

In conjunction with its 2008 Annual Scientific Meeting in New Orleans, the American Society of Hypertension, Inc. (ASH) launched its 1st Hypertension Community Outreach Initiative. This undertaking was intended to begin implementing the new strategic initiative of the Society to target **hypertension patients, those at risk for hypertension** as well as the **lay public**, while addressing its mission:

To translate and promote current research in hypertension and vascular disease into effective treatment strategies for patients with hypertension and associated disorders.

Initiative Summary

The 2008 ASH Hypertension Community Outreach Initiative in New Orleans was a series of (nine) 9 events which served to educate and positively impact the lifestyle factors and overall health of residents and visitors in New Orleans. During the weeks of May 7 – 17, 2008, ASH worked with a wide of range of demographics – from children to seniors -- and reached people in the neighborhoods of New Orleans as well as surrounding areas (one woman reported she was from Lafitte Louisiana, about 30 miles on the bayou) who were in most need of medical attention relating to blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose screening. ASH called upon national and local professionals, government officials, and organizations to assist in this endeavor and successfully brought a host of honored guests together.

Hypertension Health Festival in the French Market - Saturday, May 10, 2008

The Hypertension Health Festival took place on Saturday May 10, 2008 and was the largest component of the patient outreach initiative. Checkpoints were set up throughout the festival route (starting at Washington Artillery Park and ending at the French Market) where individuals could be screened for blood pressure, and could receive information and tools which would help them understand how exercise (10,000 steps per day)) and eating right (the Dash Diet) could help them achieve controlled blood pressure and good health. Fruits and vegetables, pedometers, home blood pressure device, and jump ropes were given out to festival attendees.

It is important to note that several people, who were screened, were advised to go to the closest health unit to obtain medical attention. Vitalogy, Inc, performed the blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol screening and provided an aggregate report of the findings. The results showed that 560 people were screened for blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol while an additional 400 - 500 were screened for blood pressure only.

There was media coverage of the festival throughout the morning. The event was carried on the NBC local affiliate WDSU News Channel 6 Saturday Morning TV program during the 5:45 AM, 6:00 AM and 6:15 AM segments. Another press conference took place later in the morning where Dr. Kevin Stephens, City Health Director and the Honorary James Carter (New Orleans Councilman) were in attendance and spoke to the city about the dangers and concerns of hypertension in the community.

St Thomas Clinic Community Health Forum – Monday, May 12, 2008

On Monday, May 12, 2008, ASH held a Hypertension Community Health Forum at the St. Thomas Clinic where local clergy, medical professionals and New Orleans residents met to discuss Hypertension and its effects on the local community. A service award was given to Don Erwin, MD and Mary Abell, MD, the founders of the clinic.

Hypertension Health Festival – Central City Senior Center – Tuesday, May 13, 2008

The Hypertension Health Festival was then implemented at the Central City Senior Center on May 13, 2008, where senior citizens from the surrounding senior centers were screened for blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose and were offered physical exercise and nutritional instruction tailored to their specific needs. Fruits and vegetables, pedometers, home blood pressure device, and jump ropes were given to the seniors. Interestingly, one (1) patient was taken to the local medical facility (Touro Medical Center) for medical attention as she was presenting with extremely elevated blood pressure (over 200/140) and other symptoms.

Hypertension Health Festival – Martin Luther King School – Saturday, May 17, 2008

Another Hypertension Festival was taken to New Orleans community children and their families at the Martin Luther Kind Charter School in the 9th Ward on Saturday May 17, 2008. The event was geared towards children's health and awareness. Counselors specializing in childhood issues were available to discuss childhood obesity and other childhood issues with parents.

Ground Rounds and In-Service Clinic Visits

Finally, throughout the weeks of May 6 – May 17, 2008, ASH organized:

- Grand Rounds at Tulane Medical School and at Ochsner Health Center providing lectures by the 2006-2008 ASH President, Suzanne Oparil, MD and ASH Treasurer, Joseph L. Izzo, Jr., MD; and
- "In-Service" lectures with the Excel Clinics (which was held at City Hall and was attended by over 200 people); Daughters of Charity

Clinic; and Orleans Parish Health Unit. The visiting experts engaged in discussion and offered effective strategies focused specifically on hypertensive patient whose bloodpressure is difficult to control.

Branding

An overall name, slogan, logo and concept were designed to market the events:

Overall Name	Partners in Care Health -Check Fair.
Slogan	“Controlling your Blood Pressure is a Check Away”.
Logo	Red checkmark imbedded in the ASH logo
Concept	Check Your Numbers, Check Your Food, Check Your Fitness, Check Your Family, Check for Fun – all checks had a full explanation of what they meant.

The Branding was consistent in all marketing materials including flyers, signage, promotional items; etc.

Performance Metrics.

Participants were required to register at the Festival in order to enjoy the free services and giveaway items. Registered participants received a “Your Results” sheet upon which blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels were recorded. The measure for “desirable” results and “Why it’s Important” explanation provided additional information to the patients.

All participants received a complimentary on-site consultation with a medical professional who explained the results. Participants also received a clinic card which listed locations of clinics which would provide further medical treatment. During this consultation, patients were instructed to bring the card (with their screening information) to one of several area clinics in order to receive follow-up treatment and intervention. The clinics were instructed to mail the self-addressed cards directly to the American Society of Hypertension.

DVD of the Main Events

ASH memorialized the events in a DVD which captured the events at the French Market and the Senior Center as well as key interviews with clinic physicians, ASH participating Board Members, and the ASH President.

Outreach 2009 and Beyond

In 2009, ASH intends to design the outreach program related to hypertension and vascular health utilizing a culturally relevant approach with the San Francisco community challenges in mind.