



MAY 2015

# Influential News



The National Influenza Vaccination Disparities Partnership (NIVDP) is comprised of multi-sector partners who work to promote vaccination among underserved populations including African Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians/Alaska Natives. The partnership and this newsletter are supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## NIVDP Partners Lend Their Voice to Promote Flu Vaccination

In this issue, we recognize NIVDP partners who are lending their voices and leadership to promote flu vaccination within the African and African American communities. These trusted messengers include:

- **LaTosha Brown**, Senior Advisor of the Black Women's Roundtable, a program of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP), who used social media to promote flu vaccination during the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the *Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March* to her followers in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Georgia;
- **Rhonda Adams-Rocha**, Community Nurse Consultant at Grace Church of All Nations, in Boston, Massachusetts, whose outreach efforts in her Dorchester neighborhood led to hundreds of people getting vaccinated against the flu during National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW);
- **Maurith Hughes**, Health Ministry Leader of The Potter's House Church in Denver, Colorado, who promoted flu vaccination by disseminating materials in multiple languages to congregation members; and
- **Mamadou Samba**, Director of the District of Columbia Mayor's Office on African Affairs, who joined the NIVDP because its health mission towards the community aligns with the need to increase flu vaccination coverage.

### SPOTLIGHT ON PARTNERS

#### LATOSHA BROWN WITH THE NCBCP PROMOTES FLU VACCINATION AT THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE SELMA VOTING RIGHTS MARCH

LaTosha Brown is a Senior Advisor of the Black Women's Roundtable, a program of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP). Since 2011, she has promoted flu vaccination in Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia and Alabama. LaTosha works with NCBCP local coordinators and affiliated partners in each state to engage them around health issues that impact African Americans.

Ms. Brown leveraged her social media presence to remind nearly 2,800 Twitter followers and over 2,200 Facebook fans about the importance of flu vaccination during the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the *Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March*. Her tweet and Facebook posts went viral, catching the attention of many NIVDP partners. Similar pictures, featuring Ms. Brown with the President, First Lady, and their daughters, have been featured on The White House and The President's twitter handles; amongst many other media channels and platforms.

Ms. Brown knows her role as a change agent. "The work I do allows me to collaborate across communities and improve outcomes for African Americans, particularly women and children. Educating and motivating African Americans to be proactive about their health, such as getting vaccinated against the flu, is one way I can create change."



LaTosha Brown, Senior Advisor of the Black Women's Roundtable (pictured between First Lady, Michelle Obama and daughter, Natasha) marching in Selma, Alabama



## RHONDA ADAMS-ROCHA COORDINATES FLU VACCINATION CLINICS IN BOSTON DURING NIVW

Thanks to the efforts of NIVDP partner Rhonda Adams-Rocha, over 100 people were vaccinated against the flu in her neighborhood of Dorchester during NIVW (December 7-12, 2014).



**Rhonda Adams-Rocha,**  
Community Nurse Consultant  
at Grace Church of All Nations

As a nurse and health practitioner, Ms. Adams-Rocha saw the impact of the 2011-12 flu season in her home state of Massachusetts. She stated, "I wanted to create a prevention solution by making the flu vaccine easily accessible using familiar, comfortable community sites such as churches and schools. My goal was to reach as many community residents as possible, especially the elderly and the young who are high-risk groups."

Through her leadership efforts, two flu vaccination events were held during NIVW. The first event was held at Dorchester Collegiate Academy after school for students and teachers. The other event was held after Saturday services for members at Grace Church of All Nations. Walgreens administered flu vaccinations at both events.

Ms. Adams-Rocha explained, "There are many health disparities that challenge community members in my neighborhood. Flu vaccination is one way to help families stay healthy. I plan to expand my efforts each flu season."

## THE POTTER'S HOUSE OF DENVER DISSEMINATES FLU VACCINATION MATERIALS IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES

The Potter's House of Denver joined the NIVDP in December, 2014 to promote flu vaccination. Located in Southeast Denver, the church is home to a multi-ethnic congregation, which includes African Americans and immigrants from Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe.



Church member gets vaccinated at the Potter's House flu vaccination promotion event in Denver, Colorado

After joining the NIVDP, Health Ministry Leader Maurith Hughes organized a flu vaccination event on January 25, 2015 in the church's popular fellowship hall. Prior to the event, leaders promoted flu vaccination in multiple languages within church bulletins, announcements, and during services. In addition, volunteers offered interpretation services to those in need, and Walgreens provided free flu vaccinations. The Potter's House of Denver prides itself on its outreach services and commitment to providing health information to its members in Spanish, Russian and Kinyarwanda (Rwandan language).

When Maurith Hughes was asked if the flu vaccination event was a success, she stated "Fifty people got vaccinated who otherwise might not have been able to. That's success. Walgreens was a pleasure to work with, and the pharmacists did a fantastic job as they engaged with each and every client who received the vaccine as well as those who had questions. It was great!"



**Mamadou Samba,**  
Director of the DC Mayor's  
Office on African Affairs

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA MAYOR'S OFFICE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS JOINS THE NIVDP

The District of Columbia Mayor's Office on African Affairs (OAA), under the leadership of Mamadou Samba, recently joined the NIVDP. Mr. Samba and OAA seek to improve the overall wellness of Africans in the District, particularly those with chronic health conditions.

The OAA was formed in 2006 to ensure that a full range of health, education, employment, and social services are available to the African community in the District of Columbia. According to the US Census, the District's African community is approximately 17,000 African-born residents, which is roughly 17% of the District's entire immigrant population.

Mr. Samba formerly served as the Public Information Officer for OAA where he authored the District of Columbia's first-ever State of the Africans in the District Report, which aims to raise the awareness of the challenges in diaspora communities, such as employment, education, and health.

One of Mr. Samba's first priorities as OAA director will be to hold a conference that focuses on health disparities among Africans and develop disease prevention strategies, including policy recommendations. "Knowledge and correct information are critical to improved health outcomes, which helps promote dialogue about health issues and treatment and care," he said. The OAA will also host flu vaccination promotion events for a back-to-school push in August.

Share your ideas, photos, and events with us. We will feature them in upcoming issues of InFLUential News.

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