

# AFRICAN COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES

## 2020 Newsletter



## MISSION

The mission of **African Community Health Initiatives** (ACHI) is to support and improve the health of Africans living in Massachusetts by promoting access to quality culturally competent health and social services through education, research, and community partnerships.

### EXPLORE WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

*Spring 2020 Health Fair*

*COVID-19 Efforts*

*A Conversation with our Chair*

## ACHI OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

In fiscal year 2020, ACHI held several workshops and presentations. As a result, **300 people** received education on breast and cervical cancer prevention, nutrition, and cardiovascular disease risk factors.

In addition, ACHI supported community members in accessing social services. Through ACHI efforts, **52 people** received assistance in applying for MassHealth services and **40 people** received assistance in obtaining food stamps.

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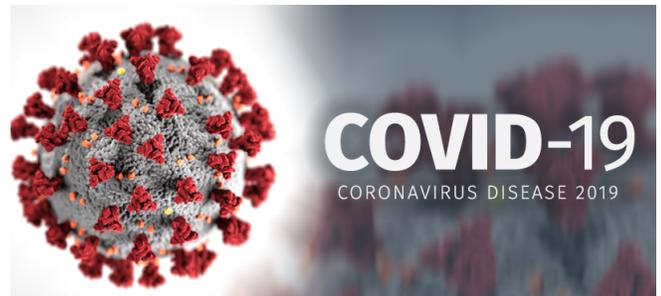
## COVID-19 EFFORTS

ACHI has adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to provide services to our target population.

ACHI developed and disseminated COVID-19 prevention materials to the community. ACHI also provided information on COVID-19 testing sites and food and job assistance to several community members.

Furthermore, ACHI adapted to provide health education presentations to members virtually.

In addition to COVID-19 efforts, ACHI continues to support members with accessing MassHealth services and obtaining food stamps.



## FALL 2019 HEALTH FAIR

ACHI hosted their annual "Fall Back Into Health" fair on September 14, 2019. ACHI partnered with Lion's Club (with Physicians from Boston University School of Medicine Department of Ophthalmology), Cambridge Health Alliance Dental Center, and Walgreen's.

**50 participants** received services, including:

- 18 cholesterol checks
- 18 blood glucose checks
- 17 BMI checks
- 11 eye exams
- 11 flu shots
- 22 dental checks and cleanings



## SPRING 2020 HEALTH FAIR

The Spring into Health Fair took place on March 7, 2020. Partners included the Cambridge Health Alliance Dental Center and Walgreen's. Again, Maxim Health served as the vendor for this fair.

**30 participants** received services, including:

- 16 cholesterol checks
- 16 blood glucose checks
- 15 BMI checks
- 10 flu shots
- 10 dental checks and cleanings





## **How has ACHI programming evolved over the last five years?**

ACHI has evolved from a focus on outreach and enrollment in health insurance programs to an increased focus on educating people on how to take care of themselves and ensuring their participation in preventative medicine. Enrollments are still getting done but with less intensity. In the COVID-19 era, we are doing more through virtual means, including one on one face-time sessions. Unfortunately, not many community members have access to the internet or smart phone devices. That notwithstanding, we still connect them to care.

## **A CONVERSATION WITH OUR CHAIR**

Dr. Anne Medinus is the current chair of African Community Health Initiatives Boston. We asked her about ACHI efforts over the years.

### **Why is the mission of ACHI important to you?**

The mission is very important to me because it focuses on the elements required for eliminating the health disparities experienced by African immigrants in Massachusetts. Many are unaware of services available to them and where to seek such services.

Coming from countries that usually emphasize curative medicine, many do not care about preventative medicine and only seek help when the acuity levels of their conditions have increased. There are often cultural and linguistic barriers that keep many from getting the services they need.

Furthermore, the race and ethnicity data collected by researchers and providers are often not granular to the level where the actual conditions affecting the African immigrant population can be easily deciphered. It is therefore the aim of ACHI to not only reach the African immigrants and educate them on how to take care of themselves, but also help them overcome the barriers and connect them to care.

## What is the biggest lesson you have learned as the chairperson for a nonprofit organization?

It is very challenging to keep the focus on what the target population needs because many funding sources have criteria that preclude the needs of the population.

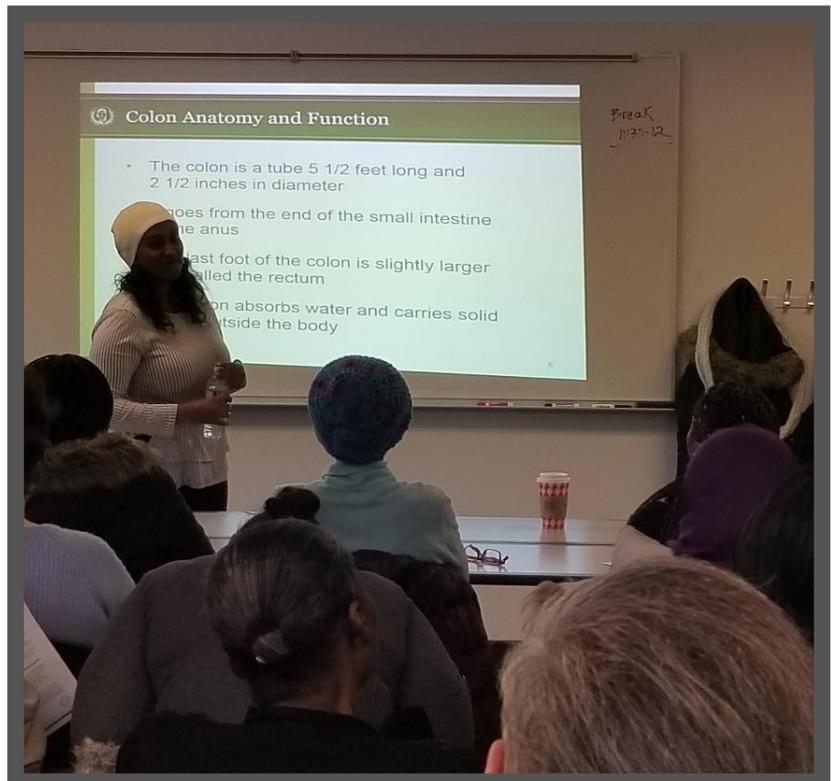
## Can you describe ACHI's work in five words?

Outreach. Education. Connecting With Care



## Where will ACHI focus efforts during 2021?

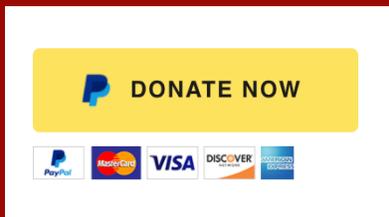
ACHI will want to ensure that members of our target population are informed about the COVID-19 vaccines in order to make informed decisions for themselves and their families. ACHI will continue to increase awareness about the services available to community members and connect them to necessary services. ACHI will also research the needs of community members, particularly needs that have now been confounded by the COVID-19 era. Lastly, we will craft strategies to ensure a healthy African immigrant community.



# HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE ACHI MISSION

## Donate

Visit [africancommunityhealthinitiatives.com](http://africancommunityhealthinitiatives.com) and click donate now.



## Volunteer

Email us at [info@africancommunityhealthinitiatives.org](mailto:info@africancommunityhealthinitiatives.org) for more information.

