

A healthy community is everyone's business

you can help...

"CHANGING HEARTS" CHANGE LIVES

Project Update

August 2009

Thank you for your ongoing support of "Changing Hearts," a Rockford Health Council program designed to address disparities in clinical cardiovascular outcomes of Rockford's underserved populations. Using faith-based organizations as screening sites, our goal is to reduce hypertension in 80 percent of participants and reach blood pressure goals in 40 percent of those found to be hypertensive. At our one-year anniversary, we have exceeded our expectations.



Southwest Rockford's Liberty Baptist Church has been on board for more than a year. A wonderful partner, they continue to enroll first-time congregation members and have screened some members as many as 10 times over the course of the last year. In the Hispanic community, we are currently reviewing possibilities to replace First Hispanic Church of God, which opted out due to scheduling difficulties.

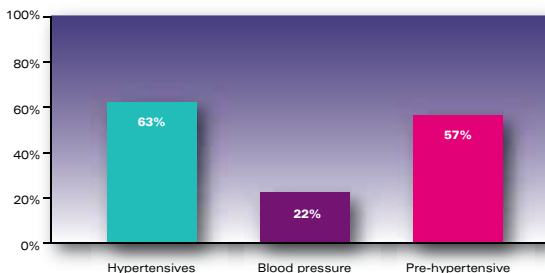
We are focusing on hypertension as a clinical component because it is simple to measure, is prevalent in the target populations and offers the best potential impact of a successful campaign to reduce

blood pressure. Recent data suggests that each incremental rise of 20/10 mmHg doubles the risk of cardiovascular disease across the entire range of BP, beginning at pressures as low as 115/75.

Changing Hearts has enrolled and followed a total of 227 participants, all but 29 of whom were prehypertensive or hypertensive. At Liberty Baptist, 140 of the 144 enrollees were hypertensive (81) or prehypertensive (59) upon enrollment. We provide screening, education and access to conventional medical care, and attempt to engage the population in lifestyle modification through the program and its community partners. As of May 2009, 63 percent of those with hypertension had reduced their blood pressure based on their last reading and control had improved from zero to 22 percent. We are making progress!

Rockford Health Council and our partners, engaging with faith-based organizations, earning their trust and acceptance into their Sunday institution, is perhaps even more important than the clinical program. While the value of this partnership is not easily measured, we believe the impact is immense. We are now reaching otherwise overlooked populations.

Saint Anthony College of Nursing and the University of Illinois undergraduate and residency programs joined us this summer. Through the "lessons learned" from our symbiotic relationship with Liberty Baptist, we seek to nurture and sustain our present partnerships, and by slowly expanding to other faith-based organizations, create and develop strong new ones.



- 63% of hypertensives improved their blood pressure
- 22% of hypertensives brought their blood pressure under control
- 57% of pre-hypertensives improved their blood pressure

J. Maichle Bacon, Chair
Rockford Health Council Strategic Planning Committee

Steve Lidvall, MD, Chair
"Changing Hearts" Steering Committee

Rebecca Cook Kendall, Executive Director
Rockford Health Council