

Rutgers, East Orange Educate Seniors About Osteoporosis Risk

Referred to as a silent disease, osteoporosis represents a major public health problem, especially among senior citizens. To spread awareness, Lydia Albuquerque, RN, MSN, CCRN, a fellow of the Minority Nurse Leadership Institute at Rutgers University in New Jersey, under the mentorship of Nelson Tuazon, RN, MSN, MBA, NEA-BC, CPHQ, FACHE, senior vice president and chief nursing officer at East Orange (N.J.) General Hospital, designed the “Standing Strong: Preventing and Treating Osteoporosis” awareness program for senior citizens of East Orange.

This was a collaborative effort between the community outreach department, nutrition and physical therapy at East Orange and General Electric Healthcare.

Albuquerque worked with the teams for six months to design and implement the program. The goal was to create awareness among men and women to identify risk factors, seek treatment and prevent the disease. Organized by the community outreach department at East Orange, 65 men and women increased their osteoporosis awareness during April’s monthly Senior Bash Day.

Seniors who interact with the community outreach program were invited to participate, and an osteoporosis risk-factor checklist and osteoporosis knowledge awareness tool were administered. The Novartis-funded presentation was designed by the Alliance of Aging and was tailored to meet the needs of ethnic populations.

A therapist and representative from GE also participated in teaching awareness. Albuquerque designed a jeopardy game about osteoporosis during which the seniors won prizes for correct answers. The seniors also sampled a meal with foods rich in calcium to show them how to incorporate more of the nutrient into their diets. At the end of the session, the seniors tested their bone mass density with a portable machine brought in by the GE representative.

Albuquerque says she will continue to evaluate the seniors’ knowledge of osteoporosis and observe any behavioral changes in subsequent senior bash sessions at EOGH. Contact Albuquerque at lydia170461@yahoo.com.

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