The HBEC encourages older African Americans to participate in research with the goal of addressing health disparities



Summer 2021

Connecting Older Adults to Research



How You Can Help

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 quarantee that:

The 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 HBEC Program Coordinator at 313-664-2604

The Healthier Black Elders Center is part of the Michigan State University, University of Michigan and Wayne State University Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research: A National Institute on Aging Grant Program



RESEARCH STUDY SPOTLIGHT

Personalized Approach to Breast Cancer Screening

by Sarah Whitney, MSW Clinical Student

For the last 30 years, women have been advised that they should be screened for breast cancer annually. Despite these screening recommendations, breast cancer is still the second leading cause of cancer death for women in the U.S. Laura Esserman, MD, and her research team are seeking to change that with the WISDOM Study.

WISDOM stands for 'Women Informed to Screen Depending On Measures of risk'. Dr. Esserman, director of the UCSF Carol Franc Buck Breast Care Center, and Steffanie



Goodman, the marketing & communications lead for this project, are researchers from the University of California, San Francisco Department of Surgery. Their goal is to change the way breast cancer is detected by identifying the safest and

see WISDOM page 2

HBEC COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE

Introducing a New HBEC Subcommittee: Critical Crossroads

by Christian Conyers, MSW, Candidate '21, U of M

Throughout 2020, inequities were brought to the forefront of the media in response to a critical election, Covid-19 death disparities, and the Black Lives Matter protests. Institutions across the United States promoted messages that promised racial equity and opportunity within their organizations. In the summer of 2020, the Pew Research Center reported, "Two-thirds see CROSSROADS page 3

Help with Research **PAGE 4-5**

Detroit Area Eat Safe Fish Program **PAGE 6-7**



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most effective breast cancer detection tools for each woman.

In an interview with UCSF. Dr. Esserman said, "We now know that all breast cancers are not the same . . . This study tests the concept that one-size-fits-all might not be the right strategy for breast cancer screening and prevention either, especially because we know that all women do not have the same risk. Instead, we have developed an approach to determine how best to screen based on each woman's risk, so we can do more for those at high risk, and less for those at lower risk."

The study includes women age 40 to 74 and uses two screening methods: the traditional annual mammogram and a personalized screening kit. The screening kit is tailored to different ethnicities and accounts for women's individual risk factors such as breast density, genes and family health history. All participants will add any previous mammograms to their health history and will complete an annual health survey that includes a saliva DNA test for a genetic risk assessment, and an assessment of other risk factors.

These risk factors can be especially telling across different ethnic backgrounds. Kim Rhoads, MD, MPH, a partner in recruitment and the associate director for community engagement at the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, shared in the same interview. "Minority women may be diagnosed with more aggressive breast tumors at younger ages," she said. "Screening guidelines based on our understanding of breast cancer in white women may fail to achieve best outcomes in diverse populations. The WISDOM study will help us better understand the behavior



The WISDOM Study is now an active study

with the HBEC PRP. If you are interested in participating or would like more information visit their website at

www.TheWisdomStudy.org

or call our office at 313-664-2616.

of breast cancer in women of color, and tailor personalized and effective screening guidelines that will detect tumors easily and narrow a longstanding disparities gap."

A unique feature of the study is the participants' level of control. Participants have the option of being randomly placed in one of the two screening groups or choosing the group they prefer. Because the study is centered around increasing health and safety as it relates to breast cancer, the researchers thought it was important to allow participants to select the screening option that felt safest to them.

Due to the invasive nature of some breast cancer screening and the still extremely high rates of breast cancer, this study will provide women and physicians with more knowledge and control over screening and personal care plans. They hope this will result in less anxiety around screening and closer monitoring for women at higher risk, especially women of color. These results could mean catching cancer in its earlier, more treatable stages and could ultimately save lives.

"Most women spend 30 to 35 years getting breast screenings," said Dr. Esserman "We recommend that women join the WISDOM study and spend the next five years helping us create a better future, where we can learn how best to target both breast cancer screening and prevention."

HBEC Student Interns Did a Stellar Job

On behalf of the HBEC CAB, staff, and program leaders, we would like to recognize the hard work and dedica-







GIANFERMI WHITNEY

CONYERS

tion of our three internship students: Hannah Gianfermi, Sarah Whitney, and Christian Conyers. Completing their field placement requirement with the Healthier Black Elders Center, these students have greatly contributed to keeping the program running during a very challenging year. They conducted countless phone calls to HBEC members to check-in and provide resources, facilitated the weekly Party Line program, assisted with Community Advisory Board member activities and helped with Lunch

& Learn events. They learned a tremendous amount on aging issues, health disparities, diversity, and advocacy.

Hannah will be graduating this year with her Master of Social Work from Wayne State University, Sarah has completed her first year of the Master of Social Work program at WSU, and Christian is completing her first year of the Master of Social Work program at the University of Michigan. We thank them for all their hard work and wish them great success in their future endeavors!

Do you know someone who would like to join the HBEC program?

Becoming an HBEC member connects you to opportunities to participate in research studies attend various health information seminars, and learn about other programs or events focused on aging and health.

Volunteers must be 55 or older, identify as Black or African American, and complete our health survey, done by phone or mail. Simply call

313-664-2616 to join. Share this special opportunity with friends and family!



UPDATE CONT.

Crossroads from page 1

have continued to witness various forms of injustice within our society." Although we acknowledge reform will take time, the HBEC Community Advisory Board (CAB) members' want to aid in this process.

The HBEC CAB strives to address injustice through the formation of a new subcommittee titled Critical Crossroads. Detroit CAB members Henry Swift, Patricia Mullin, Jim Bridgforth, and Wilma Stringer will lead this subcommittee to engage in community conversations, advocacy, and strategies. Potential topics include voter suppression, policing, hate crimes, and much more. At the beginning of HBEC Lunch & Learns, participants can look forward to presentations from Critical Crossroads. The subcommittee hopes to raise awareness pertaining to social injustice and provide feasible ways for members to become involved in advocacy. For topic suggestions or for additional questions, please call (313) 664-2616 or email HBEC Coordinator Vanessa Rorai at vrorai@ wayne.edu.

Help with Research While at Home

The list below contains studies looking for participants. No in-person visits needed. All studies have been reviewed and approved by the Community Advisory Board.

The WALLET Study – People who experience a decline in memory or thinking skills may unknowingly also experience a decline in taking care of their finances. This study will review the past 12 months of your bank statements and administer some psychological and cognitive tests. Looking for English-speaking adults aged 60 or older. Study completed by telephone. Contact Vanessa Rorai at vrorai@wayne.edu or 313-664-2604

Shared Decision-Making & Colorectal Cancer Screening Behaviors

 Take part in a telephone interview to understand informational needs and beliefs about colorectal cancer screening. Participants will review an existing health pamphlet and provide feedback. You must be 75 to 85 years old and have some college or less (no Bachelor's degree). We are particularly interested in learning from men. Contact Tamara Cadet at tamara. cadet@simmons.edu or 617-521-3981

Community-based Approach to Early Identification of Transitions to Mild Cognitive Impairment and Alzheimer's Disease in African Americans, COVID Sub-Protocol

 This study wants to improve how we diagnosis Alzheimer's Disease in African Americans by using electroencephalogram (EEG) and computerized assessment. We are conducting a phone-only Enhanced Screening to identify those who could be a good fit for the study when in-person visits

resume. We will also give you a questionnaire to assess your experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants must be African American and 65+ years old (among other criteria). Those who complete the Enhanced Screening and COVID questionnaire will be compensated for their time. Contact the ELECTRA Study Team at 313-577-1692, or email ELECTRA@ wayne.edu

The Impact of Racial Concordance on African American Participation in Nursing Research – This study is conducting telephone and Zoom interviews to examine the shared connections of African American researchers and African American research participants. It will also explore African American research participants' shared cultural experiences. Participants will receive an Amazon e-gift card for par-

WHO WE ARE

Participant Research Pool (PRP)

A database of older African Americans open to participate in research studies on aging. When you become a member of the HBEC, you are added to the Participant Resource Pool. Web: https://mcuaaar.wayne.edu/participant

Ph: 313-664-2604

Healthier Black Elders Center (HBEC)

The community outreach program of MCUAAAR responsible for educating seniors about health and promoting research on older African Americans.

Web: https://mcuaaar.wayne.edu/healthier

Ph: 313-664-2604

Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research (MCUAAAR)

One of the RCMAR centers jointly run by WSU, U-M and MSU to train scholars in African American aging research to reduce health disparities faced by minority older adults. Principal Investigators are James S. Jackson, PhD, U-M; Peter Lichtenberg, PhD, ABPP, WSU; and Joan Ilardo, PhD, MSU. Web: https://mcuaaar.wayne.edu

Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research (RCMAR)

Created and funded by the NIA, RCMAR coordinates and supports 18 centers across the country, each focusing on a particular population and/or disease. The Michigan Center for African American Aging Research is one of those centers. Web: https://www.nia.nih.gov/research/dbsr/resourcecenters-minority-aging-research-rcmar

National Institute on Aging (NIA)

A governmental agency that is part of the National Institutes of Health. It funds scientific research to understand the nature of aging and supports centers including MCUAAAR.

Web: https://www.nia.nih.gov



ticipation. Must be between the ages of 18 and 85 with a history of participating in research. Contact Marie Campbell-Statler at 301-332-0639 or mas3px@virginia.edu

Aging & Changing Natural Environments in Detroit – Earth Day 2021 was the kickoff for this study spearheaded by HBEC's faculty member Dr. Tam Perry. This project seeks to better understand the impacts of climate change, changing natural environments, and water and housing concerns on older adults in Detroit. Seeking any Detroit residents aged 55 or older to complete a survey by phone, Zoom, or mail. Type this link into your browser to complete the study online: bit.ly/ACNED-Survey or contact Evan Villeneuve at 313-332-8267 or ee8332@wayne.edu

Early Serotonin System Changes in Prodromal DLB – This study explores relationships between certain sleep problems, changes in sense of smell, and possible risk for dementia. Participants are mailed a study survey and a measure of sense of smell. Participants must be 65 years of age and older. To learn more, please contact Emily Herreshoff (egalopin@med. umich.edu), Cate Lewis (cathlewi@med.umich.edu) or call 313-664-2616.

Preferences of Couple-Based Smoking Cessation Interventions among Smoker Couples – This study is conducting interviews on Zoom to examine smokers' and their partner's preferences of a couple-based smoking cessation intervention. Married couples (living as married) where one or both members currently smoke are eligible. Contact Seung Hee Choi at hc0054@wayne.edu or 313-577-8945

Why Should I Participate in Research?

by Dolly Niles, Executive Director, QUEST Research Institute

In my 15 years working in medical research, there's always been concern about the lack of minority participation but no real action plan to fix it. African Americans make up 13% of the US population (in metro-Detroit this is almost 23%), but only 5% of clinical trial participants. Our experience with the Covid-19 pandemic has provided the hard facts on how this lack of research participation is detrimental to the health of minorities: they were more seriously affected by Covid, and the healthcare community didn't see it coming and didn't know why.

This lit a fire under the medical research community to do better and improve minority participation in clinical trials. In our research we need to capture populations that are more at risk for certain diseases, get a complete picture of the risk and benefit of a new treatment and test these treatments on the people that will use them. We know the barriers are a lack of awareness about trials that are available. a lack of accessibility, and a lack of knowledge about measures to protect you and your privacy. Did you know when you enroll in a study, your name and other personal data are kept separate from the research information so your privacy is protected?

I hope to provide knowledge to the community about what a research participant can expect to experience, about what trials are out there and about your rights and safeguards. Since I manage a research site, I also work with sponsors to procure support to clear obstacles that can keep people from participating.

There is significant work going on in treating Alzheimer's disease – more trials at one time than I've ever seen. This is great news, but we need participants or they will never succeed. We need minority participants because among people ages 65 and older, African Americans have the highest prevalence of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (13.8 %), followed by Hispanics (12.2 %). If you would like to learn more about current research on memory loss, look for details about our July Lunch & Learn where we will have Dr. Ellenbogen as a speaker.

I hope to see you then!

Special Help with Our Bonus Issue – The HBEC budget covers two issues of this newsletter each year. We wanted to add an extra summer issue to stay in touch with our members. We give special thanks to **Dolly Niles** and **Quest Research** for sponsoring the printing and mailing of this special issue.

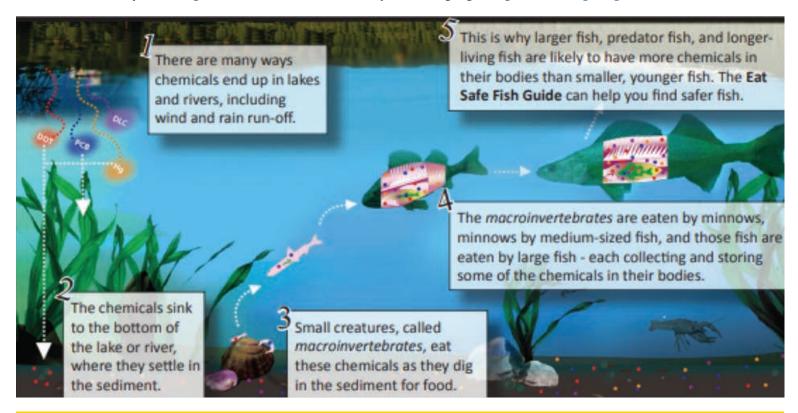
Detroit Area Eat Safe Fish Program

by Jeremy Waechter, outreach coordinator, MDHHS Division of Environmental Health

Michigan's beautiful landscape includes thousands of lakes, streams, wetlands, and rivers, making fishing a popular activity in our great outdoors. However, Michigan is a historically industrial state that discharged many chemicals into its waterways, and some chemicals, like mercury, are a problem worldwide. So it is important to choose the fish you catch to eat wisely to avoid chemicals like mercury, PCBs, dioxins, and PFOS that are sometimes found in locally-caught fish.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' (MDH-HS) Eat Safe Fish (ESF) program is responsible for testing fish filets and issuing guidelines to help people choose safer fish to eat. If you use the MDHHS Eat Safe Fish Guide and restrict your catch to fish that have fewer chemicals, you will get a lot of health benefits and have very little risk.

Each year, MDHHS partners with the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy and the Department of Natural Resources to collect fish from waterbodies throughout the state. These fish are fileted as if you were preparing them to eat. Those filets are then tested at the MDHHS Laboratory for a variety of chemicals. MDHHS scientists review the data and update the Eat Safe Fish Guides. These Guides are available to anyone for free by calling MDHHS at 1-800-648-6942 or by visiting Michigan.gov/eatsafefish.



The River Walkers

While the Detroit River is popular with boating anglers, many people also fish from the shore. Unfortunately, the River is also heavily impacted by historical contamination due to the amount of industry in the area. Based on MDHHS's research, shoreline anglers often rely on fish for subsistence and tend to be more impacted by various environmental and social justice issues. This realization, over a decade ago, led MDHHS to develop our River Walker program, first launched in the Saginaw area and now running in Detroit and Kalamazoo.

The River Walker program provides information directly to anglers fishing on the shoreline who are likely to be greatly impacted by environmental contamination. River Walkers are members of the community hired by MDHHS and trained on the Eat Safe Fish (ESF) program. Walkers visit locations that are popular with shoreline anglers who often rely on fish for subsistence. This program ensures that information about choosing and eating safer fish makes it directly into the hands of those anglers who tend to be most at-risk.

The ESF program team also attends community events with partners like Friends of the Detroit River and the Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency (WMCAA) food distribution network across Wayne County. The Eat Safe Fish team is also developing partnerships with Wayne County community organizations, participating in non-profit collaboratives, community coalitions, and community projects.

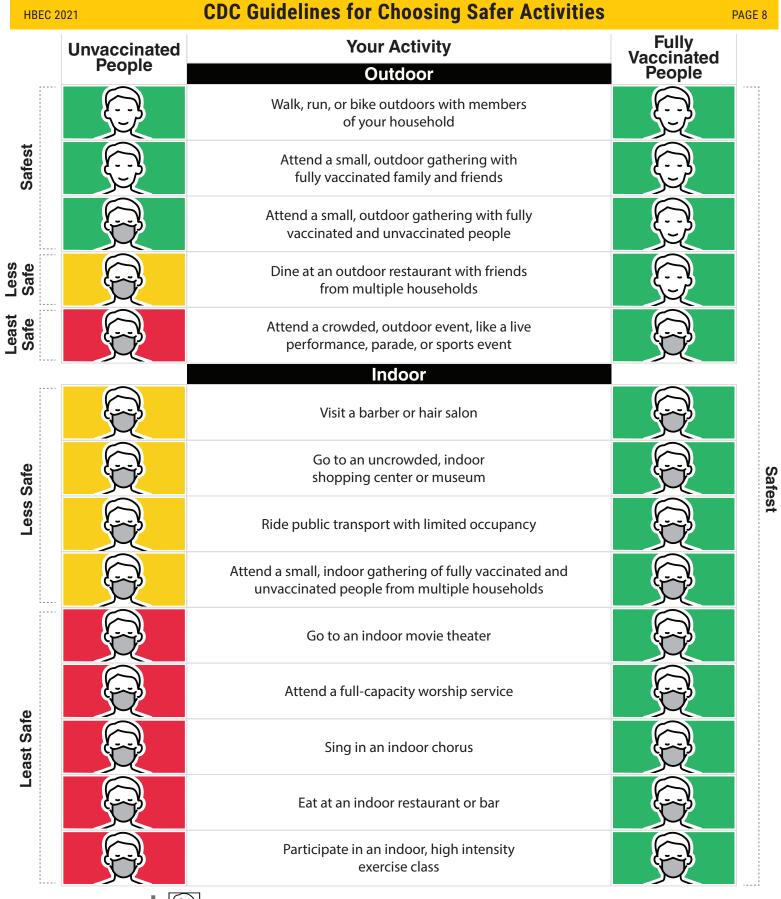


Jim Bridgforth (left) describes his role as "Focusing in on informing anglers about the fish in the river, while enjoying the river.

We do this so that anglers can make the decision to eat fish with less harmful chemicals to protect themselves and their families."

Learn more about the **Eat Safe Fish** program and choosing safe fish by visiting **Michigan.gov/eatsafefish.**

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Get a Covid Vaccine



Prevention measures not needed

Take prevention measures

Fully vaccinated people: wear a mask Unvaccinated people: wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart, and wash your hands.

- Safety levels assume the recommended prevention measures are followed, both by the individual and the venue (if applicable).
- CDC cannot provide the specific risk level for every activity in every community. It is important to consider your own personal situation and the risk to you, your family, and your community before venturing out.

Depressive Symptoms and What You Can Do

by Hannah Gianfermi, MSW
Clinical Student

Depression is a common but serious mood disorder, and it can come in different forms such as clinical (or major depressive disorder), postpartum depression, persistent depressive disorder, psychotic depression, seasonal affective disorder, or even bipolar depression. It mainly starts in adulthood, but can be present from a young age, as well. It can cause severe symptoms that affect how one feels, thinks, and

fect how one feels, thinks, and handles daily activities.

Some symptoms of depression include: persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood; feelings of hopelessness, pessimism, irritability, guilt, restlessness, worthlessness, helplessness; a loss of interest in hobbies and activities; decreased energy; difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions; and difficulty with sleep or food related activities. Some risk factors for depression are a personal or family history of depression, major life changes, trauma, or stress, and certain physical illnesses and medications.

Depression can be treated with medication, therapy, or a combination of the two. It is important to contact your doctor or a mental health professional if you think you are experiencing symptoms of depression for more than two weeks. The amount or types of stress that one may experience can lead to a significant amount of depression if not addressed. One's ability to cope with daily stress impacts

physical and mental health now and later.

The Center for Urban Responses to Environmental Stressors (CURES) is an environmental health sciences core center funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. CURES, a Wayne State University program, has hosted and recorded a few presentations including coping with stress. It is a good baseline for learning about how stress affects

people, and how coping mechanisms affect mental health. They address a variety of topics, including, but not limited to: Good Food = Good Health, Gardening for Good Health, and Mental Health & Neighborhood Stressors.

Some key takeaways from CURES materials on stress management: handling stress well can come from a good support system, being active, and from a toolkit of coping strategies. In addition, making a list

of what makes you happy or activities you enjoy and doing that will help ease the effect of stress on your mental health. Many people need to take time for self-care, but they are unaware of what qualifies as self-care or do not understand why it is necessary. Self-care tips include maintaining a good sleep cycle, cultivate relationships, educate yourself on mental health, accept help when needed, and exercise in any way you can. One can also start a journal and write down one or two things each day that they are grateful for.

In addition to CURES, these resources may be helpful: Adult Outpatient services (mental health support) at 313-961-7990 and Older Adult Services (for those in group facilities and nursing homes for a broad range of clinical, psychiatric, nursing and occupational therapy support) at 313-961-7990.

RESOURCES

The 24/7
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255

National SAMHSA Helpline 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Telehealth www.BetterHelp.com

The 24/7 Stay Well counseling line 1-888-535-6136 and press "8"

The 24/7 National Disaster
Distress Helpline
1-800-985-5950 or
Text 'TalkWithUs' to 66746

10 a.m. - 2 a.m. The Michigan PEER Warmline 1-888-733-7753

Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network for non-crisis 313-344-9099





A Social Group for Older Detroiters Join Us by phone or computer!

A virtual social group for anyone feeling isolated.

Hosted by the Healthier Black Elders Center at
Wayne State University. There will be icebreakers,
games, poems, videos, and general topics.

Meet us on Zoom every Tuesday 1:00-2:00pm now
through August 10th, 2021.



Questions?
Call 313-664-2616
Hannah Gianfermi
at fz8926@wayne.edu
or Sarah Whitney at
er7366@wayne.edu



Wayne State University Institute of Gerontology





Sample Agenda

- Introductions
- Icebreaker
- Potential Topics:
 - Ways to have Fun
 - Physical Health
 - Mental Health
 - Wavs to De-Stress
 - Exercise and Activities
 - Cognitive Activities
 - Careers and Retirement
 - Hobbies
 - Things that give life meaning
- Games
- Concluding Remarks
 & Next Week's News

The Healthier Black Elders Center is part of the Michigan State University, University of Michigan and Wayne State University, Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research: A National Institute on Aging Grant Program



Center for Urban Responses to Environmental Stressors



Seeking SAGE Advice

by Carrie Leach, Community Outreach Program Manager

We are in the process of developing a senior-driven advocacy program titled "Senior Advocates and Guardians of our Environment (SAGE). If you have concerns about things happening in your neighborhood, do you know what you can do about it? We learned that people want to know more about how to protect their communities, reduce harm, improve health, and contribute to the decision-making process. In response, we developed a training to educate people to advocate for themselves. At the Center for Urban Responses to Environmental Stressors (CURES), the focus of the advocacy work of the Community Engagement team has been to help individuals learn how to participate

in decision-making about their neighborhoods and the city of Detroit.

What is advocacy? A general definition of advocacy is, "public support for or recommendation of a policy." More specifically, our

approach to advocacy is to increase the ability of people to influence policies and practices that preserve, protect, and improve the well-being of their community. Environmental health is a local matter, and we believe that Detroit's older residents are a key resource for helping to preserve and protect their neighborhoods and community and the best line of defense against harm.

To make sure that people can participate in the advocacy process, we

are developing a workshop tailored for people age 55 and older and seeking informants to help shape it. If you would like to attend, participate, or provide insight on how this should be developed please fill out the form at the top of our page at https://cures.wayne.edu/commu-



nity-engagement or by hovering your smart phone camera over this QR code image.



Any questions, contact: rochellechapman@wayne.edu

Left WSUers and advocates for digital justice (left to right) Rochelle Chapman and Carrie Leach of CURES, and LaToya Hall of the Successful Aging thru Financial Empowerment (SAFE) program.

alzheimer's \bigcap association

GREATER MICHIGAN CHAPTER

Looking for Volunteers to Eradicate Alzheimer's The **Alzheimer's Association** relies on dedicated volunteers to achieve its vision of a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia. We seek committed, passionate volunteers to educate the public, lead support groups, and link consumers to services. Please contact Treena Horton, program coordinator, for more information at **248-996-1058**.



WSU, Institute of Gerontology Healthier Black Elders Center 87 E. Ferry St. Detroit, MI 48202 313-664-2600 www.mcuaaar.wayne.edu Non-profit US postage PAID Detroit, MI Permit #3844



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HBEC Editor & Community Outreach Specialist - Vanessa Rorai

All newsletter content is approved and directed by the HBEC Community Advisory Board.

If you have any questions, contact us at 313-664-2616

Lunch & Learns

Join us online!

Each Lunch & Learn webinar will start at 11:00 am with presentations from 11:30 - 12:30 pm. You can join by computer to see and hear the presentation, or by telephone to listen to the presentation.

If you would like a reminder before the event, RSVP at 313-664-2616 and leave a voice message with your:

- 1) Name
- 2) Phone number
- 3) Lunch & Learn Topic and
- 4) How you are attending, by phone or computer

To join by computer, type this link https://bit.ly/HBElunch into your internet browser

To join by telephone, dial: 1-312-626-6799, Webinar ID: 954 9577 4535

Can't attend? Listen to recorded webinars on our Healthier Black Elders Center website.

After the presentation dates, visit:

https://mcuaaar.org/resources/videos/hbec



Research on Memory and Brain Health Monday, July 12, 2021 | 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

What should you expect when you are in a research study? What are the benefits of participating in research? How are research study results used? Researchers from QUEST Research will answer these questions and share information on how to receive free memory screenings and opportunities to participate in studies on memory.

"What's Next after the Vaccine?"

Thursday, August 12, 2021 I 11:00 am – 12:30 pm Join us for a panel discussion with physicians to discuss the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic through a health equity lens. We will focus on what could be done to better serve the interests and needs of senior populations of Flint, Detroit, as well as throughout the State of Michigan. We will end with discussing how to improve our residents' trust in medicine and public health and a live Q&A. **We look forward to seeing you:**)