

AFRICAN AMERICAN OUTREACH



Epilepsy affects over 3 million Americans.

What is epilepsy??

Epilepsy is a neurological condition. A seizure is a symptom of epilepsy. A diagnosis of epilepsy is generally given after a person experiences two or more unprovoked seizures.

Known causes of epilepsy include head injuries, stroke, brain tumors, poisoning, problems in brain development before birth, and serious infections such as encephalitis or meningitis. However, more than half the time, the cause of epilepsy is unknown.

The Epilepsy Foundation has a network of affiliates nationwide that provide services in their local communities. To locate an affiliate in your area, call us toll-free or visit our website's home page and type in your zip code under 'community connections.'

For more info contact:

Program Objectives

More than 350,000 African Americans have been diagnosed with epilepsy.

African Americans are more likely to be diagnosed with epilepsy than Caucasians; they more often experience *status epilepticus*, a medical emergency in which a seizure continues for 10 minutes or more without stopping; and they are at an increased risk for Sudden Unexpected Death from Epilepsy (SUDEP).

For many African Americans with epilepsy, access to appropriate care is a central problem. But even more damaging than issues of medical care can be the fear, misperceptions and discrimination imposed by people who don't know the truth about epilepsy – that it doesn't define a person, it's just a medical condition. Education is the key to changing attitudes and encouraging those with the condition to seek proper care.

The Epilepsy Foundation recognizes how important targeted and culturally-sensitive outreach to the African American community is to improve the quality of life for those who are living with epilepsy. In 2008, the Foundation expanded its outreach by launching a campaign that urged the African American community to "Get the Facts-Know the Difference."

The ***African American Outreach Program** continues to focus on: 1) educating family and caregivers on seizure recognition and treatment options, and 2) increasing the awareness of the prevalence of epilepsy in the African American community. To expand the scope and reach of this program, the Foundation is currently testing models of working with strategic partners, like Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and using new social networks.

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Available Resources

know the difference

- For more information, media, and personal stories, please visit: www.epilepsyfoundation.org/knowthedifference.
- CD-ROM with downloaded audio clips (past PSAs), photos, media articles and other electronic resources related to African Americans that can be used for programmatic activities