



Health Screening at Scotland Community, Potomac, MD

**AAHP MONTHLY REPORT
March 2025**



I. Executive Summary

1. A. Maternal and Child Health - SMILE (Start More Infants Living Equally Healthy) Program

1. Enrollment & Referral Process Improvements

- The SMILE team enrolled 25 new clients in March, nearly tripling February's numbers.
- A new standardized enrollment process was introduced, involving:
 - A revised phone script for intake nurses, including client demographics, consent, and intake questions.
 - A new verbal case assignment protocol for nurse case managers to schedule home visits within 24 hours.
 - A new referral tracking spreadsheet will launch on April 1, improving tracking of referral sources, client outcomes, and medical and social risk factors.

2. Workflow Structure & Caseload Management

- A balance between structured processes and flexibility was emphasized.
- Caseload thresholds were established: 30 clients for nurses and 15 for supervisory leadership roles.
- Nurses with few clients will receive referrals first to maintain workload balance.

3. Strategic Partnerships & Outreach

- A new partnership with Shady Grove Hospital will offer on-site childbirth education classes.
- Planning is underway for participation in the Seneca Valley High School Health Fair, which will feature topics tailored for a teen audience (e.g., healthy relationships and consent).
- Breastfeeding education sessions were expanded, with educational handouts and over 80 registrants anticipated.

4. Community Engagement & Communication

- The first SMILE newsletter was released; social media engagement efforts are being restructured.
- Instagram content creation and management were delegated, with plans to enhance outreach and visibility.
- The "SMILE Bucks" incentive program is being developed to reward client participation in events and visits.

5. Mental Health & Complex Case Management

- Several clients requiring mental health and social support were reviewed, including cases involving alcohol use and domestic abuse.
- Follow-ups were assigned to ensure safety, continued engagement, and appropriate referrals.

7. Documentation & Policy Feedback

- Discussions on the challenges of documenting "couplet visits" (mother and baby seen together) raised concerns that the additional effort is not reflected in program performance metrics.
- Practices for maternal versus infant chart documentation were clarified to improve continuity of care.

8. Comprehensive Audit of All SMILE Case Records Between 2016-2024

- Audited all case records for completeness, accuracy, and elimination of duplicate records, ensuring consistency between paper and digital data.
- Collaborated with student interns and Clarion Technology to create clean Excel and CSV files essential for matching Maryland State Vital Records from 2018 to 2022.
- On March 20, 2024, a file was submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services, Chief of Epidemiology, for use in a retrospective study of the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on maternal and infant health.
- Worked closely with the AAHP Contract Manager, the Executive Committee, and SMILE staff to provide data, edits, and comments for a report prepared by the Montgomery County government's Office of Legislative Oversight.

B. Chronic Disease Prevention & Management (CDMP)

1. In March, Community health workers conducted 499 biometric screening tests and distributed 740 health education information packets.
2. Blood pressure screenings were conducted for 199 Black residents, with 61% of participants found to be hypertensive.
3. One-quarter of all participants recorded elevated blood pressures (130-139).
4. Two participants had crisis-level blood pressures (above 180 over 120) and were referred to emergency services.
5. The CDMP team conducted 231 blood glucose screenings during the month, with elevated levels detected in 10% of cases.
6. Additionally, 139 cholesterol screenings were performed, identifying elevated levels in 9% of participants.
7. No HbA1C tests were conducted in March due to concerns about the accuracy of test controls.
8. Screening efforts also included 59 HIV screenings, all of which were negative; 49 hepatitis C screenings with two positives; and 58 syphilis screenings, with nine positives referred to the Dennis Avenue STD clinic.
9. The team continued to expand outreach through nutrition, weight management, and diabetes prevention programs.
10. The AAHP Social Worker conducted 74 mental health screenings in March, providing all participants with resources for mental health services.
11. Most mental health screenings were for well-being and generalized anxiety.
12. The Wednesday Take Control of Your Health classes included 126 participants, with an average class size of 32, well above the national average for similar programs of five participants.
13. Strong participation continued in all AAHP physical fitness classes, including yoga and Zumba. Low-impact exercise classes also recorded increased participation levels.
14. The Thursday Take Control of Your Health Program classes included 119 participants, with an average class size of 30.

C. Key Challenges & Mitigation Strategies

1. Navigating competing priorities while maintaining high-quality service delivery.

2. As the weather temperature rises, AAHP receives more requests to participate in health screenings and community events that exceed staff capacity.
3. Managing workload efficiently during the transition of onboarding two new nurse case managers and close coordination with a new Nursing Supervisor.
4. Challenges and solutions:
 - **Increase Prenatal Enrollments & Reduce Loss to Follow-Up**
 - Challenge: Respond more rapidly to unanticipated client referral and follow-up surges.
 - Solution: Launch a new outreach campaign targeting OB/GYN providers to enhance engagement. AAHP case management staff will recontact all women they attempted to contact over the past 120 days to identify and provide feedback to the original referral sources.
 - **Community Awareness & Participation Gaps**
 - Challenge: There is a need for increased community presence at in-person events.
 - Solution: Expand social media engagement, strengthen partnerships, enhance Community Health Worker outreach, and implement an effective public relations program. AAHP has also begun a new partnership with Montgomery Cable to assist with community outreach and engagement using digital media to reach more young people who understand the importance of reducing health risks at an earlier age to improve the quality of health.
 - **Financial & Staffing Adjustments**
 - Challenge: Continuing to advertise for a certified substance abuse coordinator position. Past efforts have been unsuccessful. On an interim basis, community health workers, along with the AAHP's social worker and mental health specialists, continued to provide substance abuse education, counseling, and referral services as we continue to recruit for this vacancy.
 - In March, AAHP submitted a budget amendment for review and consideration to better align with actual spending requirements in the first three quarters of the 2025 budget.

F. Looking Ahead (April 2025 Priorities)

1. Eliminate the backlog of potential SMILE enrollees who were unreachable immediately after their initial referral in February and March.
2. Increase the caseload of the new chronic disease nurse who joined AAHP in February.
3. Develop and implement a pilot plan to replace paper data collection at health screening events and install an all-computerized data collection system and workflow.
4. Create more data analysis reports that offer insights to continuously improve the delivery of prevention services and health outcomes.
5. Expand the "In It to Win It" Men's Health initiative, emphasizing outreach to engage more young men between 18 and 42 in prevention education and intervention services.
6. Attract and recruit more pregnant Black women with private insurance for enrollment in the SMILE program through targeted engagement with OB/GYN partnerships.

7. Increase oral health awareness and enhance community education about its importance to well-being.
8. Increase enrollment of County residents in nutrition and weight management programs to prevent chronic diseases, including heart disease and diabetes.

II. Program Activities

A. SMILE (Start More Infants Living Equally Healthy) Program

Throughout March, the SMILE team focused on enhancing program efficiency, increasing client engagement, and preparing for upcoming outreach events. The team celebrated a significant achievement—client enrollments nearly tripled from February, with at least 25 clients enrolled. A new referral and enrollment process was introduced to standardize intake procedures, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and improve performance tracking. Home visit targets were prioritized, partnerships expanded, and planning for youth-centered outreach events advanced.

A significant accomplishment was the successful completion of the SMILE Data Project. This initiative culminated in submitting a comprehensive dataset to Montgomery County Health and Human Services (DHHS). The data analysis will examine perinatal outcomes among women enrolled in SMILE and inform future strategies to enhance maternal and infant health in the County.

Team morale and collaboration were notably enhanced. The nursing supervisor fostered camaraderie and active engagement among the nurses, which translated to increased participation in community events and stakeholder outreach. The nurses attended two key maternal health equity events: the Perinatal Health Equity Session at Holy Cross Hospital and the Maternal Health Equity Session at Montgomery General Hospital. These engagements reflect SMILE's growing presence and credibility in the maternal health landscape in Montgomery County.

This month, efforts focused on raising enrollment resulted in a threefold increase over the previous month. A total of 35 new clients were enrolled in March, surpassing the newly established benchmark of 10 monthly enrollments and representing the highest enrollment figure for Fiscal Year 2025. This surge is attributed to improved internal processes, streamlined outreach strategies, and heightened staff engagement. Furthermore, processes and metrics for enrollment were formalized, laying the foundation for sustained growth in the future.

Strategic relationship-building was a primary focus this month. The team established and nurtured key partnerships with Montgomery General Hospital's obstetrics leadership team, including the vice president of Medical Affairs and chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Additionally, a referral pipeline was secured through ongoing collaboration with the Shady Grove Maternal Care Center manager, which increased visibility and awareness of the SMILE Program among clinical partners and enhanced community trust. Nurses were actively involved in planning for April's community engagement events, further demonstrating a deepening sense of ownership and initiative.

within the team. The dashboard below provides a more detailed analysis of quarterly trends in program performance.

1. Caseload and Enrollment

The caseload in March surpassed February's total by 14%, reaching 121 clients, which included 26 prenatal cases, 95 postpartum mothers, and 97 infants. This increase was primarily driven by a record number of enrollments (35) and deliveries (16). This month's 16 deliveries included seven preterm births. Currently, three babies are in the NICU.

PROFILES AND SERVICES	*Monthly Average Calendar Year 2022	Jan-25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Comments for March 2025
<i>A) Currently Active Moms</i>	112	118	106	121	
Prenatal (still pregnant)	32	28	22	26	
Postpartum (Moms who have delivered)	80	94	84	95	
<i>B) All infants</i>	83	96	85	97	
Single births	75	92	83	93	
Multiples	8	4	2	4	
Case Load(A+B)	195	218	191	218	
MOM's ORIGIN					
Black American	43	41	36	41	
African	64	65	56	64	
Caribbean	5	16	14	16	
PRENATAL REFERRALS					
DHHS Prenatal Referrals Received	4	4	19	14	
Referrals Received from Other Sources	9	2	3	11	
Total Prenatal Referrals	13	6	22	25	
NEW ENROLLMENTS					
Prenatal Moms Newly Enrolled During the Month	8	4	6	15	
Postpartum Moms Newly Enrolled	1	0	0	6	
Infants Newly Enrolled During the Month	9	12	5	14	
All New Enrollments for The Month	18	16	11	35	

DISCHARGES During the Month					
Prenatal Discharges	1	3	1	1	Lost to F/U
Infant Discharges	8	9	14	8	
All Discharges for The Month	9	12	15	9	
DELIVERIES During the Month					
Term Deliveries	8	7	4	9	
Preterm Deliveries	1	1	1	7	
Total Deliveries	9	8	5	16	
Babies in NICU	1	1	2	3	
BIRTH OUTCOMES					
Number of Low Birth Weight (LBW)	1	1	1	5	
Number of Very Low Birth Weight (VLBW)	0	0	0	0	
% Healthy Birth Weight (Out of Total Deliveries)	89%	88%	80%	69%	
Infant Deaths (including Stillbirths)	0	0	0	0	
Unfavorable Birth Outcomes (Congenital Anomaly, Fetal Demise, Miscarriage)	0	0	0	0	
SERVICES					
Total Home Visits	1	44	31	64	
Telephonic Consultations	224	222	201	280	
Community Referrals Made	28	47	30	79	
Classes/Presentations Completed	15	20	17	26	
PERCENT BREASTFEEDING MOMS					
Up to 3 months	88%	89%	94%	96%	
Up to 6 months	84%	86%	93%	91%	
Up to 12 months	71%	81%	82%	84%	
INSURANCE					
Clients with Private Insurance**	30	26	22	24	
Clients with Medicaid Insurance**	77	91	84	97	
COLOR LEGEND					
<i>Above reference year</i>					
<i>Level with reference year</i>					
<i>Below reference year</i>					

<i>Untoward Outcome</i>		
<i>Desired Outcome</i>		

2. Risk Stratification & Management

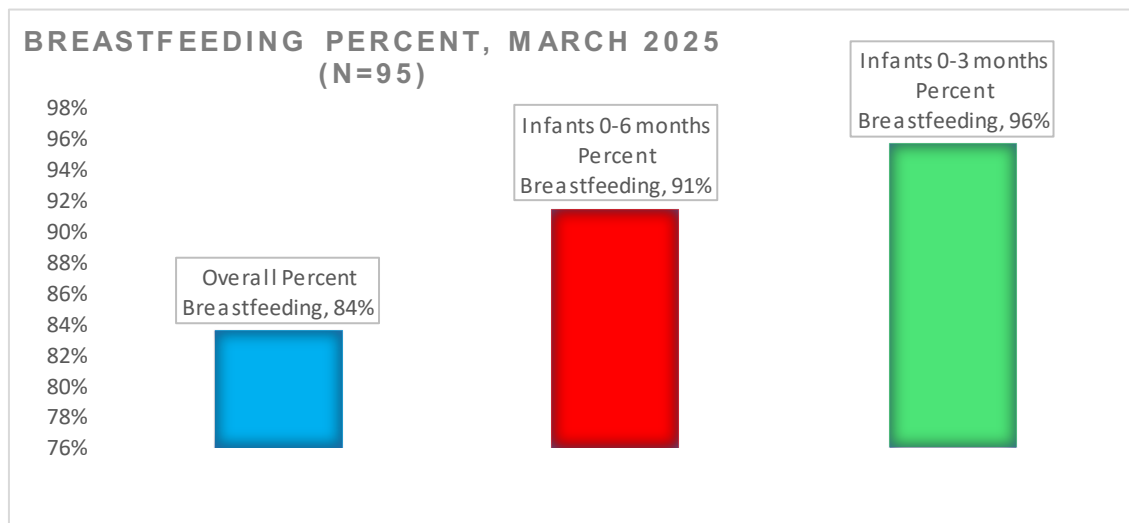
One hundred and five (105) high-risk cases were managed, including 53 with social risks and 52 with medical risks. Specific medical cases were addressed for conditions such as gestational diabetes, chronic hypertension, advanced maternal age, obesity, hypothyroidism, fibroids, preeclampsia, preterm delivery, and premature rupture of membranes. Social risks included financial instability, housing instability, transportation barriers, mental health issues, and past trauma history.

3. Breastfeeding Success

The breastfeeding rates remained high in March, as follows:

- 96% of mothers breastfed their newborns up to three months.
- 91% continued breastfeeding up to six months.
- 84% of mothers breastfed up to 12 months.

These figures far exceed national benchmarks, especially the six-month exclusive breastfeeding rate of 93%, compared to only 27.8% for African American women nationally.



4. Cultural Representation:

The program continues to provide services to a diverse group of mothers, with 53% African, 34% Black American, and 13% Caribbean participants.

5. Care Coordination and Process Improvement:

a. Mommy Chat:

This month's Mommy Chat topic was nutrition. An AAHP nutritionist presented at a session on "Nutrition during Pregnancy, Breastfeeding, and Postpartum."

Emphasis was placed on healthy eating, portion sizes, and nutrition based on the stages of pregnancy. The nutritionist highlighted that eating for two does not mean doubling portions and discouraged weight loss during breastfeeding. She also stressed the importance of caloric intake and portion sizes. Eight mothers attended the session.

b. Case Conferences

In March, the conferences included updates on multiple clients managed by team members, addressing various medical and social challenges. Action items were assigned to team members, including follow-ups on referral processes, community outreach, and client support initiatives. Process improvement and training related to the documentation and reporting of call attempts and home visits were addressed throughout the month.

c. Community Engagement

Periodically, the nurses experience a breakdown in engagement due to losing contact with clients or unexplained cancellations of home visits. Nurses conducted 64 home visits and 280 telephonic consultations, highlighting the program's commitment to personalized care and accessibility.

d. Resource Connection

The Program maintains strong engagement with community stakeholders through its active participation in the monthly Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FMIR) and Community Action Team (CAT) meetings. At these meetings, it consistently contributes valuable insights that inform and enhance case management practices throughout Montgomery County.

6. Future Considerations

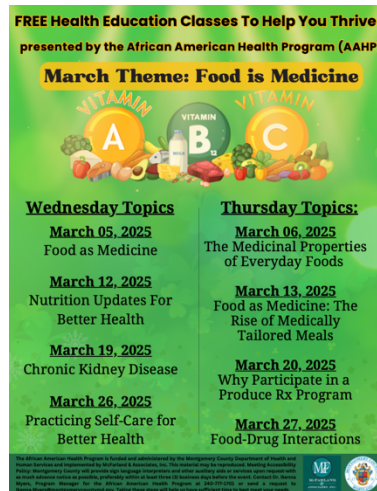
- **Graduation:** SMILE nurses will host a graduation party celebrating the January-April graduates.
- **Right From the Start Event:** The nurse will present on the benefits of breastfeeding during a breakout session.
- **Seneca Valley High School Fair:** The nurses will highlight teen-related topics such as healthy boundaries involving relationships/consent, contraception, female hygiene, and community resources.
- **Outreach and Recruitment:** Continued community engagement and recruitment efforts will be crucial to meeting demand and ensuring the program can continue supporting at-risk populations.
- **Follow-up on Long-Term Outcomes:** Monitoring long-term health outcomes for both mothers and infants could provide more insights into the Program's lasting impact and areas for improvement.

B. Chronic Disease Management and Prevention (CDMP) Program

1. CDMP Classes

The Chronic Disease Management Program (CDMP) theme in March was "Food is Medicine." The topics discussed in Wednesday's and Thursday's Take Control of Your

Health classes included “Your Food as Medicine,” “Nutrition Updates for Better Health,” “chronic kidney disease,” “Practicing Self-Care for Better Health,” “The Medicinal Properties of Everyday Foods,” “Food as Medicine: The Rise of Medically Tailored Meals,” “Why Participate in a Produce Rx Program,” “Food-Drug Interactions.” Below is the calendar summarizing the classes conducted.



Beginning in the new calendar year, the AAHP team has consistently met internal deadlines for publishing the themes for upcoming classes at least 15 days before the upcoming month. The table below shows class themes planned for April and May of the current year.

Month - Theme	Topic Recommendations
April - Equitable Health for All	Women’s Eye Health and Safety Month Foot Health Awareness National Public Health Week - (April 7 – 13)
May - Healthy Movement: No Bones About It	Osteoporosis Awareness & Prevention Month National Mental Health Month National Physical Fitness and Sports Month National Arthritis Awareness Month National Stroke Awareness Month Lupus Awareness Month World Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis Day

AAHP’s CDMP team is also actively planning key presentations each month, which include:

April	Podiatrist Presentation Eye Health Presentation Cancer Presentation Kidney Presentation
May	Psychiatrist Presentation Bone Health Presentation

The theme for March’s Health and Nutrition classes on Mondays and Thursdays was “Food is Medicine.” Classes emphasized healthy eating principles without counting calories. The class project included an assignment to assemble a class recipe book with photos of their signature dishes and calculations of their budgets for each food group. Once this project is complete in April, it will be printed for participant use. The Nutrition Series of classes maintained above-average attendance, with participants sharing invitations with their networks and using Constant Contact to reach other participants.

Session titles for March included:

- Protein: The Body’s Natural Defense System
- Protein for Optimal Health: How Much Do We Need?
- Protein and Plant-Based Protein: Can It Fuel and Heal the Body?
- Healthy Fats: Friend or Foe in Disease Prevention?
- Cooking Oils for Health: Choosing the Best for Your Body

a. Attendance Data Review

Attendance increased by five participants in the Take Control of Your Health Wednesday class, bringing the total for March to one hundred twenty-six participants. The highest attendance occurred at the March 5 class on “Food as Medicine.” The lowest attendance occurred during the March 12 class about “Nutrition Updates for Better Health.” The monthly attendance average increased by five participants, with an average of thirty-two participants.

In the Take Control of Your Health Thursday class, attendance decreased by eight participants, totaling one hundred and nineteen participants. The highest attendance occurred during the March 6 class discussing “The Medicinal Properties of Everyday Foods.” The lowest attendance occurred during the March 13 class discussing “Food as Medicine: The Rise of Medically Tailored Meals.” The monthly attendance average decreased by eight participants, with an average of thirty participants. The table below shows the number of participants for each class conducted.

Health and Nutrition Series						
	3/3/2025	3/10/2025	3/17/2025	3/24/2025	3/31/2025	Total
Men	1	5	5	2	3	16
Women	32	38	38	37	36	181
Total	33	43	43	39	39	197
National Average 4 to 6 (for classes that meet weekly)						
Plant Based	3/6/2025	3/13/2025	3/20/2025	3/27/2025		Total
Men	2	2	1	1		6
Women	18	31	20	18		87
Total	20	33	21	19		93

Average 23

Includes 16 individuals in person at Leisure World

Take Control of Your Health Series

TCYH 1	3/5/2025	3/12/2025	3/19/2025	3/26/2025		Total
Men	3	3	5	3		14
Women	39	20	26	27		112
Total	42	23	31	30		126

Average 32

TCYH 2	3/6/2025	3/13/2025	3/20/2025	3/27/2025		Total
Men	3	3	3	2		11
Women	30	23	28	27		108
Total	33	26	31	29		119

Average 30

Health and Fitness Series

Tai Chi	3/1/2025	3/8/2025	3/22/2025			Total
Men	0	0	1			1
Women	9	13	11			33
Total	9	13	12			34

Average 11

Yoga	3/5/2025	3/12/2025	3/19/2025	3/26/2025		Total
Men	0	0	0	1		1
Women	11	18	18	9		56
Total	11	18	18	10		57

Average 14

Zumba	3/7/2025	3/14/2025	3/21/2025	3/28/2025		Total
Men	0	1	0	0		1
Women	18	15	18	15		66
Total	18	16	18	15		67

Average 17

Low Impact	3/6/2025	3/13/2025	3/20/2025	3/27/2025		Total
Men	1	0	2	0		3
Women	11	9	14	11		45
Total	12	9	16	11		48

Average 12

National Average 4 to 6 (for classes that meet weekly)

2. Nutritional Support Services

AAHP's nutritionist led various impactful activities throughout the month, beginning with a Mommy Chat session entitled "Pregnancy Weight Gain: During and After," designed to educate expectant and new mothers on healthy weight management. In addition, she conducted Module 25 of the DPP (Diabetes Prevention Program), entitled "More About Carbs," and offered insights into making healthier carbohydrate choices.

In March, AAHP's nutritionist served as the AAHP speaker liaison, playing a critical role in planning and organizing the Nutrition Mondays Class series. Her responsibilities included preparing detailed summaries of post-assessment data from each session, helping the team evaluate outcomes, and refining future programming. She also created personalized educational materials that addressed individual clients' specific needs and challenges.

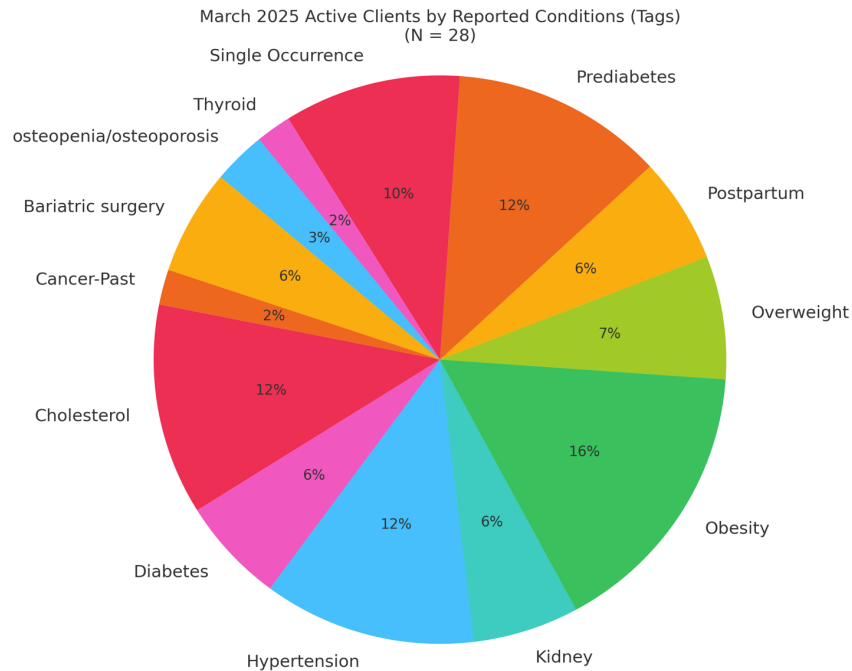
AAHP's nutritionist continued to offer Vioscreen Clinical, a scientifically validated dietary assessment tool, enabling a more comprehensive evaluation of clients' eating patterns. This resource, found at viocare.com, facilitated tailored nutrition interventions and provided a solid foundation for ongoing counseling and support.

In March, SMILE nurses and community health workers continued sending referrals, and AAHP's nutritionist provided direct nutritional consultations and documented each client encounter in both Healthie and NextGen.

A summary of the Healthie client communications regarding nutrition included 58 messages, 317 journal entries, and 53 food entries. The chart below lists the primary reasons for referral and the number of clients requesting nutritional services during the past six months.

Cumulative Client Visits by Primary Nutrition Intervention Topic (October 2024 - March 2025)

Primary Referral Reason	Number of Clients
Postpartum	9
Pregnant	12
Weight Reduction	10
Diabetes/Prediabetes	17
Infant	1
Other	8



Note: Clients self-report conditions and often have multiple nutrition-related tags. The “Single Occurrence” category contains conditions with only one instance. The “Single Occurrence” tags include gout, anticoagulation issue/drug, food allergy, GI disorder, underweight, GLP-1, anemia, and vitamin deficiency.

3. Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)

In March, the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) held two post-core sessions. Attendance for the two post-core sessions is presented in the table below. All individuals who missed a session attended make-up sessions and notified Lifestyle Health Coaches beforehand. All attendance and biometric data were collected during each session and logged into the respective attendance trackers. During the sessions, participants were invited into a private breakout room to report on their physical activity minutes, weight, and any further information they wanted to share. For those who missed the live session, they provided their biometric data ahead of the session to the team. Below is the attendance chart for the two sessions held this month.

Diabetes Prevention Program		
	March 4	March 18
Women	8	9
Total	17	
Average	9	
Cohort Size	14	
Number of Dropouts	4	

4. Weight Management Program (WMP)

In March, the Weight Management Program held in-person and online exercise and informational activities. On Monday, March 3, the WMP hosted the monthly motivation meeting on Zoom from 8:00-8:30 am. The conversation involved a quote to reflect on, a detailed review of the third and fourth chapters of the book “The Journey: Principles of Total Life Transformation,” focusing on the chapter titled “Obstacles of the Mind and Body,” which emphasizes the significant role of mindset in overcoming personal challenges related to weight management by Dr. Joseph Williams. Following the chapter review, the group discussed how to overcome challenges by using support from others and practicing positive affirmations. Participants shared personal reflections and action items, leaving eager for the next meeting.

Saturday, March 1 9:30-10:30 am	Valley Mill Special Park 1620 E Randolph Rd, Colesville, MD 20904	Outdoor walk on paved trail 3.5 miles	11 walkers were in attendance
Saturday, March 8 9:30- 10:30am	Full Body Fitness White Oak Rec Center 1700 April Ln Silver Spring MD	In person full body fitness with Coach Phyllis	13 people joined the in-person session
Saturday, March 22 9:30- 10:30am	Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Park Trail 1120 Jackson Road Silver Spring, MD 20904	Outdoor walk on paved trail 2.8 miles	5 walkers were in attendance
Saturday, March 29 9:30- 10:30am	Full Body Fitness White Oak Rec Center 1700 April in Silver Spring MD	In-person full-body fitness with Coach Phyllis	10 people joined the in-person session

WMP members were also encouraged to attend the online full-body fitness class held weekly via Zoom from 9:15 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Monday through Thursday, as well as the Yoga, Tai Chi, low-impact, and Zumba classes hosted by the CDMP program. Recordings of these classes were also sent to attendees for the month. See participants below.

Date	Class Type	# or Attendees
Thursday, March 6	Low impact	13
Friday, March 7	Zumba	18
Thursday, March 13	Low impact	13
Friday, March 14	Zumba	16
Thursday, March 20	Low impact	17
Friday, March 21	Zumba	15 (recording)
Thursday, March 27	Low Impact	16
Friday, March 28	Zumba	19

Eight new participants were contacted via email for enrollment in March and received information regarding the WMP and upcoming events. Three people are setting up appointments and joining, which will be added to the April monthly report. The total enrollment of WMP members is currently 38. The goal for April is to increase the number of new weight management program participants to 41.

5. Health Screenings and Referrals

March was filled with meaningful community events that provided opportunities to build new networks, connect with diverse community members, and support County residents. Engaging with diverse communities allows AAHP to understand unique local needs, foster trust, and create tailored health initiatives with a lasting impact.

In March, community health workers conducted health screenings at 15 sites around the County, screened 200 County residents, and conducted 499 biometric screenings. County residents were screened for hypertension, diabetes, elevated cholesterol, HIV, hepatitis C, and syphilis.

The team demonstrated high community engagement across varied settings (churches, shelters, health fairs) while integrating a screening model that addresses chronic conditions and infectious diseases. They have effectively identified high-risk individuals and established clear referral pathways.

Key Data Summary:

1. Total Participation: Total People Screened: 200

2. Blood Pressure Screening:

- High prevalence of elevated blood pressure across sites.
- Breakdown of BP abnormalities:
 - BP Elevated (120-129/80-89) = 54 participants
 - Stage 1 Hypertension (130-139/80-89) = 54 participants
 - Stage 2 Hypertension ($\geq 140/\geq 90$) = 60 participants
 - HTN Crisis ($\geq 180/\geq 120$) = 7 participants

3. Infectious Disease Screenings:

- HIV Reactive: 2 participants (identified at Progress Place & Generation 1 events)
- HCV Reactive: 1 participant (Progress Place)
- Syphilis (TP) Reactive: 1 participant (Wednesday Tea)

4. Referrals Generated:

- Total Referrals made: 39
- CDMP (Chronic Disease Management Program): 7
- DPP (Diabetes Prevention Program): 3
- RPM (Remote Patient Monitoring): 10
- CDMP (Chronic Disease Management Program): 7
- DPP (Diabetes Prevention Program): 3
- HIV Navigation: 1

- Nutrition Counseling: 2
- COMP (Comprehensive Care Program): 4
- Others: 12

5. High-Impact Sites (in terms of volume or abnormal results)

Sites	Key Observations
Progress Place	High HTN prevalence 17 HIV Non-Reactive 1 HVC Reactive 14 Syphilis Non-Reactive
Generation One	18 Abnormal readings; 1 HIV Reactive
Men's Shelter	20 Screened; High BP abnormalities; 26 RPM Referrals
Links Black Family Expo	Broad screening; 19 screened; HIV Navigation Referral

AAHP Community Outreach Events (March 2025)																								
			Blood Pressure				Blood Glucose		Total Cholesterol	A1C		HIV		HCV		Syphilis								
Event Name	Date	Non-Charge Codes	BP Normal	BP Elevated (120-129/80-89)	Stage 1 (130-139/ 90-99)	Stage 2 (>140 / >100)	HTN Crisis (>180/ >110)	BG Normal	BG Elevated	Cholesterol Normal	Cholesterol Elevated	A1C Normal (<5.6)	Prediabetic (<6.4)	Diabetic (6.5--<)	HIV Reactive	HIV Non-reactive	HCV Reactive	HCV Non-reactive	TP Reactive	TP Non-reactive	TOTAL # People Screened	TOTAL # Attendees	TOTAL # Referrals	
First Alliance Church	3/1/2025	FAC	0	2	1	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	-	0	
Gaithersburg High School	3/1/2025	GHS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	170	
LWAAAC	3/5/2025	LWAAAC	4	3	3	5	0	13	0	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	1	11	40	2-RPM
That Was Easy Barbershop	3/6/2025	TWEBS	2	2	0	3	0	5	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	15	3-COMP	
Taft Court Women's Shelter	3/11/2025	WSTC	5	3	3	4	0	12	1	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	6	0	6	15	22	
Progress Place	3/13/2025	PP	11	2	4	2	0	18	1	18	1	0	0	0	0	17	1	14	3	13	19	28		
Links Heart Healthy Event	3/15/2025	GIES	6	4	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	0	12	
New Leaf Shelter Canceled	3/18/2025	NLS																						
Generation 1	3/19/2025	GEN1	5	8	3	5	0	14	5	18	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	26	COMP-4, RPM-2, DPP-3	
Men's Shelter	3/20/2025	MSNS	4	1	2	3	1	8	3	11	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	1	4	11	0	1-HIV Navig	
Links Black Family Wellness Expo	3/21/2025	LINKS	8	1	5	3	0	12	1	8	3	0	0	0	0	4	0	3	0	3	19	72		
Sickle Cell Blood Drive - Mt Calvary	3/22/2025	MCBC	7	2	1	3	0	13	1	13	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	14		8	
Crabb Branch - Women's Shelter	3/25/2025	WSCB	5	1	0	1	1	5	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	5	1	5	8	12	0	
Charter House	3/26/2025	CHSR	3	1	4	6		8	5	7	1					1					14	21	2	
Wednesday Tea	3/26/2025	WTMJ	7	0	0	5	0	6	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	12	13	Nutrition - 2	
Zeta Phi Beta Womanhood Expo	3/29/2025	ZPWE	10	3	6	2	0	20	0	17	3	0	0	0	0	12	0	13	2	10	22	80	COMP-4, RPM-1	
	TOTALS		77	33	37	50	2	137	24	126	13	0	0	0	0	59	2	49	9	43	200	499	22	

In March, all student interns participated in an experiential health screening training program to enhance their competence in conducting screenings. The training covered consent form completion, screening table setup, and performing various biometric

tests, including blood pressure screening, oximetry, hand grip strength measurement, glucose testing, and body mass index (BMI) calculation.

As part of their training, interns attended multiple screening events, where they observed community health workers conducting live biometric screenings. Under supervision, they gradually began performing screenings as they gained confidence and demonstrated proficiency. By the end of the program, interns were fully capable of conducting weight assessments, blood pressure checks, oximetry tests, and hand grip strength screenings at AAHP screening events.

One intern, specializing in gerontology, was strategically assigned to senior facilities to ensure alignment with her area of focus. She has since been designated as the “lead intern” for senior facilities and now assists event staff with packing, setup, and coordination at these locations.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, AAHP routinely conducted community outreach and health screening activities at Black barbershops in Montgomery County. In March, AAHP staff re-initiated health screenings at That Was Easy Barbershop. The plan is to expand health screenings to one or two new barbershops every month to reach more Black men, raising their awareness about health and empowering them to take control of their health. Knowing the numbers is critical to achieving this objective.

C. Cancer Prevention

In March, AAHP’s cancer prevention efforts focused on raising awareness of cancer prevention in Montgomery County, particularly breast and prostate cancers, which significantly impact morbidity and mortality among Black residents. Another priority involved securing funding for transportation assistance to help community members in need. Ongoing collaborations with local organizations will provide support and resources to the community.

A total of 42 participants attended the Cancer Chat and Chew sessions. On March 7, twenty attendees attended a nutrition class; on March 14, ten participants examined ways to maintain strong bones. The session scheduled for March 21 was canceled to accommodate an in-person event. On March 28, twelve attendees gained insights into mental health and discovered ways to find a happy place. Participants also engaged in interactive conversations, shared personal experiences, and benefited from guest speakers. Techniques for mindfulness exercises, creative expression, and forming supportive relationships helped to equip individuals with skills to enhance their overall well-being.

D. Mental and Behavioral Health

In March, the Social Work team completed 56 mental health screenings using MindWise screening software on computer tablets. These screenings were conducted across multiple sites, including the Nebel Street Men’s Shelter, New Leaf Shelter, Generation One, People’s Church Black History Program, In It to Win It, and The Sanctuary at Mt. Jezreel Church. However, frequent internet interruptions, particularly at shelters and during outdoor events, posed a significant challenge and often complicated the process.

To address these issues and better serve diverse populations, the team implemented a series of adaptations. For instance, when conducting in-services or working with seniors in housing programs, staff occasionally read the screening questions aloud upon request, rather than relying solely on the tablets. Some individuals declined or deflected from screenings, underscoring the importance of continued outreach and engagement. In many cases, Social Work staff offered mental health screenings immediately following presentations, although the reported numbers do not fully capture how many attendees actually engaged with the tool.

Mental health screenings assessed for alcohol use, opioid misuse, and other substance use concerns in accordance with the DSM-5-TR guidelines. Those who required additional resources or short-term therapeutic support were connected to case management services, ensuring they received referrals tailored to their needs. Despite technological hurdles, the month's efforts highlight the Social Work team's commitment to meeting clients where they are, providing immediate support, and navigating barriers to reach vulnerable populations.

1. Support Groups

a. Your Inner Self

This month, an AAHP consultant presented on "Belly Works." The consultant discussed how stomach muscles become weak and separate during pregnancy and how belly exercises can be combined with healthy eating habits to strengthen stomach muscles and improve overall health. The presentation was met with enthusiasm, and many attendees expressed interest in participating in the program. Sixteen people attended the presentation, indicating a strong interest in community resources and learning about what Montgomery County offers residents.

b. Caregiver Village

Caregiver Village, which began in March with a limited cohort of 18 participants, covered caregiving, including its benefits and challenges. Most participants were caregivers, while others were interested in the topic. The group engaged in a general conversation about caregiving and received an introduction to what the group will cover throughout the year. In-person or hybrid meetings will be considered if there is ongoing interest.

c. Chat & Chew - Breast Cancer Support Group

A March Cancer Chat & Chew session included a presentation on mental health and chronic disease. The group discussed the relationship between physical and mental health. The session addressed issues related to stigma, how to incorporate mental health into a treatment plan, and how to communicate with a doctor about therapy and other mental health treatments during cancer treatment.

d. Community Mapping (Ross Boddy)

On March 13, members of the Ross Boddy Taskforce toured the community to establish connections. They visited the Olive Branch and Sharp Church, took

pictures, and interacted with church members. They also toured the Mutual Cemetery, learning about its history and the many occupants buried there. They also visited the Quaker Meeting Place and cemetery. The pictures will be uploaded as part of the information compiled for the project.

e. Black Men and Mental Health

On March 22, the team participated in a community forum on “Understanding Social Isolation and Its Impact on Communities.” This forum, a collaborative program by the Aging Subcommittee of AAHP and Howard University, was designed as a public conversation among professionals, practitioners, policymakers, and community members committed to addressing social isolation, its effects on individuals and communities, and potential solutions. The conference highlighted DMV community programs, networking opportunities, and shared strategies to combat social isolation.

E. Men’s Health Initiative - “In It to Win It”

On Saturday, March 22, AAHP conducted a health education and awareness session at the recently renovated Odd Fellows Lodge at 1308 Olney/Sandy Spring Road in Sandy Spring, MD. More than forty current and retired Black Montgomery County police officers, both male and female, attended the event. The former Montgomery County Police Chief, now the Head of Security for Montgomery County Public Schools, was also in attendance. The audience actively participated, asking questions and sharing their health journeys. This level of involvement increased awareness and knowledge sharing about Black men’s health in the community, making everyone feel part of the initiative.

AAHP’s men’s health consultant held a virtual conversation on March 20 to highlight the issues of mental health in African American men. The discussions centered around stigma, personal issues driving the failure to seek help, and societal forces that impact mental health in the African American community.

Since its launch on February 1, the In It to Win It initiative has achieved significant milestones in promoting Black men’s health awareness and chronic disease prevention. The goal of establishing 20 community partners has made noteworthy progress, with seven partners secured, representing 35% of the target. These partnerships, which include prominent organizations such as the Odd Fellows Lodge of Sandy Spring, MD, the Potomac Valley and Montgomery County Sections of the National Council of Negro Women, The People’s Community Baptist Church, The African American Community Liaison and Outreach Office of Community Partnerships, The Retired Black Police Officers of Montgomery County and WPFW Radio, have been instrumental in amplifying the initiative’s reach and impact.

AAHP conducted three public conversations/community dialogues to date, drawing 120 participants, 40% of the target. These sessions, a mix of in-person and virtual events, have garnered high satisfaction ratings, demonstrating the initiative’s ability to engage and inspire meaningful discussions. Participant feedback, captured through an online

evaluation form and anecdotal discussions, has provided valuable insights for future programming.

In It to Win It has secured approximately 100 pledges from Black men, translating to 10% of our goal of 1,000 pledges by the end of June. This initial momentum is encouraging, and AAHP remains committed to mobilizing more individuals to take the pledge and join the movement.

In addition to the above progress over the past two months, AAHP has achieved several notable milestones, including establishing a Project Advisory Group, a critical initiative component. The Project Advisory Group will provide expert guidance and support to inform programming and strategies.

The development of a PowerPoint presentation for the project has been well received by participants and will continue to be refined for maximum effectiveness. This presentation serves primarily to raise awareness about Black men's status and provide actionable first steps everyone can take for themselves, their loved ones, and their communities to change outcomes for Black men in the near term.

Other achievements include:

- Creation of an online Resource Page to serve as a hub for initiative-related materials and updates
- Design and distribution of promotional materials including lapel pins, posters, and flyers
- Launch of a social media survey campaign to obtain real-time data on health attitudes of young adult Black men ages 18-35
- Launch of an online Health Heroes nomination form
- Conducting a Community Ambassadors training program with seven participants in the first session
- Initial planning for the In It to Win It Community Partners Recognition Breakfast (June 28)

F. Key Special Community Conversation & Outreach Efforts

In March, the African American Health Program staff and consultants continued to organize a collaboration of stakeholders aimed at improving community engagement and expanding conversations and participation in health-related issues as follows:

- **Sickle Cell Committee Activities and Deliverables:**
 - The AAHP Sickle Cell Working Group/Committee has been activated to address the sickle cell crisis in Montgomery County and Maryland. Key activities include research, awareness, education, stakeholder engagement, and convening regular meetings to guide the committee's goals and outcomes.
 - Major deliverables include the development of two Sickle Cell Toolkits (one for the general population and one for caregivers), a Sickle Cell page on the AAHP website, and a comprehensive reference list of sickle cell resources, events, and organizations in Montgomery County and surrounding areas.

- The committee is preparing for a Sickle Cell Community Awareness Day in June 2025 to raise awareness and support for the sickle cell community.
- **Community Day Event Planning and Community Engagement:**
 - The AAHP Annual Community Day, scheduled for May 31, 2025, is in full planning mode. Activities include site visits, weekly committee meetings, marketing strategies, and partner collaboration to increase youth attendance and community engagement.
 - The Complementary, Alternative, and Supplementary Non-Medicinal Healing and Wellness Project, scheduled for June 28, 2025, focuses on holistic health and wellness. It will feature fitness demos, plant-based food vendors, health screenings, and workshops targeting intergenerational audiences.

AAHP's event coordinator engaged with subject matter experts, advocacy groups, public health professionals, and community organizations to build relationships and gather recommendations for the Sickle Cell Committee and other AAHP initiatives. Efforts include attending webinars, events, and meetings to inform project goals, enhance collaboration, and ensure impactful engagement with the African American community in Montgomery County.

Conversations are vital in promoting public health, raising awareness, and fostering meaningful engagement. These discussions create safe spaces for individuals to share experiences, voice concerns, and collaborate on solutions to pressing health issues. By bringing together experts, advocates, and community members, these conversations help drive policy changes, improve access to healthcare, and encourage proactive wellness practices.

In March, AAHP will continue executing ongoing projects, strengthening partnerships, and managing daily operations to successfully implement upcoming events and initiatives. Staff will actively participate in relevant meetings, coordinate logistics, and refine strategies to advance key program goals and expand community impact.

III. Administrative & Management Services

In March, the African American Health Program staff played a key role in facilitating the monthly Executive Committee meeting on the first Thursday of each month and the monthly Executive Coalition meeting on the second Thursday. Responsibilities included distributing the agenda in advance, sending periodic meeting reminders, uploading necessary documents, and managing any recording-related tasks that arose throughout the month.

Significant improvements have been made to the AAHP website, enhancing loading speed, functionality, content, and software efficiency. These upgrades have streamlined the addition of new content, reducing both time and effort. Additionally, each focus area will begin publishing monthly statistical performance data directly on the website.

To improve data accessibility, AAHP has introduced a new approach to capturing and displaying key program metrics. While the homepage currently features four bullet points summarizing data, users previously had to navigate through the monthly report to locate specific details. Although the report contains valuable insights, searching for precise data points has been time-consuming. A new template will present current data directly on the website, eliminating the need to reference the full report for essential statistics.

In March, AAHP staff initiated significant enhancements to the SMILE program data and information management to assess program progress, address challenges, and outline data management, validation, and migration steps. Discussions focused on data consolidation, analysis methodologies, and transitioning from Excel-based workflows to a database-driven system to enhance efficiency, data accuracy, and security.

Throughout the month, AAHP staff and senior leadership provided extensive comments and recommendations on the Office of Legislative Oversight report on maternal health programs. Their input led to the addition of new data, clarification of budget considerations, and refinement of service descriptions, particularly in physical health, mental health, and social support.

APPENDIX A – Media Report

	February 2025	March 2025
General List Recipients:	6183	6519
Successful deliveries:	5986	6212
Open rate:	28.7%	35%
Click rate:	.2%	.1%

Health Notes Newsletter: March 2025 Report

AAHP's March Health Notes newsletter, "Strong Choices Win," offered informative articles on key health topics. The feature article "Colorectal Cancer Awareness and Prevention" explained how healthy lifestyle choices and timely screenings can reduce colon cancer risk, especially among African Americans, who experience higher incidence and mortality rates. In line with AAHP's emphasis on sickle cell disease, the newsletter continued its series with "Living with Sickle Cell," sharing four powerful stories of resilience and the importance of genetic testing, blood transfusions, and supportive communities for those affected. The article "You and Your Toothbrush" emphasized the need to brush for two minutes twice daily, replace toothbrushes regularly, and consider flossing and mouthwash for thorough oral hygiene. This article also advised readers to keep their toothbrushes away from the toilet to minimize contamination. The Health Hint section encouraged individuals to speak with a pharmacist before discarding expired medication, noting that some pills may remain effective when stored properly. The Featured Video, an ABC News segment, explored the impact of removing race-based kidney function calculations and showed how this change sped up life-saving transplants for African Americans. The featured recipe was Ethiopian Yataklete Kilkil, a vegetable-based dish seasoned with turmeric, cumin, and paprika. By covering these essential topics, AAHP's March Health Notes aimed to provide the community with valuable information and practical tools for better health.

Email Campaign Performance

The March 2025 email campaign exhibited exceptionally strong engagement across key performance metrics, with an impressive open rate of 35%. Of the 6,519 emails sent, 6,212 were delivered successfully, and 2,145 recipients opened the email, surpassing typical industry averages. The click rate stood at 0.1% (four total clicks), only two people unsubscribed, and no spam complaints were reported, demonstrating that the content continued to resonate with its audience. Desktop usage dominated these interactions, with 99.4% of opens occurring on desktop devices, compared to 0.6% on mobile. Overall, these results confirm a robust connection with the newsletter's readership and reaffirm the campaign's effectiveness in delivering health-focused communications.

Facebook

In March 2024, the Facebook page reached 976 followers, an increase of six from the prior month. It published 21 posts—one fewer than the previous month—while likes remained steady at 39, comments increased to two, and shares rose to 16. These metrics show a moderate uptick in engagement and audience interest, highlighted by new followers and more interactions through comments and shares.

Facebook Metrics – March 2024

	Followers	Posts	Likes/Love	Comments	Shares
Total	976	21	39	2	16
Change from last month	+6	-1	same	+1	+4

Instagram

In March 2024, the Instagram account reached 389 followers, an increase of three compared to the previous month. The account posted 20 times, up by 15, and shared four stories, marking an increase of three. Post likes dropped to 38 (down by 29), and shares declined to 15 (down by 20). Despite the dip in likes and shares, the significant rise in posts and followers indicates continued audience interest and a potential opportunity to explore strategies that boost engagement.

Instagram Metrics – March 2024

	Followers	Posts	Stories	Post Likes	Shares
Total	389	20	4	38	15
Change from last month	+3	15	+3	-29	-20

APPENDIX B – HEALTH NOTES

The monthly newsletter of the African American Health Program (AAHP). Visit AAHP's website [here](#).



HEALTH NOTES

MARCH 2025: STRONG CHOICES WIN

"We are powerful because we have survived, and that is what it is all about- survival and growth."
— Audre Lorde



March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Taking Control: The Power to Prevent Colorectal Cancer

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness about prevention, early detection, and the disparities that impact African Americans. According to the American Cancer Society, more than half of colorectal cancer cases and deaths could have been prevented with healthy lifestyle choices. For African Americans, who face 20% higher incidence and 40% higher mortality rates than other demographic groups, understanding prevention strategies is critical. By making smart choices regarding diet, exercise, and screening, we possess the power to transform these troubling statistics and reduce our colorectal cancer risk individually and collectively.

The foods we choose daily directly impact our colorectal cancer risk. Research shows fruits, vegetables, and fiber reduce risk, while red and processed meats increase it. Proactive health habits include limiting red meat consumption to three or fewer servings per week, avoiding processed meat products (such as hot dogs, deli meats, and bacon), and embracing more plant-based foods. The method of cooking meats also matters; gentler cooking methods like baking, steaming, or slow cooking reduce exposure to cancer-causing chemicals produced when meat is grilled at high temperatures.

While diet is a major factor in colorectal cancer prevention, it is only part of the equation. Regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting alcohol consumption, and avoiding tobacco all contribute to lower colorectal cancer risk. These choices are within our control and represent real opportunities to protect our health.

Screenings remain crucial for early detection and prevention. Recognizing the rising rates of colorectal cancer in younger adults, the American Cancer Society now recommends that screening begin at age 45. These screenings can detect and remove precancerous polyps before they develop into cancer, truly preventing the disease rather than just treating it early. If you're over 45 and haven't been screened, schedule your screening today.

AAHP's cancer prevention specialist provides education, resources, and personalized support to empower individuals in preventing and managing cancer. Visit AAHP's website [here](#) to learn more about cancer prevention and how you can take charge of your health.

Source:
www.cancer.org
www.newsroom.clevelandclinic.org
www.cdc.gov
www.cancer.gov

Living with Sickle Cell Disease



(part 3 of AAHP's Sickle Cell series)

Many individuals with sickle cell disease (SCD) are proving that resilience and determination can overcome even the toughest challenges. Despite the pain, fatigue, and health complications that come with SCD, they continue to thrive, advocate, and inspire others. Here are some of their powerful stories.

LaMetra is dedicated to raising awareness about the sickle cell trait (SCT) and the importance of genetic testing. In 2012, she discovered during pregnancy that both she and her son's father carried SCT, giving their child a 25% chance of having sickle cell disease (SCD). Through the process of her son being diagnosed with SCD, she recognized gaps in medical knowledge and community awareness. Determined to make a difference, she advocates for early testing, counseling, and education to help families make informed health decisions and ensure individuals with SCD receive proper care.

Phillip found a sense of belonging at a summer camp designed specifically for children with sickle cell disease. Growing up with SCD can be isolating, but these camps provide a safe space where kids can connect with others who understand their struggles. With medical professionals on hand, children can enjoy outdoor activities, make friends, and simply be kids without the fear of a sudden health crisis. Phillip's positive camp experience inspired him to advocate for similar programs, ensuring that more children with SCD have access to spaces where they feel supported and understood.

Tasha's journey highlights the critical role of blood transfusions in managing sickle cell disease. Frequent transfusions help reduce complications like severe pain and strokes, allowing her to maintain a better quality of life. In addition to transfusions, Tasha takes folic acid, which helps her body produce healthy red blood cells. Her story underscores the urgent need for African American blood donors, as their donations are often the best match for sickle cell patients. Increasing blood donations within the Black community can save lives and provide relief for those who rely on these treatments.

These stories showcase the power and strength of individuals living with sickle cell disease. Education, care, and community support can make all the difference. AAHP is committed to expanding its efforts to better empower individuals with sickle cell disease and their families.

Source: www.cdc.gov

You and Your Toothbrush



Your toothbrush is one of the most important tools for maintaining good oral health. Here's what you should know to get the most out of this everyday essential:

Brush for Two Minutes, Twice a Day

Brushing your teeth properly is the foundation of good oral hygiene. Many people rush through brushing, missing key areas where plaque builds up. Dentists recommend brushing for at least two minutes, twice a day, using fluoride toothpaste. Don't forget to brush your tongue, as bacteria can accumulate there and cause bad breath.

Replace Your Toothbrush Regularly

A worn-out toothbrush won't clean your teeth properly. Over time, bristles become frayed and less effective at removing plaque. Replace your toothbrush (or electric toothbrush head) every three months, or sooner if the bristles look worn. If you've been sick, change your toothbrush immediately to avoid reinfection.

Electric or Manual?

Both electric and manual toothbrushes can be effective, but electric toothbrushes often remove more plaque and reduce gingivitis more effectively. They're especially helpful for those with arthritis or limited mobility. However, a manual toothbrush works well if used correctly.

Floss and Rinse for Extra Protection

Brushing alone isn't enough to keep your mouth completely clean. Flossing daily removes plaque and food particles between teeth where your toothbrush can't reach. Using mouthwash can also help kill bacteria and freshen breath.

Store It Away from the Toilet

Where you store your toothbrush matters. Flushing the toilet releases tiny bacteria-filled droplets into the air, which can land on your toothbrush. Keep it at least a few feet away from the toilet and store it upright so it can air dry.

By brushing properly, replacing your toothbrush regularly, and following these hygiene tips, you can protect your teeth and gums for years to come. Take a moment today to check—does your toothbrush need replacing?

Health Hint

Before throwing out expired medication, check with a pharmacist. Many drugs remain effective well past their expiration dates. While some liquid medicines and antibiotics can degrade and become unsafe over time, many pills and tablets can be effective for years. Proper storage in a cool, dry place can also help extend their shelf life. Don't assume an expiration date means a medication is useless; get the facts from the pharmacist.

Source: www.health.harvard.edu

Featured Video

This ABC News feature examines how the removal of race-based kidney function calculations has helped African Americans like Jazmin Evans receive life-saving transplants sooner:



Featured Recipe: Ethiopian Yataklete Kilkil



Ingredients

- 3 medium potatoes, chopped
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ½ medium onion, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 jalapeño pepper, diced and seeds removed
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 large tomatoes, diced
- 1 cup green beans, chopped into thirds
- 2 carrots, thinly sliced
- Salt to taste

Instructions

1. Add potatoes to a large saucepan and add water to cover potatoes. Boil until fork-tender (10-15 minutes). When tender, remove from heat, drain water, and set cooked potatoes aside.
2. In a large saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add onions, garlic, jalapeño, ginger, turmeric, cumin, smoked paprika, and black pepper. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Add tomatoes and ½ cup of water. Bring to a boil and let boil for 3 minutes, then reduce heat and let simmer for 5 minutes. Next, add the cooked potatoes along with the green beans and carrots. Continue to simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, and adding a splash of water if the liquid reduces too much. Taste and adjust seasoning, adding salt if needed.

Source: www.oldwayspt.org



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