

Dr. Bill Releford Launches Black Barbershop Health Outreach Program in Los Angeles



“The need to address health care disparities in African American men is paramount in light of the fact that they have the lowest life expectancy of any group in the U.S.,” says Dr. Bill J. Releford, D.P.M. “For decades, the black barbershop has served as a centralized gathering place where African American men feel comfortable discussing the most important issues that impact their lives: politics, social trends, family and finances. Now, we are introducing an important discussion of health and the critical need for health awareness.”

The Los Angeles Initiative will include more than 100 barbershops and will aim to screen more than 2500 men between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Ultimately, the Black Barbershop Health Outreach Program goal is to screen more than 500,000 African American men by 2012. This unique and innovative grassroots program works with black-owned barbershops, which represent a cultural institution of familiarity and trust in many communities as an effective avenue to disseminate health education information.

The program has already tested close to 10,000 African American men in 23 cities including New Orleans, Chicago, Atlanta and Harlem. The impact of the program has been deeply evidenced. In St. Louis for instance, of some 550 men screened, seven had to be taken directly from the barbershop to the emergency room

Compared to the general public, African American males have a higher risk of diabetes and other cardiovascular conditions, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. The American Diabetes Association estimates that 3.7 million (14.7 percent) African Americans, ages 20 years or older, have diabetes, while statistics show that forty percent (40 percent) of African American men die prematurely from cardiovascular disease as compared to twenty-one percent (21 percent) of white men.

The Black Barbershop Health Outreach Program, in partnership with Charles Drew University, U.C.L.A., Vasamed and Entrahealthsystems, will offer free diabetes, high blood pressure as well as PAD (Peripheral Artery Disease) screenings at the following locations in Los Angeles:

- The New Millennium BS ,4310 Crenshaw Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 9004
- In The Cut, 220 East Regent St., Inglewood, CA 90301
- The New Millennium BS, 1207 N. La Brea Ave., Inglewood, CA, 90302
- Legends Barbershop, 5366 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036
- Inglewood's Finest, 122 S. Market St., Inglewood, CA 90301

The Black Barbershop Health Outreach Program, founded by Dr. Bill J. Releford, D.P.M. seeks to empower African American men to better understand cardiovascular diseases through education, testing and prevention. The Black Barbershop Health Outreach Program has effectively addressed the health concerns of African American men in nearly 200 black owned barbershops since December 2007. For additional information and to view a list of all participating barbershop locations, go to <http://www.BlackBarberhop.org>.

About Dr. Bill Releford

Dr. Bill Releford began private practice in 1990 and started

the Diabetic Foot Institute, a facility dedicated exclusively to the reduction of diabetes-related amputations in high-risk populations. Most patients were oblivious to the standard of care that should be expected during the occurrence of a diabetic foot complication or the unfortunate recommendation for lower-extremity amputation. Dr. Releford's personal and professional mission is to create innovative ways to decrease diabetes-related amputations. "Five Colors To Better Health" is his new book dedicated to a clear understanding of how eating a variety of colors can reduce your risk of diabetes and high blood pressure as well as other chronic diseases. Visit with him at <http://www.5ColorsADay.com>.

About the Diabetic Amputation Prevention (DAP) Foundation

The DAP Foundation's mission is to help decrease the diabetes-related amputation rate among high risk populations around the world and address the escalating number of individuals with undetected cardiovascular disease. The DAP Foundation's African American Men's Outreach Program seeks to partner with community groups and organizations to reduce the incidence of health conditions that adversely affect African American males by utilizing education, prevention and early detection through screening activities. DAP's efforts have already been successfully duplicated in other metropolitan areas, such as Oakland, Chicago, Harlem, St. Louis, Kansas City, Atlanta and New Orleans. For more information on participating or sponsorship opportunities, please visit <http://www.BlackBarbershop.org>.