

*Mental  
Health*



*Awareness  
Month*

# **IMA Health & Wellness**

## **May 2016 Newsletter**

THE IMA CAT- HEALTH & WELLNESS committee works locally to raise awareness about mental health and other health related issues. We believe that everyone at risk for mental illnesses and related disorders should receive early and effective intervention and care. Historically, communities of color experience unique and considerable challenges in accessing mental health services. It is our desire to address and decrease that disparity. African American are not different when it comes to the prevalence of mental health conditions when compared to the rest of the population. However, our concerns or experiences and how we understand and cope with these conditions has been the difference.

**Depression & African Americans (Not “Just the Blues”)** Clinical depression is more than life’s ups and downs. Life is full of joy and pain, happiness and sorrow. It is normal to feel sad when a loved one dies, or when you are sick, going through a divorce or having financial problems, but for some people the sadness does not go away, or keeps coming back. If your “blues” last more than a few weeks or cause you to struggle with daily life, you may be suffering from clinical depression.

Clinical depression is not a personal weakness, gracelessness or faithlessness - it is a common, yet serious, medical illness. Clinical depression is a “whole-body” illness that affects your mood, thoughts, body and behavior. Without treatment, symptoms can last for weeks, months or years. Appropriate treatment, however, can help most people who have clinical depression.

**Clinical depression can affect anyone:** Anyone can experience clinical depression, regardless of race, gender, age, creed or income. Every year more than 19 million Americans suffer from some type of depressive illness. According to a Surgeon General report, African American’s are over-represented in populations that are particularly at risk for mental illness. A common myth about depression is that it is “normal” for certain people to feel depressed - older people, teenagers, new mothers, menopausal women or those with chronic illness. The truth is that depression is not a normal part of life for any African American.

**Myths about depression:** The myths and stigma that surround depression create needless pain and confusion, and can keep people from getting proper treatment. People with clinical depression cannot “just snap out of it.” Spiritual support can be an important part of healing, but the care of a qualified mental health professional is essential, and the earlier treatment begins the more effective it can be.

**What causes clinical depression?** Many factors can contribute to clinical depression, including cognitive issues (negative thinking patterns); biological and genetic factors; gender (it affects more women than men); other medications, other illnesses, and situational factors.

**Barriers to treatment of depression can include the following:** Denial, embarrassment/shame, financial hardship/lack of money/insurance, fear, lack of knowledge of treatment/problem, hopelessness, homelessness, and misperceptions to name a few.

**Don’t let fear of what others may think prevent you or a loved one from getting better.** 1 in 5 people are affected by mental illness. This means that even if we don’t talk about it, most likely, each of us or someone we know have experienced or will experience this at some point in our lives.

**Do you or someone you know need help with mental illness?**

**Contact NAMI of Southern Arizona  
(National Alliance on Mental Illness)**

**6122 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> St. \* Tucson, Az. 85711 \* (520) 622-5582**

**FIND HELP \* FIND HOPE**

# IMA HEALTH & WELLNESS

## May 2016 Newsletter



IMA Health & Wellness

Next Meeting

Rising Star Baptist Church

2800 E. 36<sup>th</sup> St.

May 14, 2016 \* 9:30am

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IMA Town Hall Meeting

Dunbar Pavilion

325 West 2nd Street

May 16, 2016 \* 5:30pm

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You May Reach Us At:

Address:

Attn: IMA CAT

2305 S. Park Ave.

Tucson, Az. 85713

Phone: 520-791-9255

Email:

[imatownhall@gmail.com](mailto:imatownhall@gmail.com)

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“I’m Not What It Says I Am”

A Support Group for  
heterosexual individuals with

HIV/AIDS and their  
caregivers.

Contact Tina (520) 302-9239

or Nika (520) 278-9358

for more information.



### I CAN'T FIND MY KEYS; IS IT MY CHOLESTEROL

Many health care professionals agree, what's good for the heart is good for the brain and what's good for the brain is good for the heart. The negative effects of cholesterol on the heart and cardiovascular system are well documented, now researchers are focusing on the brain.

High cholesterol levels are being linked to the development of Alzheimer's disease. Results of a study conducted by Charles DeCarli, MD and the University of California, Davis Alzheimer Disease Research Center concluded that high levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol and low levels of HDL (good) cholesterol were linked to increased amyloid in the brain.

Amyloid is a protein found in the body. In cases of Alzheimer's the protein doesn't divide correctly and produces a protein fragment known as beta-amyloid. The resulting fragments cluster together forming amyloid plaques. The amyloid plaques attach to synapses (connections) in the brain blocking impulses between nerve cells and ultimately destroying the synapses. Without synapses brain functions such as processing thought and storing memories are eroded or lost.

#### **While Alzheimer research is ongoing, what can African Americans do now to maintain brain health?**

- 1. Know your numbers: Total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, and Triglycerides**
- 2. Choose a diet low in saturated fat**
- 3. Exercise regularly**

**The IMA Health & Wellness Presents Dr. Leslie Ritter**, as the speaker for the May 16, 2016 IMA Town Hall. Dr. Ritter is a Professor at the University of Arizona College of Nursing and the Department of Neurology, and the William M. Feinberg Endowed Chair for Stroke Research at the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center, and a Fellow of the American Heart Association (FAHA). Dr. Ritter conducts innovative research on how inflammation interferes with recovery after stroke. She will discuss stroke and its relationship to African American's. Her research team was the first to identify a significant, early inflammatory response in the small blood vessels of the brain after stroke. As a result of these pioneering findings, in 2000 she received the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, the highest honor

bestowed by the U.S. government on young professionals at the outset of their independent research careers.