



# HEALTHIER BLACK ELDERS CENTER

FALL 2015

The HBEC encourages older African Americans to participate in approved research.

Research is critical to understanding why African Americans are at much higher risk of developing certain diseases, and why these diseases have a greater impact on their health and longevity. If you agree to be part of the Participant Resource Pool (PRP), we guarantee that:

All research projects meet the highest quality federal, state and university standards.

Your information will be handled with the strictest confidence.

You will be considered for research that is of interest to you.

You have the right to decline a research project for any reason at any time.

If interested contact LaToya Hall at: 313-664-2604

## HEALTHIER BLACK ELDERS CENTER (HBEC)

University of Michigan and Wayne State  
University Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research: A National Institute on Aging Grant Program



## Detroit's Revitalization and Its Affect on Area Seniors

Tam Perry, PhD, a former Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research (MCU-AAAR) scholar, has partnered with St. Aloysius Parish and the United Community Housing Coalition to find out how area seniors, who were forced to move from a downtown Detroit building when their low income senior housing converted into market rate housing, are experiencing the transition. The project, *Relocation Amidst Revitalization: Recreating Social Worlds for Older Adults* is funded through the Hartford ChangeAGents Initiative Action Award and plans to locate and interview seniors on their moving and post-move living situations. The community partners involved are working with students of various local universities to complete this project.

The project hopes to contribute to the understanding of the diverse experiences seniors have while making housing transitions and to developing supportive interventions and services. Dr. Perry and partners also expect their research will assist in providing relevant information to policy makers regarding the impacts of community redevelopment on senior populations. "This project is really trying to contribute to making sure Detroit is a city for all ages," Dr. Perry said.

With an estimated 2,000 Detroit area low-income seniors facing the possibility of involuntary relocation over the next 10 years, this work is critical to ensuring low income seniors have access to the support and resources they

SEE REVITALIZATION ON PAGE 3

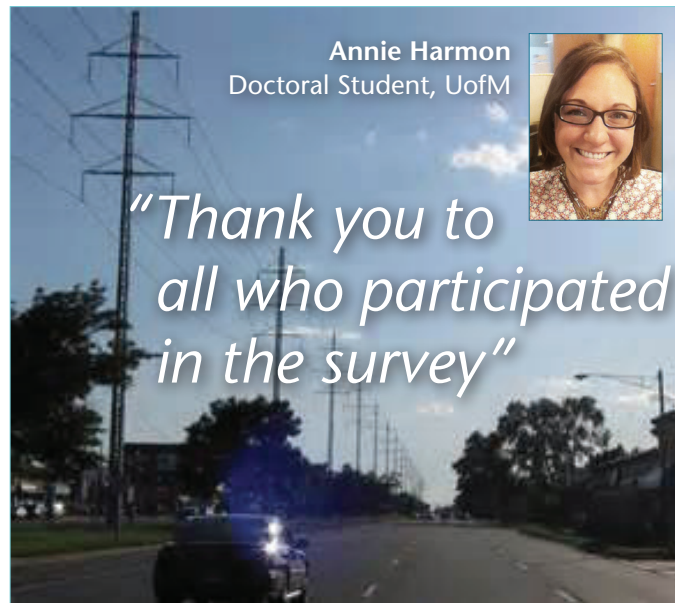
Editor - LaToya Hall  
Graphic Designer - Catherine Blasio

## HBEC in the Driver's Seat for Transportation Research

This May, many HBEC members received an important survey from researcher Annie Harmon called, *Expecting and Planning for Future Transportation - Related Mobility in Adults 55-84*. Annie mailed over 1,100 surveys to HBEC members and got nearly 700 back – an excellent and overwhelming response. She thanks all the HBEC members who completed and returned the survey. Without them, this work could not take place.

Annie is a doctoral student at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. The transportation project is part of her dissertation research exploring how middle-aged and older adults (ages 55-84) use transportation to get to where they need to go. Annie's research will explore the following:

- The driving experiences of middle-aged and older adults, such as number of years driving, events that made drivers consider changing their driving behaviors,



and events related to limited mobility.

- How middle-aged and older adults plan for possible changes to their current transportation practices.
- Middle-aged and older adults' expectations of how likely it is they will need to plan for changes to their current transportation practices.
- What type of planning would help middle-aged and older adults who currently drive deal with

transitioning into being a non-driver in the future?

The ultimate goal of Annie's work is to help older drivers and those around them plan for future changes to their transportation practices to ensure they stay mobile. Maintaining mobility as we age is very important. It allows us to stay connected to family, friends, and other social groups that give life deeper meaning.

Although many people assume they will always

be able to drive, our health can decline as we age, both physically and mentally, so that it is no longer safe to continue driving. Balancing the need to stay mobile and engaged with being a safe driver is a challenge many adults will face as they age. HBEC thanks Annie Harmon for this much-needed research and is proud that HBEC volunteers helped to make it possible.

The new season of Lunch & Learns begins in September **SEE BACK FOR DATES**



We offer a huge THANK YOU to the Healthier Black Elders, who attended the Lunch & Learn Sessions this past season. Over 700 people attended the Lunch & Learns, held at a variety of locations throughout the city, between September 2014 and June 2015. In addition to gathering useful information on a variety of topics in aging, those in attendance took full advantage of the free health and cognitive screenings offered at the events. The total number of health screenings conducted was over 200, and cognitive screenings were just as popular with more than 150 being performed throughout the season.

# Understanding Memory Loss

What is the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia? This is a question we hear frequently here at the Healthier Black Elders Center. These two terms are often used interchangeably and often mixed up in everyday conversation and understanding. However, dementia is not one specific disease. There are forms of dementia that are completely unrelated to Alzheimer's disease.

Dementia is an umbrella term for diseases and conditions characterized by memory decline, decline in thinking

skills and the ability to perform every day activities. Damage to nerve cells in the brain called neurons is the cause of dementia. Although Alzheimer's disease is one of the conditions that causes dementia (Alzheimer's accounts for an estimated 60 to 80 percent of dementia cases), there are many other conditions that could cause dementia. There are also some conditions that mimic dementia through presenting with dementia like symptoms, but may be reversed with treatment (see illustration).

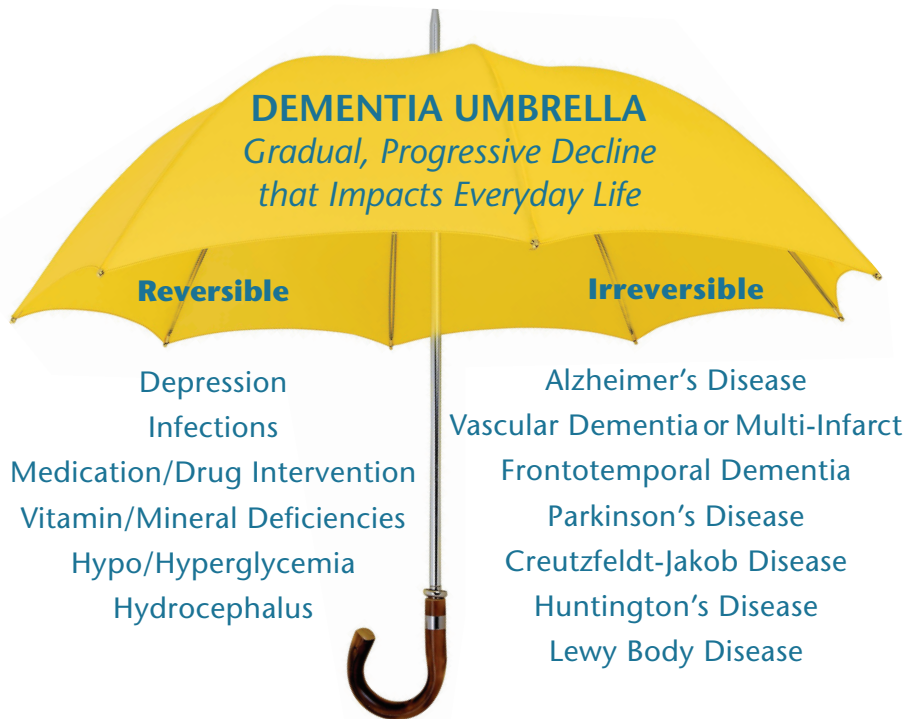
While signs of dementia can vary greatly, the following are a

few early warning signs of dementia. Not all warning signs need to be present for a person to have dementia.

1. Memory loss.
2. Difficulties in planning or solving problems.
3. Difficulty in completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure.
4. Loss of ability to focus and pay attention.
5. Paranoia and agitation.
6. Problems with finding the right words (speaking or writing).
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.
8. Decreased or poor judgement
9. Loss of interest in work or social activities.
10. Changes in mood and personality

If you or someone you know has memory loss or other personality and thinking changes that concern you, see a doctor. Don't assume the problem is Alzheimer's—about 40% of the time it is not. Only a physician can help you determine the cause of your memory changes and the best way to help you feel like your old self once again.

*Remember Alzheimer's is a dementia, but dementia isn't always Alzheimer's.*



**Revitalization** from page 1 need if and when they need to relocate. "This work is important because we already know many older adults like to stay in their own homes as they age, Dr. Perry

said. "We now need to understand better how to support them when they do move."

Dr. Perry is also a member of the Senior Housing Preservation-Detroit, a coalition formed to preserve senior housing in Midtown

and downtown. The coalition also works to smooth the transition of seniors to new housing when preserving the current living situation is not an option. Senior Housing Preservation Detroit meets monthly at the Hannan House.



Institute of Gerontology  
 Healthier Black Elders Center  
 87 E. Ferry  
 Detroit, MI 48202  
 313-577-2297  
 www.mcuaaar.wayne.edu

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 NEWSLETTER

# Save the Dates: Lunch & Learn



*These events are **FREE but you must RSVP to attend** by calling Donna MacDonald at 313-664-2605*

## *BrainStorm: A Workout for the Mind*

**September 22, 2015 9:30 am - Noon**

Community Social Services, 9851 Hamilton Ave, Detroit, 48202  
 9:30am health screenings, 10am presentation followed by lunch.

Shake up your brain with fun, new activities that stimulate and invigorate your thinking. We will talk about brain function, memory tricks and different types of dementia. Donna MacDonald and Cheryl Deep, of the Institute of Gerontology at Wayne State University, introduce a breakthrough approach to brain health and training.

## *Aches and Pains:*

*Is it My Age or Something Else?*

**October 15, 2015 9:30 - Noon**

Tabernacle Church, 2080 W Grand Blvd., Detroit, 48208  
 9:30 am health screenings, 10am presentation followed by lunch.

Learn how our aches and pains can be associated with arthritis, the different kinds of arthritis and how you can treat the pain both with medicine and holistic approaches. We top off the session with some Tai Chi especially for pain relief. Dr. Russel York, M.D., will be our keynote speaker.

## *Financial Scams: Don't be a Victim;*

*& The Truth be Told: Legal Documents*

**November 18, 2015 9:30 am - Noon**

Heilmann Comm. Center, 19601 Crusade, Detroit, 48205  
 9:30 am health screenings, 10am presentation followed by lunch.

Financial health can impact your physical health. Learn how to avoid financial exploitation, what to look out for and how to keep your money safe. Also, legal expert Kathleen Newell, JD, will enlighten you on what legal documents you really need to have in place to ensure your assets, health wishes and peace of mind are protected.

## *Making the Most of Your Doctor's Appointment,*

*& Blood Sugar and What it Means to My Health*

**December 10, 2015 9:30 - Noon**

Regency Heights, 19100 W Seven Mile Rd, Detroit 48219  
 9:30 am health screenings, 10am presentation followed by lunch.

Tips and tricks for getting your questions answered and understanding what your physician is communicating during your appointments. Plus, learn the effects of blood sugar on our over-all health and how to control your sugars for optimum health.