



Community-Based Participatory Intervention to Reduce HIV/AIDS Risk among Rural African American Youth in North Carolina

Project Description

- Project GRACE (Growing, Reaching, Advocating for Change & Empowerment), funded by the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities and the University of North Carolina Center for AIDS Research, is an academic-community partnership aimed at eliminating health disparities in African American communities through community-based participatory research (CBPR) in Edgecombe and Nash Counties, North Carolina.
- Project collaborators include: Better Days Ahead, Carolina Family Centers, Community Enrichment Organization (CEO), Dynasty Health Solutions, Edgecombe County Health Department, Nash County Health Department, NEW Sources, Inc., Project Momentum, Inc., St. Paul Baptist Church, SOZO Ministries, The Wright's Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and VISIONS, Inc.

Background: HIV/AIDS rates continue to rise among African Americans in Edgecombe and Nash counties

- Among the 100 counties in North Carolina, Edgecombe ranked 3rd and Nash ranked 16th according to their rate of new HIV cases. Edgecombe ranked 4th and Nash ranked 13th according to their rate of new AIDS cases.
- In Nash County, 82% of people with HIV/AIDS in 2006 were African American, although only 34% of the county's population was African American.
- In Edgecombe County, 86% of HIV/AIDS cases in 2006 were African American, although only 58% of the county's population was African American.

HIV/AIDS Prevention Intervention: T.O.R.O. (Teach One Reach One)

- T.O.R.O. is a community-based lay health advisor intervention conducted with youth ages 10-14 and their caregivers. Lay health advisors are members of the community that people naturally turn to when they need help. The evidence-based curriculum focuses on how to prevent HIV/AIDS through behavioral factors, as well as the social and physical environment.
- Youth and their caregivers (typically parents or grandparents) attend Saturday lay health advisor training sessions. Youth learn how to prevent HIV/AIDS and ways to effectively communicate this with their peers. Caregivers learn ways to effectively communicate with youth about how to prevent HIV/AIDS.
- Since May 2009, over 200 youth and their caregivers have actively participated in the T.O.R.O. intervention. Over 750 youth and their caregivers will have completed the program by 2013.

Policy Implications

- **Support health reform.** A key factor in supporting HIV/AIDS prevention efforts is reforming the health care system so that rural African Americans will have access to affordable health care.
- **Support efforts to increase HIV/AIDS prevention funding.** HIV/AIDS prevention has traditionally been underfunded, especially among rural communities. Legislation, such as H.R. 1964, addresses HIV/AIDS prevention using community-based approaches.

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