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Darlington County First Steps Prioritizes Men’s Health

Hartsville, SC -Darlington County First Steps (DCFS) declared a commitment toward men’s health in 2017. As a Men’s Health Network Affiliate, DCFS is dedicated to making a positive impact in the lives of fathers and men in Darlington County communities.

Darnell Byrd McPherson, DCFS executive director, brought men’s health to the surface once she began her work with the Equity Leaders Action Network (ELAN) BUILD Initiative. McPherson and other members of ELAN were tasked with identifying disparities in their communities and searching for solutions. McPherson and DCFS decided to focus on health disparities among African American males which was a natural fit for the organization as they already worked with fathers.

Having access to resources that contribute to the quality of life is vital to making a difference in communities. Providing access is one way DCFS intends to create change. AC/DC (Access Condoms in Darlington County) is a free condom access initiative implemented in barbershops, beauty salons, and by individuals currently being used by DCFS throughout the county. DCFS has used a similar approach by giving barbers free blood pressure cuffs to conduct blood pressure checks in their shops.

“The hope is to get men into a doctor’s office if necessary” said Patricia Sullivan, DCFS Communications Specialist. “They may initially go in as a follow up to their blood pressure check, but this also opens the opportunity for them to disclose other health issues with a healthcare provider.”

The Men’s Health Network published statistics provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Center for Health Statistics 2015, comparing men and women’s health:

Cause and Rate	Men	Women
Heart Disease	210.9	131.8
Cancer	192.9	138.1
Injuries	54.7	27.3
Stroke	36.9	35.6
Suicide	20.7	5.8

Lamar, Darlington, and Hartsville cities signed proclamations affirming June as Men’s Health Month. The proclamation “encourages all citizens to increase awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles, regular exercise, and medical check-ups for preventative health practices and early detection efforts.”

For more information on what you can do throughout the year to support men’s health, visit www.menshealthnetwork.org.