

Capacity Building Among African American Faith Leaders to Promote HIV Prevention and Vaccine Research

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

- The study aim was to engage faith leaders ($N=19$) in a sustainable partnership to increase community participation in preventive HIV vaccine clinical research while improving their access to and utilization of HIV/AIDS prevention services.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

- Despite the recognition among faith leaders that HIV/AIDS is a pressing issue in the black community, many feel unqualified and too financially restricted to adequately provide the HIV/AIDS-related services needed in their communities.
- The historically charged relationship between research institutions and the black community continues to hinder adequate public health efforts to raise awareness of the disease and its devastating impact.
- There is a scarcity of literature on methodologies for engaging faith based organizations in discussions on HIV vaccine and initiating HIV prevention and treatment services.

WHAT ARE THE FINDINGS?

- Funding emerged as the chief hindrance to churches' ability to implement HIV prevention services.
- Clergy cited the need for additional training in practical methods for implementing an HIV/AIDS ministry in their Church.
- Overall, the majority of participating clergy members felt that that the seminar had significantly increased their understanding of HIV vaccine research and its goals.
- Rochester faith leaders who attended the Faith Academy took the lead in sustaining momentum and further expanding the program in Rochester by forming the Rochester Faith Collaborative (RFC).

WHO SHOULD CARE MOST?

- Community-based organizations providing HIV prevention and treatment services
- Research and/or academic institutions seeking to collaborate with faith based organizations for health initiatives
- Faith-based organizations seeking to initiate HIV prevention and treatment services

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Triangulation of skills and expertise from academic institutions, community-based organizations, and the black faith leadership is an important avenue for rebuilding damaged trust between these same entities.
- Trust must be cultivated through communication and respect by ensuring that black communities, and in particular, black faith leaders, are involved in prevention efforts and equipped to face the problems and needs resulting from the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- Prevention efforts and research among minority populations require the establishment of strong, long-term relationships with communities; subsequently, resources must be dedicated to supporting community engagement in HIV/AIDS prevention efforts.