

SIDEBAR

The Kidney Education Outreach Program: HEY DOC, HOW ARE MY KIDNEYS?

Donna H. Harward

The University of North Carolina Kidney Center has developed an innovative, community-based outreach program targeted to at-risk populations who are unaware of the major factors leading to the development of chronic kidney disease. The Kidney Education Outreach Program (KEOP) was launched in the fall of 2005 with the support of an Abbott Laboratories education grant. The program targets 17 counties with high prevalence rates of end-stage kidney disease. The goals of this outreach initiative are to educate the public about chronic kidney disease, screen at-risk populations, and work with physicians to provide early interventions to stop or slow the progression of the disease.¹⁻⁴

KEOP staff have conducted 17 focus groups and spoken with more than 1300 at-risk individuals to assess community understanding of kidney disease. The staff use the information gathered from these discussions to develop customized awareness, prevention, and outreach activities for at-risk populations. In addition, KEOP identifies local community leaders to serve as spokespersons for community-based media campaigns focusing on the primary risk factors for CKD. The media campaigns and outreach materials remind people to check on their kidney health by using the KEOP motto: "Remember to Ask...HEY DOC, HOW ARE MY KIDNEYS?"

KEOP has also provided free screenings to more than 1500 at-risk individuals in partnership with local agencies and faith-based organizations. To further

expand outreach and screening efforts, KEOP recently purchased a mobile outreach unit with support from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, the UNC Health Care System, and public donations. People who are screened receive a personal consult and medical information to be shared with their primary care provider. KEOP staff also help individuals identify appropriate community-based resources if the individual does not have a primary care provider.

KEOP's success is rooted in relationships developed with community-based lay leaders, agencies, and institutions. KEOP works with county commissioners, health departments, faith-based organizations and ministries, civic clubs, local businesses, and community colleges to raise awareness about the high prevalence of CKD and its comorbid diseases. The outreach to these community organizations has helped KEOP identify local lay leaders and organizations that can work collaboratively with KEOP program staff to provide key outreach activities. In addition, community-based partners, spokespersons, and lay leaders help promote awareness about the major risk factors for CKD. Further collaboration with other North Carolina agencies and community-based outreach organizations that target comorbid diseases (diabetes, hypertension, heart disease) will ensure that KEOP continues to educate at-risk North Carolinians about the importance of asking, "HEY DOC, HOW ARE MY KIDNEYS?"

- 1 McClellan WM, Knight DF, Karp H, Brown W. Early detection and treatment of renal disease in hospitalized diabetic and hypertensive patients: important differences between practice and published guidelines. *Am J Kidney Dis.* 1997;29(3):368-375.
- 2 Bouleware LE, Troll MU, Jaar BG, Myers DI, Powe NR. Identification and referral of patients with progressive CKD: a national study. *Am J Kidney Dis.* 2006;48(2):192-203.
- 3 Stevens LA, Fares G, Fleming J, et al. Low rates of testing and diagnostic codes usage in a commercial laboratory: evidence for lack of physician awareness of chronic kidney disease. *J Am Soc Nephrol.* 2005;16(8):2439-2448.
- 4 Coresh J, Byrd-Holt D, Astor BC, et al. Chronic Kidney Disease awareness, prevalence, and trends among US adults, 1999 to 2000. *J Am Soc Nephrol.* 2005;16(1):180-188.

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