



National Black Nurses Foundation, Inc.
Serving to Lead-Leading to Serve

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OUR MISSION is to convene alliances
and develop programs around clinical,
and policy measures to improve the
quality of life for underserved,
underprivileged, and underrepresented
at-risk populations. We achieve our
mission through education, research, and
policy implications as these programs
highlight the impact of the nursing
shortage and leadership in the United
States and its territories.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MENTAL HEALTH AND THE ROLE OF STIGMA COMMUNITY PROGRAM PRESENTED AT INTERNATIONAL NURSING CONFERENCE

Republic of Malta, (May 10, 2011) *MINDING THE GAP: IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS-ELIMINATING STIGMA* was presented during the 2011 International Council of Nurses (ICN) meeting, *Nurses Driving Access, Quality and Health in Malta* May 5-8. MTG has reached more than 50,000 individuals through NBNF partnerships and alliance relationships. The program aims to improve mental health seeking behavior and increase the utilization of mental health services beyond the usual less than half of adults and less than one third of children who receive treatment. The program directly addresses the role of stigma and its relationship in health seeking behavior surrounding mental disorders, especially depression and bi-polar disorder, while connecting communities with leaders in each field to address the issues.

Program content is developed for clinicians, public health advocates, clergy, and counselors who are in faith and community based settings. The program target audience also includes mental health policy advocates and workers, non-clergy in faith-and community organizations who are involved in mental health services and advocacy, and professional mental health organizations and their members. This mental health program was developed to:

- define mental illness and distinguish it from ordinary worry and unhappiness;
- describe the partnership between the faith-based community, academia, clinical communities, and policy makers in providing an improved safety net to enhance mental health and its related services;
- discuss the role of health policy in improving equality for mental health services; and
- provide resource information about mental health services.

Having been presented in Atlanta, Philadelphia, New Orleans, New York and Houston, MTG aided in identifying local alliances and partnerships to discuss advocacy, and identify clinical and faith partners to work together on the important issue of stigma and its role in improving mental health outcomes and improving access to behavioral health services. NBNF president and first author Dr C Alicia Georges presented the abstract during a concurrent session on care systems and access. The National Black Nurses Foundation in conjunction with The 1Joshua Group, association management company for the Foundation.

The **International Council of Nurses (ICN)** is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations (NNAs), representing the more than 13 million nurses. The 2011 conference will present strong evidence demonstrating how nurses, as key members of the health services team, promote, and contribute to quality and accessible health care. The Conference will provide opportunities to disseminate nursing knowledge and leadership across specialties, cultures, and countries.

Minding the Gap is sponsored in part by Astra Zeneca and The 1Joshua Group, LLC.

Should you have questions about the Foundation or Minding the Gap, please call The National Black Nurses Foundation at 404.559.6191.

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About the National Black Nurses Foundation

The National Black Nurses Foundation, Inc. (NBNF) undertakes the responsibility of improving the state of nurses, particularly African-American nurses through cooperative relationship with other similar international nursing organizations across ethnic nurse populations. The Foundation is engaged in activities that include health literacy, health authority models to increase access to care, nurse leadership development, reforming healthcare workforce regulations and the decrease of chronic diseases and related risk factors in underserved, under represented and at risk populations. For more information, visit <http://nbnfoundation.us>.