas for Monthly Health Observances (*con't.*)

OCTOBER

- **National Church Safety and Security Month**
Congregations are asked to perform a "top down" safety and security inspection of all houses of worship and grounds including fire evacuation and tornado drills. With the blessing of your leader, involve others in contacting your insurance company, local fire department, and law enforcement agency about other tips on safety and security measures.
- **Mid-October 2010- 2nd Annual Healthy Congregations Conference - check the website for information - www.healthycongregations.info**

NOVEMBER

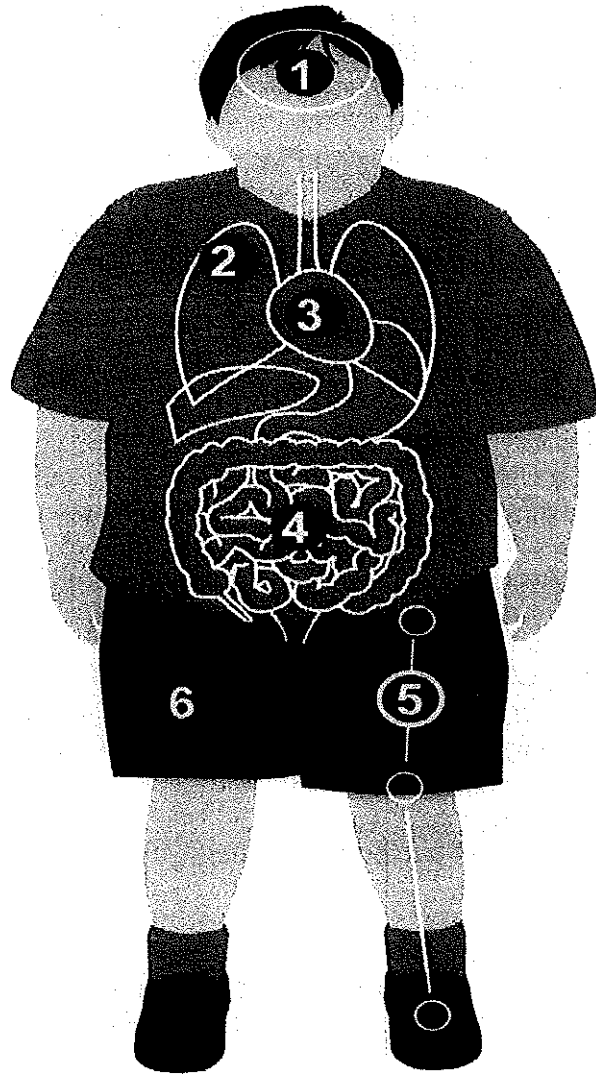
- **Diabetes Awareness Month** – American Heart Association provides a wealth of materials to educate your congregation about preventing and managing Diabetes- the number one health issue for many children and adults! Go to www.diabetes.org for a wealth of information and free materials.
- **Great American Smoke Out-** Health Ministries can promote tobacco cessation activities throughout the month in partnership with the Tobacco Free coalition in your area.

Consider asking your local elected officials to adopt a "no smoking policy" in public places where you live!

DECEMBER

World AIDS Day- Health Ministries are asked to promote wearing red ribbons and to provide information and a time for quiet reflection in recognition of all those stricken with HIV/AIDS around the world.

How Does Obesity Impact a Child's Body?
USA Today, July 22, 2009



1. MIND & WELL BEING

Poor self-esteem, Depression

2. LUNGS

Sleep Apnea, Asthma, Shortness of breath

3. HEART & BLOOD VESSELS

High LDL (bad cholesterol)

Low HDL (good cholesterol)

High Triglycerides (other blood fats)

High Blood Pressure

Abnormal blood clotting

Chronic inflammation & blood vessel damage

4. DIGESTIVE TRACT

Acid Reflux, Constipation, gallstones, fatty liver

5. BONES & JOINTS

Dislocated growth plate in hip socket, bowed knees, flat feet, pain in weight bearing joints like feet, knees, hip & lower back

6. OBESITY CONTRIBUTES SIGNIFICANTLY to many

CHRONIC DISEASES including diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension that impact children today.

Usher's Checklist

I. Guardians of Self

A. Personal Hygiene

1. An inoffensive body
2. A concern for dental hygiene
3. Personal grooming

B. Personal Attire

1. Uniform care and upkeep
2. Use and misuse of jewelry
3. Hands and nail care

II. Guardians of Worshippers

A. Personal Safety

1. Carpets, runners, throw rugs, obstacles
2. Fire extinguishers and safety equipment
3. Stairs, Aisles, Exits
4. First Aid Equipment

B. Personal Comfort

1. Seating
2. Restrooms and lounges
3. Room temperature

C. Personal Convenience

1. Concern for persons with disabilities
2. Nurseries
3. Aid to sick

III. Guardians of Worship Aids

A. Hymn book and Bible care

B. Bulletins, envelopes, fans, etc.

C. Worship services for children

1. Space
2. Equipment
3. Aids

IV Guardians of Week-Day Worship Activities

A. Choir Rehearsals

B. Church Ministry Meetings

C. Church Conferences

D. Special Activities

Eight Goals for Healthy Living -Set the Example!

Healthy living just doesn't happen. Healthy living is composed of deliberate lifestyle changes, transformation of attitudes about health and wellness, and measurable outcomes. We have included "Eight Goals for Healthy Living" as a model in promoting and supporting healthy living. We are all challenged to commit to the pledge after goal eight. Remember the key is to make "health a personal priority."

1. Get regular physical activity*

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans can be found at http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/pdf/fs_prof.pdf

'Be sure to check with your physician prior to starting an exercise program.

2. Achieve/Maintain a healthy weight*

- A body mass index (BMI) less than 25 is ideal. A BMI of 30 or above indicates obesity and high risk.
- A waist girth less than 35 inches for men and less than 33 inches for women is ideal.
- A waist girth of 39+ inches indicates high risk for men and 35+ inches is high risk for women.

'Be sure to check with your physician about the right BMI for you.

3. Eat more plant based foods

- Aim to add fruits and/or vegetables to every meal.
- Limit fatty meats and high cholesterol foods.
- Peas, beans, and soy foods are good sources of plant proteins.

4. Eat more whole-grain breads and cereals

- Aim for at least 3 servings of whole-grains/breads daily including brown rice and oatmeal.
- Limit highly refined cereals such as white bread, pastry, white rice, sugary cereals.

New Guidelines from the Food Pyramid can be found at <http://www.mypyramid.gov/downloads/MiniPoster.pdf>

Eight Goals for Healthy Living (continued)

5. Choose healthy fats

- Eat at least 1 serving of nuts daily (1 oz of nuts or 2 tablespoons of peanut or almond butter).
- Choose unhydrogenated vegetable oils in place of animal and solid fats such as hard stick margarine and shortening.
- Eat one serving of foods high in Omega 3 fatty acids daily such as flax meal or walnuts, or eat fish 1-2 times per week.

6. Get adequate rest daily

- People with the best health and longevity get at least 6.5 to 7 hours of sleep daily.
- Taking time for daily relaxation and recreation is also helpful to the body and mind.

7. Be free of tobacco and illicit drugs, limit alcohol if used at all

- 100,000 people die prematurely every year due to alcohol.
- Over 400,000 people die prematurely every year from smoking.
- Drug use can lead to dependencies that can destroy physical, mental, and spiritual health.

8. Get regular health checkups

- Include checks for body weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.
- Get preventive medical exams, for women 18+ PAP test, women 50+ colorectal exam and mammogram, for men 50+ colorectal exam, prostate exam, and optional PSA test.

Pledge: It is my desire to incorporate these *Eight Goals for Healthful Living* into my daily. I will take the time necessary to make health a personal priority in my life.

Prepared by Don Hall, Masters in Public Health Nutrition, Doctorate in Preventive Health Care, Registered Dietician, Certified Health Education Specialist, Consultant. ©2003, Wellsorce Inc. Permission given to reproduce for use in wellness programs.

About Healthy People 2010

Healthy People 2010 is the prevention agenda for the Nation. It is a statement of national health objectives designed to identify the most significant preventable threats to health and to establish national goals to reduce these threats. It can be used by many different entities to assist in developing programs and strategies to improve health.

The Leading Health Indicators will be used to measure the health of the Nation over the next 10 years. Each encompasses one or more objectives from **Healthy People 2010**. As a group, the Leading Health Indicators reflect the major health concerns in the US at the beginning of the 21st century and were selected on the basis of their importance as public health issues, the availability of data to measure progress and the potential for action and impact.

The 2010 Leading Health Indicators are-

- Physical Activity
- Overweight and Obesity
- Tobacco Use
- Substance Abuse
- Responsible Sexual Behavior
- Mental Health
- Injury and Violence
- Environmental Quality
- Immunization
- Access to Health Care

Healthy People 2020. Every 10 years, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) leverages scientific insights and lessons learned from the past decade, along with new knowledge of current data, trends, and innovations. Healthy People 2020 will reflect assessments of major risks to health and wellness, changing public health priorities, and emerging issues related to our nation's health preparedness and prevention.

[Healthy People 2010](http://www.healthypeople.gov), www.healthypeople.gov

Faith Community Nursing Ministry

We encourage each member congregation to consider formal training for Registered Nurses among their membership as well as lay health advocates through the Faith Community Nurse Training offered in northwest Mississippi.

Faith community nurses and committed lay health advocates who obtain the complete 32 hour training approved by the International Parish Resource Center will be equipped to *serve* as a standalone ministry or an integral part of the Health Ministry Team.

Faith Community Nursing is a unique, specialized practice that focuses on the promotion of health within the context of the values, beliefs, and practices of a faith community. Licensed Registered Nurses who practice in this role are required to work within the American Nurses Association "Scope and Standards of Parish Nursing Practice."

Congregations are encouraged to develop the role of Faith Community Nurse within the membership of their Health Ministry Team. Faith Community Nurses serves as volunteer or paid staff and several faith communities might share a Faith Community Nurse.

Healthy Congregations is partnering with The Office of Health Ministries of the Memphis Diocese, Union University, and Northwest Community College to sponsor non-denominational training for Faith Community Nursing through continuing education at NWCC in Senatobia. Information about these classes is available through the *Get A Life!* office at 662-449-5002.

Why a Health Ministry?

I weep for the hurt of my people; I stand amazed silent, dumb with grief. Is there no medicine in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why doesn't God do something? Why doesn't He help?-
Jeremiah 8.21-22 (Living Bible Translation)

Today many Americans die and are disabled from health conditions that are greatly impacted by lifestyle behaviors. **In fact, 54% of our health status is a result of lifestyle choices.**

These conditions might be prevented or better managed if we

- 1) knew the risks associated with many health problems,
- 2) believed that healthy activities could be beneficial,
- 3) had access to nutritious food choices and safe places for physical activity, and
- 3) could receive appropriate health care services and resources.

Lifestyle changes that can improve quality of life are::

- engaging in consistent moderate exercise;
- maintaining a healthy weight by consuming a diet high in fiber, fruits and vegetables and low in fat and cholesterol;
- cessation from smoking and other addictions;
- increasing social support; and actively managing stress.'

Several leading causes of death-**Heart Disease, Cancers, Strokes, Injuries, Chronic Lung Disease, Pneumonia, Influenza, Diabetes, Suicide, HIV/AIDS, Homicide, Liver Disease**-are considered "lifestyle" diseases because they could be reduced through common sense changes in lifestyle.

Oftentimes we speculate on the causes of these "lifestyle" diseases and disabilities from specific behaviors exhibited by the individual at risk. For example, the person who suffers a heart attack might consume a diet high in saturated fat, engage in little or no exercise and might smoke. Perhaps the person involved in a motor vehicle accident was speeding, consuming alcohol or not wearing a seatbelt. We discuss and share with one another our own need to "do better" or admit that we "need to make some changes." Sadly, the time for making needed changes in our own lives gets pushed on the back burner until a crisis hits.

Why A Health Ministry? (con't.)

And then there are those diseases that often go undetected until it is too late-sadness, loneliness, hopelessness, helplessness, lovelessness, insecurities, personal guilt and persecution, abandonment, discouragement, low self-esteem, stress, depression, and a broken heart...to name a few. These are symptoms of pending disability and serious health challenges if they continue to go undetected. There are risk factors that we often cannot readily observe. People often mask these emotions because they fear rejection if anyone really knew what they were going through-if anyone knew the "real deal". Our culture teaches us to be strong, just trust the Lord, and/or "pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps". We are taught to laugh on the outside and not to let anyone see us cry. Sometimes there is pain so deep that we cannot pull ourselves up or call out for help to anyone.

It is in the context of these often "undetected" conditions that the emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions of health must further emerge. It is in these three dimensions that the church must take the lead role. For many, health is narrowly defined and specifically targeted to one dimension-the physical. Health consists of five dimensions-physical, social, emotional, mental, and spiritual. An individual is considered healthy when all of these dimensions are working together in harmony. Because healing does not necessarily mean curing, as we tend to think, a congregational Health Ministry must involve emotional, mental and spiritual healing which can occur during illness even when curing of the disease is not present? Galatians 5:15 reminds us to "Love our neighbors, as ourselves". As Christians we are called to love as Jesus Christ has loved. We are called to service, as Jesus Christ served. We have the responsibility to minister to those in need. In the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:37-40), Jesus invites the righteous (the sheep) to receive their inheritance by entering the kingdom which has been prepared for them because of their faithful service and unselfish, compassionate giving. "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me". We should strive to be sheep.

Why A Health Ministry? (con't.)

Can the church make a difference in reducing disparities, disease, disability and death? The church today still represents the central point of reference for many communities. Careful planning and thought must be given to the focus for health promotion and disease prevention programs. "We are finding that all the 'expert and expensive health care solutions' still do not guarantee better health outcomes and quality of life. It may be that to mobilize, educate, and coordinate resources through congregations works better".³

The idea for churches to develop programs that have an impact upon the most significant health risks and crippling health conditions in congregations is not new. However, it is an increasingly important one as health care funding and services gradually shrink while disparities persist. Local churches can help address the less than healthy environments we live in and the importance of personal responsibility for practicing the most promising disease prevention measures available alongside the ongoing struggle to improve our health care system. The church can also bring a holistic perspective to an understanding of health...one of harmony with God, self, others, and the environment, a continuum of physical, social, psychological, and spiritual well-being.

Sidebar 1.2: A Basic Health Survey

Each congregation has different health needs and concerns. There is no "one size fits all" model. Therefore, it is incumbent upon congregations to conduct a health survey and to compile results that will help to establish an effective, efficient health and well/ness ministry to meet their needs.

Today, social service and social action are seen as integral and complementary forms of ministry. Church-related social services and institutions serve many needs. Church-related social action and policy formation cover a wide range of contemporary issues which include: urban life, poverty, housing, health care, family life, women's issues, child care, aging, hospice, racial and ethnic concerns, needs of handicapped persons, peace, and refugees and immigration.⁴

Why A Health Ministry? {con't.}

As both social services and social action ministries remain faithful to God's vision of shalom, they will respond to the changing needs and new possibilities among people and within society, working always toward liberation from life's bondage and reconciliation of the alienated.⁵ The development of health ministries within the congregation helps focus the members' awareness on the essential Christian ministry of health and healing.⁶

When health ministries are an essential part of congregational life, the members:

- A. Find opportunities to volunteer their help to those who are in the hospital, home bound or living in residential care centers;
- B. Have the opportunity to learn about wellness and disease prevention. Healthy lifestyle choices are promoted through seminar and workshops, giving information in such areas as exercise, nutrition and handling stress;
- C. Through health screening, make early detection and treatment possible⁷; and
- D. Build a greater capacity for *advocacy* to individuals and community.

A health ministry can promote healing and health as wholeness, as a mission of a faith community to its members and the community it serves. This takes a variety of people, paid and volunteer, laity and clergy, all committed to sharing the compassionate *love* and grace of Jesus Christ.

As we weep for the hurt and pain of each; as we stand in amazement, silent and dumb with grief; as we wonder if there is medicine in Gilead; as we wonder if there is a physician there; as we wonder if God is going to do something or if God will help...God will, for God is the ultimate Balm in Gilead. But, God also wants us to be a Balm, a healing *sa/ve*. Developing a health ministry does not require *vast* sums of money. It only requires us to become the body of Christ. We must have the compassion of Christ, the heart of Christ, the soul of Christ, and most importantly, the *love* of Christ.

Notes

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- ? .Ibid

Source:

Barbara T. Baylor, MPH, CHES
Minister for Health and Wellness Programs
Economic Justice Team
Justice and Witness Ministries
216-736-3708

Words of Inspiration

"The first WEALTH is HEALTH."

....Ralph Waldo Emerson

Obesity is inflicting our children with chronic diseases just like it does adults. They may be the first generation in our history to die younger than their parents. Rural populations including African Americans are disproportionately affected, and we owe it to ourselves to do everything within our power to pursue good health. Whether you help plant a garden, start a walking group, ask your Mayor for sidewalks or limit your child's time sitting in front of the TV, YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

We invite you and your faith community to join hundreds of other Mississippi congregations working together to build healthier communities where everyone has access to more nutritious foods and safe places for physical activities!

Get A Life! - An Initiative of the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi to prevent childhood obesity.



Stacye Rawlings, Regional Health Coordinator
assistant@cfnm.org

Peggy Linton, Community Development Director; Healthy Kids
Healthy Communities Project Director
plinton@cfnm.org



Healthy Congregations

**Join the coalition and receive free information,
resources, and networking opportunities!**

Visit us at

www.healthycongregations.info

For more information on other efforts to
CREATE HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES:

www.cfnm.org

May God enrich you in ministry in
your congregation and community.



**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**
of Northwest Mississippi

Quick List of Monthly Health Observances

<p style="text-align: center;">JANUARY</p> <p>National Volunteer Blood Month</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">FEBRUARY</p> <p>American Heart Month AHA Choose to Move Campaign</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MARCH</p> <p>Taste Test Sunday- Healthy Recipes National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">APRIL</p> <p>National Donate Life Month World Health Day</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MAY</p> <p>Breast Cancer Awareness Month Mother's Day Bells of Remembrance</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">JUNE</p> <p>Cancer Awareness Month National Cancer Survivor's Day</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">JULY</p> <p>Rethink Your Drink- CDC Beverage Campaign Eye Injury Prevention & Fire Works Safety Month</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">AUGUST</p> <p>World Alzheimer's Day Cataract Awareness Month</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SEPTEMBER</p> <p>Prostate Cancer Awareness Month</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">OCTOBER</p> <p>National Church Safety & Security Month 2nd Annual Healthy Congregations Conference</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">NOVEMBER</p> <p>Diabetes Awareness Month Great American Smoke Out</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">DECEMBER</p> <p>World AIDS Day</p>

Resources and Information:

www.healthycongregations.info