BRANCH Out: Nurturing Healthy Youth Leaders through Faith Based Partnerships

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**Background**

† The purpose of the BRANCH (Building a Rejoiceful Alliance of Neighbors for Change and Healing) Out partnership is to reduce health risk factors related to cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes in African-American church-based communities in Milwaukee.

† Traditionally, churches have been deeply rooted cornerstones in African-American communities. Churches have a strong tradition of caring for others, providing fellowship, support and education.

† BRANCH Out builds on the existing relationship between health ministry workers, youth and congregation members to address the social determinants of health.

**Primary Objectives**

† Build on successes of initial partnership to expand to additional church partners
† Develop and train Youth Health Council members
† Develop and disseminate cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes education materials
† Enhance leadership capacity for participating adult and youth
† Sustain, evaluate, and expand BRANCH Out programs

**Outcomes**

| 30 CHAT members trained representing 13 community congregations |
| CHAT training included team building, spirituality and health, nutrition, community resources and goal setting |
| Recruited and trained 60 youth council members in leadership, healthy relationships, nutrition and fitness, and HIV awareness |
| Hosted a Health Expo for over 100 community members to learn about health improvement and BRANCH Out |
| Completed health risk assessments for congregation members |
| Developed education modules for cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes |
| Health resource centers and healthy food demonstrations for congregation members |
| Developed mentoring relationships among CHAT members and youth health councils to facilitate program maintenance and growth |

**Future Activities**

† Develop health education programs specific to the needs of church and community youth
† Create dynamic, ongoing leadership development sessions for Health Action Teams and Youth Health Councils
† Continue networking opportunities through one-on-one mentoring between church partners

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