The Health Advocates In-Reach and Research Campaign (HAIR) 
Promoting Colorectal Cancer Screening

GOALS

The specific objectives of the HAIR colorectal cancer screening project are to:

1. Expand the HAIR network of barbershops and beauty salons in Prince George’s County, especially neighborhoods in the Health Enterprise Zone (HEZ) located in zip code 20743.

2. Provide formal training to barbers and stylists as Lay Health Advocates who are willing to promote colorectal cancer screening to their clients.

3. Train a team of Genetic Counselors to become more culturally confident so they can conduct Family Health Histories (FHH) with people in the HAIR barber shops and beauty salons.

4. Establish a sustainable model to transform both the barber shops and beauty salons into health promotion and disease prevention venues where medical and public health professionals are invited to deliver life saving services.

MOBILIZING BLACK BARBERSHOPS AND BEAUTY SALONS FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION IN PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY MARYLAND

PURPOSE

The Health Advocates In-Reach and Research (HAIR), is a community-based intervention developed by Dr. Stephen B. Thomas and a team of researchers from the Maryland Center for Health Equity at the University of Maryland’s School of Public Health in College Park. The primary aim of HAIR is to create an infrastructure to engage barbershops and beauty salons in Prince George’s County as culturally relevant portals for health education and delivery of public health and medical services in the community.

BACKGROUND

HAIR builds upon the rich and powerful history of barbers and beauticians as trusted entrepreneurs providing essential services to the African American community. Barbershops and beauty salons also represent private sector business partners dedicated to improving the quality of life in the neighborhoods they serve. Medical and public health research has proven that barbershops and beauty salons can be mobilized as venues for delivery of health promotion and disease prevention services designed to eliminate health disparities and advance health equity.

THE PROJECT CHALLENGE

With financial support from the Cigna Foundation, the HAIR network will focus on promoting colorectal cancer screening and increasing awareness about colorectal cancer, a leading cause of disability and premature death in the African American community. Early detection through screening has been proven to save lives. However, far too many people from African American backgrounds are not being screened.
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About the Maryland Center for Health Equity
The Maryland Center for Health Equity (M-CHE) in the School of Public Health, University of Maryland at College Park, is an NIH designated Center of Excellence on Race, Ethnicity, and Health Disparities Research, funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. Its mission is to raise the visibility of racial and ethnic health disparities and implement promising solutions to advance a healthier state of health through diverse partnerships, programs, campaigns, and a sustainable community-engaged research enterprise.

http://sph.umd.edu/center/che

APPROACH:

• 10 owner-operated barbershops will be recruited for initial phase
• 40 barbers/hair stylists trained (4 per shop including the owner)
• Two workshops will be convened to train barbers/stylists (5 hours total)
• 25 participants per shop to be recruited for health promotion about colorectal cancer
• Eligible participants: African Americans 45 years or older with no previous diagnosis of colorectal cancer
• Participants will participate in a family health history conducted by genetic counselors. Follow-ups will be done at one, six, and twelve months to determine any change in knowledge and/or screening behavior

THE TEAM:
Community Partner: Mr. Fred Spry, Proprietor, The SHOP Barbershop, Hyattsville, MD
Principal Investigator: Dr. Mary A. Garza, Associate Director, Maryland for Center Health Equity, School of Public Health, University of Maryland
Co-Investigator: Dr. Stephen B. Thomas, Director, Maryland for Center Health Equity, School of Public Health, University of Maryland
Project Director: Dr. Susan Passmore, Maryland for Center Health Equity, School of Public Health, University of Maryland
Community Outreach Coordinator, Shawnta Jackson, Maryland Center for Health Equity, School of Public Health, University of Maryland
Genetic Counseling Consultant: Ms. Shannon Dixon, University of Maryland Baltimore
Cigna Medical Advisor: Dr. Christina Stasiuk, National Medical Director for Health Disparities

Colorectal Cancer (CRC) starts in the colon or rectum. African Americans have the highest rates of colorectal cancer and are the most likely to die from the disease. People age 50 and older are most at risk. Colonoscopy every 10 years, beginning at age 50 for whites and age 45 for African Americans, is the preferred CRC screening strategy. Colorectal cancer is the second deadliest cancer in the United States and it can be prevented.