

**Mississippi Faith-Based Health and Wellness Network**  
**www.midsouthchurches.org/health\_and\_wellness**  
**2011 Planning Calendar**

January							February							March						
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31																				
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**Delta Alliance for Congregational Health (DACH)**  
**Healthy Congregations (North MS)**  
**North Mississippi National Baptist Unity Conference**



**Mississippi Faith-Based  
Health and Wellness Network**

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# 2011 Congregational Health Guide

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[www.kidsgetalife.org](http://www.kidsgetalife.org)  
[www.midsouthchurches.org](http://www.midsouthchurches.org)



## Mississippi Faith-Based Health and Wellness Initiatives

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**Mississippi Faith-Based Health and Wellness Network** is a collaborative effort captained by Faith Partners joined by Medical Professionals, Health Related Organizations, and Concerned Citizens united to make Mississippi a healthier place to live, work, and play: [www.midsouthchurches.org/health\\_and\\_wellness](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/health_and_wellness). **For more information, contact Dr. Michael O. Minor at (901) 826-8355 or e-mail [hope@midsouthchurches.org](mailto:hope@midsouthchurches.org).**

**Delta Alliance for Congregational Health (DACH)** is a consortium of churches in the Mississippi Delta that recognizes the obligation and the opportunity the church has to minister not only to one's spiritual health, but their physical health as well. DACH representatives support and promote the institution of health ministries in the faith setting: [www.midsouthchurches.org/health\\_and\\_wellness](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/health_and_wellness). **For more information, contact Kimberly Meeks at (662) 455-1344 or e-mail [kimberly.meeks@msdh.state.ms.us](mailto:kimberly.meeks@msdh.state.ms.us).**

**Healthy Congregations (North MS)** is a multi-denominational coalition of faith leaders in Northwest Mississippi to train, recognize, and empower faith leaders and lay people as advocates for Healthier Communities. HCNM is sponsored by Get A Life! an initiative of the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi to prevent childhood obesity: [www.kidsgetalife.org](http://www.kidsgetalife.org). **For more information, call (662) 449-5002 or e-mail [communityfoundation@cfnm.org](mailto:communityfoundation@cfnm.org).** Healthy Congregations is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

**North Mississippi National Baptist Unity Conference** is a collaborative effort of three of the six Mississippi National Baptist Congresses of Christian Education and the Tri-Lakes District Congresses having health and wellness as one of its major initiatives: [www.midsouthchurches.org/unity\\_conference](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/unity_conference). **For more information, e-mail [UC2011@midsouthchurches.org](mailto:UC2011@midsouthchurches.org).**

- Expanding technical assistance to states, communities, and nonprofit groups to build long-term local structures to increase food security
- Increasing public awareness of the causes of food insecurity and highlighting innovative community solutions to hunger

### Project Examples

**The Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc.** ([www.foginfo.org](http://www.foginfo.org)) of Gainesville, FL, was awarded \$175,000 for 3 years to facilitate linkages between the public school system, social service agencies, farmers, local businesses, and private citizens to address their food, farm, and nutrition needs. Activities include local farm and farmers' market tours; a local farm awareness campaign; a food and garden production school-based curriculum that includes principles of math, science and language arts; nutrition and food preparation education; and a farm apprenticeship program. Partners will also explore expanding direct farm marketing to schools and other local markets.

**The Mississippi Food Network of Jackson, MS,** ([www.msfoodnet.org](http://www.msfoodnet.org)) was given a grant of \$110,000 for 2 years to provide income and means for self-reliance for low-income households by breaking down cultural barriers in the African-American community to growing one's own food; by teaching sustainable agriculture practices suited to low-income growers; and by increasing community gardens, market gardens, and a student-run seedling project. New farmers' markets will be setup and linked with the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Community gardens in Head Start Centers will be linked with nutrition education. Best practices models will be evaluated for replication in other sites. Bolivar and Holmes Counties in the Mississippi Delta will be served by this project. More than 40 percent of the residents live in poverty and many suffer from serious diet-related diseases.

For more information, go to [www.csrees.usda.gov/hungerfoodsecurity.cfm](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/hungerfoodsecurity.cfm).

Source: [http://attra.ncat.org/guide/a\\_m/cfsi.html](http://attra.ncat.org/guide/a_m/cfsi.html)

## USDA: Community Food Security Initiative (CFSI)

The USDA's Community Food Security Initiative seeks to cut hunger in America in half by the year 2015 by creating and expanding grass-roots partnerships that build local food systems and reduce hunger. USDA is joining with states, municipalities, nonprofit groups, and the private sector to strengthen local food systems by replicating best practices of existing efforts and by catalyzing new community commitments to fight hunger.

*Mission. Helping nonprofit groups, faith-based organizations, state and local government agencies, tribes, and individual citizens fight hunger, improve nutrition, strengthen local food systems, and empower low-income families to move toward self-sufficiency*

### Goals:

- Creating new — and enhancing existing — local infrastructures to reduce hunger and food insecurity
- Increasing economic and job security by helping low-income people obtain living-wage jobs and become self-sufficient
- Strengthening the federal nutrition assistance safety net by supporting the full and efficient use of programs such as food stamps, WIC, school meals, summer feeding, and TEFAP
- Bolstering supplemental food provided by nonprofit groups by aiding food recovery, gleaning, and food donation programs
- Improving community food production and marketing by aiding projects that grow, process, and distribute food locally
- Boosting education and awareness by increasing efforts to inform the public about nutrition, food safety, and food security
- Improving research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts to help communities assess and strengthen food security

### Methods:

- Catalyzing the development of new partnerships on the local, state, and federal levels to help communities reduce hunger
- Improving the coordination between existing USDA programs — such as nutrition assistance programs, community food grants, ongoing research, farmers' markets, and food recovery projects — and related federal, state, and community initiatives

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*Good health is a vitally important issue that transcends any particular religion or creed. While this guide incorporates tenants of the Christian faith, all who find it useful are encouraged to adapt its implementation to their own belief systems while preserving the integrity of accurate health information.*

### Editorial Team

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## **About Healthy Congregations (North Mississippi)**

**Vision.** We see a day when all Mississippi children will live healthy lifestyles in healthy families.

**Mission.** We, the faith community, will achieve this vision by educating and inspiring our fellow Mississippians to commit to healthier lifestyles and to create healthier communities in Mississippi.

**Goals.** Our goals are to:

- (1) Raise awareness about the impact of obesity on the lives of children and adults;
- (2) Rally the faith community and build our capacity as Voices for Change that will help create healthier communities for all; and
- (3) Provide on-going support to enable people to eat smart and move more.

**Health Ministry Training.** Offers 32 hour curriculum approved by the International Parish Nurse Resource Center for RN's to prepare for leading effective congregational health and wellness ministries. Concurrent alternate training offered for non-RNs to become health ministry advocates (HMAs).

**Annual Congregational Health Guide.** Features a specific health and wellness emphasis for each month and resources for implementation.

**VBS Health Curriculum.** Pilot project includes health and wellness addendum to existing VBS curriculum.

**Healthy Church Meals.** Encourage healthy personal choices and developing a cookbook featuring healthy recipes .

**Community and Church Gardens.** Training and support for local church and community garden projects to improve access to fresh locally grown produce.

## **About Delta Alliance for Congregational Health (DACH)**

### **Project HEAL: Healthy, Educated, Active for Life**

Project HEAL is a health education and promotion program for African-American churches in the Mississippi Delta. The purpose of the campaign is to support a culture of wellness including physical activity, nutrition, tobacco prevention, and hypertension management. Project HEAL has four components which are discussed on the next page.

## **Increase availability of healthy food in public venues.**

Establish strong nutrition standards for foods and beverages for all publicly operated cafeterias, vending options, and community events.

### **Recommended by:**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States
- Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report: Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity

### **For more information:**

- State of Mississippi Office of Healthy Schools
- National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN) Sample Policy: District Policy Establishing a Healthy Vending Program
- Sample Vending Guidelines: San Antonio Healthy Collaborative
- Sample Vending Policy: New Hampshire DHHS
- Sample Vending Toolkit: Bay Area Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative
- Healthy Eating Physical Activity Coalition of New Brunswick: Healthy Foods in Recreation Facilities

## **Enhance accessibility to existing grocery stores through public safety efforts and through increased public transportation routes.**

In communities where either safety or access issues are barriers explore strategies to improve safety and transportation access. For example, improve public safety around food vendors such as better outdoor lighting and police patrolling. Consider realigning bus routes or provide other transportation such as mobile community vans or shuttles to ensure that residents can access supermarkets or grocery stores easily and affordably through public transportation.

### **Recommended by:**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States
- Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report: Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics (n.d.). Policy Opportunities Tool. Retrieved from [http://www.aap.org/obesity/matrix\\_1.html](http://www.aap.org/obesity/matrix_1.html).

**Create incentive programs for markets and other food vendors to carry healthier foods.**

Create incentive programs to enable current small food store owners in underserved areas to carry healthier, affordable food items (e.g., grants or loans to purchase refrigeration equipment to store fruits, vegetables, and fat-free/low-fat dairy; free publicity; a city awards program; or linkages to wholesale distributors).

**Recommended by:**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States
- Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report: Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) : Action Strategies Toolkit – A Guide for Local And State Leaders Working to Create Healthy Communities And Prevent Childhood Obesity

**For more information:**

- Food Trust: Healthy Corner Store Initiative  
The Food Trust strives to make healthy food available to all. Working with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers, we've developed a comprehensive approach that combines nutrition education and greater availability of affordable, healthy food.  
  
The Food Trust, a nonprofit founded in 1992, started out by conducting nutrition education classes for inner-city children at Reading Terminal Market, the century-old farmers' market located in the center of Philadelphia. After the Trust opened its first farmers' market at Tasker Homes, a public housing development in southwest Philadelphia, the organization began working with communities to develop lasting and stable sources of affordable foods.
- National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN): Healthy Mobile Vending Policies
- Market Makeovers: An online toolkit about transforming small corner stores to carry healthier food choices
- Healthy Corner Stores Network

Congregational Health Nurse/Health Ministry Advocate Training Program. The CHN/HMA Program certifies registered nurses as Congregational Health Nurses (CHN) and non-RNs as Health Ministry Advocates (HMA) through the Congregational Parish Nurse Health/Healthy Ministry Advocate Training. Upon completion of the training, CHNs and HMAs establish health ministries within their respective congregations and convene a health and wellness council. With goals focused on outreach and service coordination, this program is a culturally tailored program designed to address common needs, concerns, and challenges.

Church Garden Project. In cooperation with community collaborators, the DACH supports the establishment of church gardens in the Mississippi Delta. The Church Garden Project supports the development of congregational gardens to encourage increased access to and consumption of fruits and vegetables and to assist congregational members to become physically active. Community gardens provide fresh healthy produce, as well as opportunities for building community activity. This activity in conjunction with the Congregational Health Nurse/Ministry Health Advocate Training Program serves to address issues related to adverse health outcomes within the African-American community.

What's Cooking? The What's Cooking? Initiative is a collaborative effort to promote both healthy ingredients in and preparation of the meals served in houses of worship and their members. Efforts are made to ensure access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables. Demonstrations of healthy food preparation are also highlighted. In collaboration with the Mississippi Faith-Based Health and Wellness Network, each Third Sunday in March congregations are asked to observe Taste Test Sunday in which members will sample diabetic safe deserts. One of the hoped for outcomes of this initiative is a "What's Cooking? Cookbook."

Project H.E.A.L Tool Kit. Project H.E.A.L. offers a number of useful resources for congregational health and wellness ministries including the Congregational Health Guide, 9-5-2-1-0 VBS Health and Wellness Curriculum, Starting a Congregational Health Ministry Guide, and the Liturgical Dance Guide.

E-mail hope@midsouthchurches.org for more information.

## What Is Congregational Health Ministry?

As communities of faith, congregations serve as agencies for health and healing in all areas of life. What is congregational health ministry (CHM)? A CHM “combines the therapeutic qualities of (houses of worship), community, and faith in God to strengthen the healing task” (Weaverville United Methodist Church, n.d.). The purpose of congregational health ministry is to help the congregation care for one another...to help attain, maintain and/or regain the best possible whole person health—wellness of body, mind, and spirit—that can be experienced. Healing resources include worship, services for emotional and spiritual healing, prayer, education, fellowship and service.

Why are houses of worship such good agencies for health and wellness? It’s simple.

(Houses of worship) exist in virtually every community in this country and consist of people of all ages, races, and economic backgrounds. Because (congregations) are generally more integrated into the life of individuals and communities than our modern medical establishment, (they) can therefore better enable people to assume responsibility for their own health. Local (houses of worship) can help address the need for more appropriate and accessible health care services. More importantly, (congregations) can bring a holistic perspective to a community's understanding of health: one that integrates body, mind, and spirit in congregations and communities, promoting prevention and wellness (Weaverville United Methodist Church, n.d.).

The key components of a comprehensive Congregational Health Ministry include:

- Personal health counseling
- Health education
- Facilitating volunteers
- Screenings
- Referrals to community resources
- Hospital and home visits
- Support Groups
- Health promotion

Who should be involved in CHM? There should be a mix of health professionals and other interested lay members. These

## Encourage farmers’ markets to accept WIC and SNAP.

Encouraging farmers markets to accept Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infant Children (WIC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly known as the Food Stamp Program) would facilitate the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables by low-income families. Local governments could provide subsidies to farmers’ markets that accept the SNAP electronic benefit cards or communities can work with market managers to lower vendor fees so vendors can offer lower priced items.

For a listing of certified farmers’ markets in Mississippi, go to <http://msucares.com/crops/market/index.html>. You can also find helpful information there for starting a farmers’ market.

### Recommended by:

- AAP Policy: Dietary Recommendations for Children and Adolescents: A Guide for Practitioners
- Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report: Local Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States
- National Governor’s Association (NGA): Successful State Strategies to Prevent Childhood Obesity
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF): Action Strategies Toolkit – A Guide for Local And State Leaders Working to Create Healthy Communities And Prevent Childhood Obesity Executive Summary

### For more information:

- WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Programs
- United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services

**Encourage farmers' markets, farm stands, mobile markets, community gardens, and youth-focused gardens in your community by offering incentives and/or modified land use policies/zoning regulations.**

Improving the availability and accessibility of farmers markets is another strategy to increase fresh, healthy food options for children and families. Research suggests that promoting farmers' markets can increase fruit and vegetable intake. In addition, church and community gardens and garden-based nutrition intervention programs may also have the potential to promote increased fruit and vegetable intake and may increase willingness to taste fruits and vegetables among children and youth.

**Recommended by:**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States
- Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report: Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation(RWJF): Action Strategies Toolkit – A Guide for Local And State Leaders Working to Create Healthy Communities And Prevent Childhood Obesity

**For more information:**

- National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN): Establishing Land Use Protection for Farmers' Markets and Establishing Land Use Protection for Community Gardens: Fact Sheet and Model Policies
- International City/Council Managers Association (ICMA): Community Food Access – The Local Government Role

**Regional Success Story:**

The Hernando Farmers' Market features fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables as well as fresh local milk and butter, canned and preserved items, knife sharpening, soaps and lotions, woven baskets, bedding plants, baked goods and some other artisan items. It is located on the quaint, historic Hernando Town Square, and runs from May until the end of October, 8 am until 1:00 p.m. For more information, contact Shelly Johnstone at Shelly Johnstone sjohnstone@cityofhernando.org or 662-429-9092 (ext. 103).

congregational members form a health ministry's committee or cabinet. In this way, they combine their knowledge and experience with their willingness to serve, support the pastor in caring for the spiritual health of the congregation, and then respond to the unique health needs of the congregation and the community. Individual roles may include:

- Health Educator;
- Health Counselor;
- Referral Source;
- Facilitator;
- Integrator of Health and Healing; and
- Advocate.

Whatever activities are needed in the congregation, the job of CHM is to facilitate the use of available resources in the congregation and the community (rather than provide directly "hands on" health care services). A thread that runs through the work of CHM members is that they do not duplicate other available nursing or medical services, but seeks to creatively bridge the gaps identified in the health education and care delivery system.

There is a word of caution for congregational health ministries. **They should not practice nursing as done in a hospital, doctor's office or nursing home environment. The focus is strictly educational.**

*The Congregational Health Ministry Team can make a difference...*

- In the **local congregation** by raising awareness of the benefits this ministry can offer to the spiritual, interpersonal, emotional and physical health of members.
- To the **pastor** by introducing wellness programs in support of the pastor's ministry of Christian growth in the congregation.
- To the **community** by collaborating with community health services, offering supportive human care services to the community.

Sources:

Weaverville United Methodist Church. (n.d.). *Congregational health ministry*. Retrieved from [www.weavervilleumc.org/templates/System/details.asp?id=32035&PID=688811](http://www.weavervilleumc.org/templates/System/details.asp?id=32035&PID=688811).  
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (2010). *What is congregational health ministries?* Retrieved from <http://lcms.hughes-stl.com/pages/internal.asp?NavID=3590>.

## What Are Effective Ways to Implement Congregational Health Ministries?

Seeing the benefits of congregational health ministries, what are effective ways to implement them? By nature, congregations are often resistant to change. Thus, the most effective and efficient way to implement congregational health ministries involve integration in existing ministries. Why? Although, in time, it may become a standalone ministry, integration within an existing ministry offers a nurturing environment and a greater opportunity for congregational acceptance. Congregational health ministries are much more likely to be self-sustaining as part of existing ministries.

Which congregational ministries are most compatible? The most compatible ministries are those composed of members blessed with the “gift of helps,” serving. What is the “gift of helps”?

The essence of this gift of the Spirit is that of giving assistance or relief from distress where it is needed. The person who has an innate willingness simply to “pitch in” and do whatever needs to be done--no matter how detailed or tedious--evidences the gift of helps. (The biblical foundation for these gifts is found in Romans 12.7, 1 Peter 4.11, 1 Corinthians 12.28, and Acts 20.4, 35.) (Source: Angie Vawter & Gary Vawter (n.d.). *The gift of helps*. Retrieved from [http://www.vawtermark.com/THE\\_GIFT\\_OF\\_HELPES.htm](http://www.vawtermark.com/THE_GIFT_OF_HELPES.htm).)

The most common of these type ministries include ushers, hospitality/greeters, deaconess, mission society, and teaching. Collectively, these ministries offer several options for implementing a congregational health ministry. One of the most popular ministries for implementation has been the ushers. Congregational health ministries may also be housed in “seasoned” women ministries like the Deaconess Ministry or Mission Society. Since there is already an active outreach or service component, congregational health ministry would be a natural extension. With its educational components, a congregational health ministry may also become an intricate component of Christian Education ministries complimenting Sunday School and weekly Bible study. Finally, some congregations have nurse ministries, nurse guilds, or Red Cross nurses. However, many of these nurse ministries limit their work to health screenings and disease prevention.

## Communities should improve geographic availability of supermarkets via a variety of strategies such as incentives, relaxing zoning requirements, and/or small business programs.

People cannot consume a healthy diet unless healthy foods are available, affordable, and convenient. Research suggests that neighborhood residents who have better access to supermarkets and grocery stores tend to have healthier diets and lower levels of obesity. Unfortunately, many communities across the U.S. lack access to healthy food options. Communities without supermarkets should explore incentives such as grants and loan programs, small business development programs and tax incentives that encourage grocery stores to locate in underserved areas. Localities and local zoning boards can also relax zoning requirements that make it difficult for supermarkets to move into densely populated urban areas and rural communities, provide parking subsidies, and implement policies that encourage that recently closed grocery stores can be replaced by another one as quickly as possible.

### Recommended by:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States
- Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report: Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF): Action Strategies Toolkit – A Guide for Local And State Leaders Working to Create Healthy Communities And Prevent Childhood Obesity

### For more information:

- The Food Trust
- Public Health Law and Policy: Getting to Grocery: Tools for Attracting Healthy Food Retail to Underserved Neighborhoods and Zoning Talking Points
- The Rudd Center: Access to Healthy Foods in Low-Income Neighborhoods
- International City/County Managers Association (ICMA): Community Food Access – The Local Government Role



## Healthy Living Policy Change 2011: Increased Access to Healthy Food

Promoting health and wellness in our communities is just a first step. We must go beyond conversation to advocating policy change. The American Academy of Pediatrics has developed the Policy Opportunities Tool to consolidate various policy statements. This matrix “is designed to showcase the various policy strategies that support healthy active living for children and families.” E-mail [hope@midsouthchurches.org](mailto:hope@midsouthchurches.org) for a copy of the complete matrix.

Each year the Congregational Health Guide will focus on one aspect of healthy living policy change. This year’s guide focuses on increased access to healthy food. Action steps to increase access to healthy food in the community include:

1. Communities should improve geographic availability of supermarkets via a variety of strategies such as incentives, relaxing zoning requirements, and/or small business programs.
2. Encourage farmers’ markets, farm stands, mobile markets, community gardens, and youth-focused gardens in your community by offering incentives and/or modified land use policies/zoning regulations.
3. Encourage farmers’ markets to accept WIC and SNAP.
4. Create incentive programs for markets and other food vendors to carry healthier foods.
5. Increase availability of healthy food in public venues.
6. Enhance accessibility to existing grocery stores through public safety efforts and through increased public transportation routes.

On the following pages, we present policy opportunities for increasing access to healthy food based on these six objectives. Go to [http://www.aap.org/obesity/matrix\\_1.html](http://www.aap.org/obesity/matrix_1.html) for access to links for helpful resources.

## 2011 Suggested Monthly Health and Wellness Observances “Driven to Do Better in 2011!”

On pages 6-12, we share suggested monthly health and wellness observances. Remember that congregational health ministries do not practice medicine or provide medical care, but educate and empower. The goal of congregational health ministries’ is facilitating access to accurate information and finding a voice to address disparities. Bringing a specific health issue to the forefront each month throughout the year is one way to ensure coverage of a wide range of health topics of interest and concern to your congregation.

We had a good start in 2010 campaign. *Let’s all be driven to do better in 2011!* What *should* ministry members do?

- Ask God for guidance and His blessing.
- Gain the blessing of your congregation’s leader.
- Follow the monthly guide of health observances.
- Make brochures, handouts, and worship bulletin inserts.
- Make announcements early and often each month.
- Involve other congregation members, neighbors, and co-workers.
- Take pictures; keep a scrapbook.
- CREATE EXCITEMENT!!!

Brief information is given for each observance. For more information and helpful web links, go to the monthly health observances section of the regional health and wellness webpage: [www.midsouthchurches.org/health\\_and\\_wellness](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/health_and_wellness).

### **JANUARY**

#### **National Volunteer Blood Donor Month**

Sponsor a “Post Holiday Blood Drive” at your church in partnership with your local blood donation center. Go to [www.midsouthchurches.org/health\\_and\\_wellness](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/health_and_wellness) for a link to local Mississippi blood donation centers.

#### **Cervical Health Awareness Month**

Highlight issues related to cervical cancer, HPV disease, and the importance of early detection. Some of the issues you may wish to highlight are personal stories of women and family members/caregivers battling issues related to their persistent HPV/precancer and/or cervical cancer.

## **FEBRUARY**

**Heart Disease and Women.** On the Sunday, February 13 everyone is encouraged to wear something red to bring awareness to the number 1 killer of women – heart disease. Also, members may wish to participate in Wear Red Day – Friday, February 4.

**American Heart Association (AHA) “Go Red Better U” Physical Activity Challenge** encourages women to follow the AHA’s 12-week “Go Red Better U” free physical fitness activity program – for details go to [www.goredforwomen.org/BetterU/index.aspx](http://www.goredforwomen.org/BetterU/index.aspx).

**Children’s Dental Health Month**, sponsored by the American Dental Association, raises awareness about the importance of oral health.

## **MARCH**

**Taste Test Sunday (March 20)** promotes healthy meals at church functions. Have desserts prepared in accordance with guidelines for diabetics and persons at risk for diabetes. Invite the congregation to sample them after worship. Promote a contest among members to collect recipes with healthy substitutions for a “Healthy Cookbook.”

**National Nutrition Month**® is a nutrition education and information campaign created annually in March by the American Dietetic Association. The campaign focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. The theme for 2011 is "Eat Right with Color."

## **APRIL**

**STD Awareness Month.** The Center for Disease Control recognizes April as STD Awareness Month, an annual observance to raise awareness about the impact of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) on the health of Americans and the importance of individuals discussing sexual health with their healthcare providers and, if sexually active, their partners.

**World Health Day (WHD): Thursday, April 7.** The World Health Day is celebrated to create awareness of a specific health theme to highlight a priority area of concern for the World Health Organization: 2011 - Antimicrobial resistance and its global spread.

**National Public Health Week (April 3-9).** The public health community has celebrated this observance by focusing on an issue that is important to improving the public's health: 2011 “Healthiest Nation in One Generation.”

## **Healthy People 2020: The Road Ahead**

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Healthy People provides science-based, 10-year national objectives for promoting health and preventing disease. Since 1979, Healthy People has set and monitored national health objectives to meet a broad range of health needs, encourage collaborations across sectors, guide individuals toward making informed health decisions, and measure the impact of our prevention activity. Currently, Healthy People 2010 is leading the way to achieve increased quality and years of healthy life and the elimination of health disparities.

Every 10 years, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) leverages scientific insights and lessons learned from the past decade along with new knowledge of current data, trends, and innovations. Healthy People 2020 will reflect assessments of major risks to health and wellness, changing public health priorities, and emerging issues related to our nation's health preparedness and prevention.

The Healthy People process is inclusive. Its strength is directly tied to collaboration. The development process strives to maximize transparency, public input, and stakeholder dialogue to ensure that Healthy People 2020 is relevant to diverse public health needs and seizes opportunities to achieve its goals. Since its inception, Healthy People has become a broad-based, public engagement initiative with thousands of citizens helping to shape it at every step along the way. Drawing from diverse sources, Healthy People will provide a framework to address risk factors and determinants of health and the diseases and disorders that affect our communities.

Healthy People 2020 will be released in two phases. The framework (the vision, mission, goals, focus areas, and criteria for selecting and prioritizing objectives) was released in 2009. This year, the Healthy People 2020 objectives were released along with guidance for achieving the new 10-year targets. To become an active supporter of Healthy People, join the Healthy People Consortium at [www.healthypeople.gov/hp2020/Consortium](http://www.healthypeople.gov/hp2020/Consortium).

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2010). Healthy People 2020: The Road Ahead. Retrieved from <http://www.healthypeople.gov/hp2020>.

Advocate: Helps parishioners navigate their way through managed care and helps them articulate their concerns to the health care community.

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2. 10, NKJV).*

Congregational health ministry is an ideal opportunity for those whom God has prepared through experience, education, and skills to combine their faith and their profession in a practical way within the context of their congregation. **All members of the CHM should consider taking faith community nurse or health ministry advocate training.** There are a number of certification opportunities available. Consult the Mississippi Faith-Based Health and Wellness Network web page for more information: [www.midsouthchurches.org/health\\_and\\_wellness](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/health_and_wellness).

Examples of activities in congregational health ministry:

- Blood pressure screening
- CPR for nursery workers, for parents, others interested
- Adult classes on topics like  
New Healthcare Law, Heart Healthy Living, Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care Decisions, Training of Lay Visitors to Detect Health Issues in Shut-ins, Breast Health Awareness, Depression, Living through Personal Crisis, Stress Management, and Lifestyle Well
- Youth only classes
- Support Groups: Grief, Diabetes, Depression, Weight Loss
- Visitation
- Outreach into the community
- Health Resource Referrals-for those without insurance, needing community services

*As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God (1 Peter 4.10, NKJV).*

Source: Carol Ann Frizzell, RN (2010). Meeting the Challenge of the 21st Century: Fulfill Your Ministry. Retrieved from <http://www.embracingourday.com/resources/wellnessmin.php>.

## **MAY**

**“Bells for Remembrance” Breast Health Awareness**, on Mothers’ Day, is a faith-based public awareness campaign designed to highlight the importance of good breast health and assure that women are aware of resources within the community for screening, information, treatment and support. Health Ministries are asked to ring a hand-bell, organ, or chime:

- Once in support of prevention through annual mammograms, clinical breast exams and month breast self-examination;
- Twice in support of those struggling with and surviving breast cancer; and
- Thrice in memory of those who have lost their lives to breast cancer and in support of their families and loved ones.

**American Stroke Month.** African Americans have higher rates of stroke than any other racial or ethnic group. Churches are invited to conduct Power Sunday educational activities the first Sunday in May. Go to [www.midsouthchurches.org/health\\_and\\_wellness](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/health_and_wellness) to download a Power Sunday kit.

**National High Blood Pressure Education Month.** About 74.5 million people in the United States have high blood pressure, which is also called *hypertension*. Hypertension increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the United States.

## **JUNE**

The First Sunday is **National Cancer Survivor’s Day**®, an annual, worldwide Celebration of Life. Participants unite in a symbolic event to show the world that life after a cancer diagnosis can be a reality. Recognize cancer survivors in your congregation and/or community.

**Summer of Health and Wellness Vacation Bible School.**

Integrate the 9-5-2-1-0 health and wellness curriculum into your church’s VBS. Go to [www.midsouthchurches.org/vacation\\_bible\\_school](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/vacation_bible_school) to download the 9-5-2-1-0 guide.

**National Myasthenia Gravis (MG) Awareness Month.** MG is part of a large class of diseases known as "autoimmune," or "self-immune," disorders, in which the body’s immune system deploys antibodies to attack its own tissues.

**Fireworks Safety Month (through July 4)** (See July observances.)

## **JULY**

**UV Safety Month.** In the summer, the sun is bright and there is a great danger the sun can harm the eyes from exposure to the ultraviolet rays of the sun.

**Fireworks Safety Month (through July 4).** During the months of June and July, Americans nationwide are encouraged to observe fireworks safety. While fireworks can be a cheerful reminder of warm, summertime weather, and fun times spent with family and friends outdoors. The fact remains that they are still extremely dangerous and should be used with caution and responsibility.

**International Group B Strep (GBS) Awareness Month.** GBS is bacteria naturally found in the digestive tract and birth canal of 1 in 4 pregnant women. These women “carry” or are “colonized” with GBS. However, GBS can come and go at any time so each pregnancy can be different. Babies can be infected by GBS before birth and up to 6 months of age because of their underdeveloped immune systems.

## **AUGUST**

**National Immunization Awareness Month** is a great way to rally local organizations in your immunization education efforts. Communities are encouraged to plan local health screenings or fairs, media events and other related immunization outreach efforts during the month to promote the benefits of immunization.

**National Minority Donor Awareness Day** is celebrated **August 1** as a time to educate individuals on the need for minority donors and the facts surrounding organ, blood, and tissue donation.

## **SEPTEMBER**

**Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.** Encourage all men over 50 to take a prostate exam. Prostate cancer is a common and very treatable when detected early!

**National Cholesterol Education Month** is a good time to get your blood cholesterol checked and take steps to lower it if it is high. It is also a good time to learn about lipid profiles and about food and lifestyle choices that help you reach personal cholesterol goals

**Sunday, September 11 Regional Healthy Congregations Emphasis Worship** spotlights local health and wellness efforts and continues the promotion of the 2011 Healthy Congregations Conference.

## **The Work of the Congregational Health Ministry**

Congregational Health Ministry (CHM) is based on the belief that the interrelationship of body, mind, and spirit is such that when one is touched the whole is affected. One third of the recorded Gospels demonstrate Christ's concern for the physical and emotional, as well as spiritual needs of those to whom he ministered.

Houses of worship are a natural caring community that consistently interacts with individuals from birth to death in all socio-economic groups. Historically, the community of faith has been a place of hope and healing. Today, nurses, and other medical professionals, as well as laypersons, through their act of caring, are bringing a unique role to this ministry of healing within houses of worship.

As a member of the congregation, the health ministry leader (HML) facilitates use of the resources within the congregation and the community to provide services based on the assessed health needs of the faith community. The HML **does not duplicate** existing health services, but seeks to bridge the gaps, delivering and coordinating educational, preventive, and supportive services not otherwise available.

The roles of the HML may include the following:

**Health Educator:** Provides information to raise the health awareness of the church community through a variety of options that include classes, workshops, newsletters, seminars, support groups, and health fairs.

**Personal Health Counselor:** Advocates for individuals by offering knowledge of options for health and a supportive presence as members of the church make choices for their lives reinforcing physician's plan of care.

**Facilitator and Resource:** Helps to identify the many health and wellness needs within the faith community and coordinates resources within the congregation. Recruits, trains, and supervises volunteers for many support functions within the church, such as visiting the sick, providing transportation, and organizing support groups.

**Referral Source:** Serves as a liaison between the church and community resources. Helps them access health care through free/reduced fee facilities if they have no insurance.

## Getting Youth Involved: empowerMe

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation's empowerME campaign is a by kids, for kids movement that's inspiring all kids to make healthy behavior changes and to become leaders and advocates for healthy eating and physical activity. Through empowerME, healthy lifestyles become "cool" for tweens and teens.

To date, more than 1.3 million kids across the country have joined the empowerME movement and committed to eat better and move more. We're encouraging kids to use their own voices to motivate each other, get educated and get activated.

### Engage

We're creating messages informed by kids that make healthy lifestyles "cool" and encourage kids to join the empowerME movement.

### Educate

We're developing tools, inspired by kids and parents, which will instill the basic skills for good nutrition and daily physical activity into kids' lives and homes. Once they learn it they can do it each and every day one day at a time for the rest of their lives.

### Activate

We're building a platform for youth activism by helping kids tell their stories, identify the hurdles to good health, understand the appropriate tools to make change, and organize with peers in their communities to fight this epidemic of childhood obesity and win. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation's empowerME Movement inspires kids to make healthy behavior changes and become advocates and leaders for healthy eating and physical activity.

Kids can get started @ [empowerme2b.org](http://empowerme2b.org) or e-mail [empowerME@midsouthchurches.org](mailto:empowerME@midsouthchurches.org) for Mississippi affiliates. When kids join the movement, they get:

- Invitations to exclusive events, contests, and to view celebrity videos
- Tools to speak up, make changes, and share your story
- E-news with empowerME updates
- Simple ideas and tips for eating right and getting active

Source: [www.healthiergeneration.org/teens.aspx?id=2566](http://www.healthiergeneration.org/teens.aspx?id=2566)

## OCTOBER

**National Church Safety and Security Month.** Congregations are asked to perform a "top down" safety and security inspection of their houses of worship and grounds including fire evacuation and tornado drills. With the blessing of your leader, involve others by contacting your insurance company, local fire department, and law enforcement agency about other tips on safety and security measures.

### October 8, 2011 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Healthy Congregations Conference at the DeSoto Civic Center; Southaven, MS.

Check the websites for information: [www.healthycongregations.info](http://www.healthycongregations.info) or [www.midsouthchurches.org](http://www.midsouthchurches.org).

**National Breast Cancer Awareness Month** observances have been at the forefront of promoting awareness of breast cancer issues and have evolved along with the national dialogue on breast cancer.

## NOVEMBER

The American Diabetes Association sponsors **Diabetes Awareness Month** to focus on one of the fastest growing healthcare crisis. There are approximately 75 million Americans either at risk for type 2 diabetes or who currently have diabetes.

**National Donor Sabbath Weekend (November 13-15)** is set aside to raise awareness about the critical need for organ and tissue donors and to encourage individuals to register as organ and tissue donors and share their decision about donation with family members today to save lives tomorrow.

**Great American Smoke Out Thursday, November 17.** Health Ministries can promote tobacco cessation activities throughout the month in partnership with the Tobacco Free coalition in your area. Consider asking your local elected officials to adopt a "no smoking policy" in public places where you live!

## DECEMBER

**1 World AIDS Day** is dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection. Health Ministries are asked to wear red ribbons, provide information, and a time for quiet reflection in recognition of all those stricken with HIV/AIDS.

**National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month** provides opportunities to reinforce the dangers driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

## 2011 Suggested Health and Wellness Observances

*Courtesy of the Rising Sun Usher Federation*

### January

- Cervical Health Awareness Month
- National Volunteer Blood Donor Month

### February

- American Heart Month (National Wear Red Day, Select a Sunday for Wear Red Sunday)
- Children's Dental Health Month

### March

- National Nutrition Month
- 20 "Taste Test Sunday" (Diabetic Safe Desserts)

### April

- STD Awareness Month
- Thursday, April 7 World Health Day
- National Public Health Week (April 3-9)

### May

- American Stroke Month
- National High Blood Pressure Education Month
- Sunday, May 8 Mother's Day "Bells for Remembrance" – Breast Health Awareness

### June

- Summer of Health and Wellness Vacation Bible School
- National Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month
- Fireworks Safety Month (through July 4)
- Sunday, June 5 National Cancer Survivors Day

### July

- UV Safety Month
- Fireworks Safety Month (through July 4)
- International Group B Strep Awareness Month

### August

- National Immunization Awareness Month
- National Minority Donor Awareness Day (August 1)

### September

- Prostate Cancer Awareness Month
- National Cholesterol Education Month
- Sunday, September 11 Regional Healthy Congregations Emphasis Worship

### October

- National Church Safety and Security Month
- National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Healthy Congregations Conference 2011 (October 8)

### November

- American Diabetes Month
- National Donor Sabbath Weekend (November 11-13)
- Great American Smoke Out (November 20)

### December

- National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month
- World Aids Day (Wednesday, December 1)

For more information and helpful web links, go to the monthly health observances section of the regional health and wellness webpage: [www.midsouthchurches.org/health\\_and\\_wellness](http://www.midsouthchurches.org/health_and_wellness).