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Health Screening at the House of Puerto Rico High Blood Pressure Knows No Cultures

By H. Gerson Jones

San Diego – Many local consumers and festival guests will be screened by volunteers and guests of the San Diego Black Health Associates at the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the House of Puerto Rico, this coming Saturday, October 20, 2012 from 12-5 pm at the International Cottages stage area in Balboa Park.

The House of Puerto Rico is a non-profit organization that promotes cross cultural understanding and awareness of the richness of “Borinquen” music, food and perspectives. “We think our celebration is an excellent opportunity to collaborate with the Black Health Associates around high blood pressure and diabetes prevention,” explained Anthony L. Flores, President of the House of Puerto Rico. “When we look at our community, we see diabetes playing a major role affecting negatively the health of both adults and children. By spending time at our Anniversary checking high blood pressure and diabetes risks, we are ensuring that our families are conscious of the need for health improvement and prevention”.

SDBHA has been involved in a multiple task efforts to strengthen the role of families promoting health and prevention. Clovis Honore, Coordinator of the Men’s Health Project for SDBHA, noted: “When you look at the issues that cause African Americans and Hispanic Americans expiring too early from diabetes, cardiovascular issues and stroke, these can be avoided by life-style changes that can be managed, if adopted one step at a time. We see collaborating with the House of Puerto Rico an important step as we build elements within our cultural framework to redirect positive steps from negative ones”. Clovis has been busy organizing screening efforts and hosting community forums at different churches throughout Central and Southeastern San Diego.

The San Diego Black Health Associates is a non-profit organization that is working to improve the health and well-being of communities of color, through policy advocacy, education of health professionals, direct service program development and information.

“When we hold screening events such as these, we occasionally find a person whose health numbers are very high”, Mr. Honore explained. “We make special steps to ensure that these high risk consumers are referred for care. We then follow-up with them, just to make sure they take care of themselves.”

A large segment of the Hispanic community is familiar with diabetes. This condition is sometimes referred to as “sugar” among African Americans, because of its impact on blood sugar.

Dimitri Fulton is a Diabetic Health Educator and Founder/President of the Alma and Marian Diabetes Awareness Foundation. “Both my mother and my grandmother died from diabetes”, explained Ms. Fulton. “Clearly, it is a killer disease. We want people to understand the seriousness of the diseases facing high risk families. Our community action teams believe in early assessment and detection. There are simple life-style changes that can work, which will make the difference between an energized, and a pain inflicted life. Fear is no excuse!”

SDBHA has begun a walking program at Chollas Lake. Every Tuesday and Saturday morning at 7:00 AM, walkers are provided water and encouraged to walk an additional lap. The Men’s Fitness Exercise is also held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 8:00 pm at the Embassy Church International on Glebe Road in Lemon Grove.

For further information, please contact SDBHA at (619) 906-4002 or via email at info@sdbha.org To contact the House of Puerto Rico, please send an email to hprsd@houseofpuertorico.com or call Voice Mail: (619) 234-3445.