



SPOTLIGHT Interview.....

DPAC member Lisa Braddix is a Community Health Promoter, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital, who graduated from OSU and has a graduate degree from the University of Michigan in Public Health. Lisa started her career with St. Joseph after graduation in January 2007 to support the newly created Community Health Promoters Department.

What does a Community Health Worker do?

LB: "The general role of a CHW is to act as a liaison between the healthcare professionals/hospital and the public. They provide patients with a contact who can translate the often confusing or intimidating healthcare system."

Is that what you do at St. Joseph Mercy?

LB: "Yes and no. At St. Joseph Mercy we take it a step further, and try to close the access gaps for individuals needing healthcare. We go out into the communities and provide screenings (blood pressure, blood glucose), targeting hypertension and diabetes."

How does the program work? What is your main goal?

LB: "When we conduct a health-screening event, we ask general health related questions of each person. Our goal is to get the patient to see a doctor, if they are in need of care. There are several clinics in Pontiac that we use as referrals."

Then what?

LB: "Well, we don't stop there! We make sure to follow-up with each patient to see if they visited a doctor and inquire if they need educational materials."

Who are you currently targeting for support?

LB: "We are focused in Pontiac reaching African American and Hispanic adults who are low income, uninsured, or lacking appropriate coverage for care."

How does the city of Pontiac respond to your programs?

LB: "We are currently working with the city to create a farmer's market for the local community because we identified through our screenings that people have limited access to fresh produce and vegetables. Our hope is to develop more partnerships with the city to support the citizens in the community."

Does the hospital have plans to expand the program next year?

LB: "Starting in January 2008, we are starting a Healthy Lifestyle Workshop series running for six weeks. Our focus is on chronic diseases and we will invite those patients already contacted through our screening event. In addition, we eventually would like to expand our focus areas to include; cholesterol, cancer, and infant mortality."

What is most rewarding about your job as a Community Health Promoter?

LB: "I have the chance to meet many people and it's great to have an instant impact on their lives. Many times the people we work with feel like they have been forgotten by society. Our follow-up phone calls make them feel special and important!"