



Community and Economic Development in North Carolina and Beyond Blog: Prostate Cancer Ambassadors for Caswell County-

By CED Guest Author

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The Prostate Cancer Ambassadors for Caswell County Project is excited to welcome its fifteen (15) Ambassadors who are African American men and women representing various churches and organizations within the county. On the early morning of January 29, the Ambassadors gathered with much enthusiasm and eagerness at the Caswell Senior Center to begin the first of two training sessions in prostate cancer education. Already excited about the day, the group was livened even more and humored by training facilitator Alan Richmond with the North Carolina Minority Institute for Economic Development (NCIMED). He engaged the Ambassadors in general conversation about themselves, their community, and their personal experiences with prostate cancer. The sharing of personal stories and experiences among the Ambassadors cultivated a sense of community and camaraderie that fostered an environment for learning about the role of an Ambassador, public health and trends in prostate cancer, and the anatomy and physiology of the prostate. The Ambassadors even learned how to demonstrate of the effects of prostate cancer on the urinary function of the body.

Following the first training session, a second session was convened two weeks later on February 12 at the Senior Center. A recap of session 1 was provided followed by the answering of any questions and information on treatment for prostate cancer and resources. The Ambassadors were given a demonstration of how to access valid and scientific information on prostate cancer from the National Library of Medicine and the American Cancer Society. This web-based information was of particular interest to the Ambassadors due to other information they had heard about treatments for prostate health issues (i.e. the effects of saw palmetto, etc.).

Having received the basic information they would need for providing outreach and education to others in the community, a segment of the training session was devoted to allowing the Ambassadors to practice responding accurately to community inquiries about prostate cancer. One-on-one scenarios were developed by the project staff and training facilitators for the Ambassadors to practice. For example, one individual would act as the "Ambassador" while the other individual would act as the "inquiring community member". The community member would ask "Is active surveillance the same as watchful waiting in treating prostate cancer?" The Ambassador would then, based on what was learned, respond with "Yes, both terms are used to describe monitoring prostate cancer and treating it only if and when the prostate cancer causes symptoms or shows signs of growth."

Session two ended with the Ambassadors receiving a template for them to create their own action plan for conducting outreach and educational activities within the county. As a part of the project, the Ambassadors are expected to do three activities related to prostate cancer education in the community. Surprisingly, shortly after the training, some Ambassadors had already reported conducting at least one activity and/or having activities scheduled. Starting this month, project staff will be following up with the Ambassadors on a monthly basis to discuss activities conducted. Next steps for the Ambassadors include a booster session for additional practice on presenting health information (scheduled March 12) and planning for the conduct of a congregational health survey. The project staff is delighted and fortunate to be working with such an enthusiastic and motivated group of community leaders in Caswell County.

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