

REACH U.S.

Community Health Councils, Inc.

Los Angeles, California

A REACH Action Community (AC)

Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health Across the U.S. (REACH U.S.) is a national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) program aimed at eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities. It utilizes community-based approaches to reduce the burden of chronic illness in specific at-risk populations. There are 22 **REACH Action Communities** using practice-based and evidence-based programs. These programs look at cultural and environmental influences related to health disparities and their underlying causes. They develop, evaluate, and share their culturally specific and relevant strategies and best practices.

ISSUE

Community Health Councils' program, *African Americans Building a Legacy of Health*, is located in South Los Angeles, CA. The program's community-based, multi-sector coalition focuses on cardiovascular disease and diabetes in African Americans. The coalition works to increase access to healthy food and physical activity options through policy, systems, and environmental change strategies that promote investment in health, primarily in land use management and urban design policy.

ACTIVITIES

- Mobilizes and supports 450 residents in the Neighborhood Food Watch to monitor and promote standards of quality in retail food sales.
- Facilitates community engagement in the zoning regulation process. For example, provides coalition-building support to densely-populated neighborhoods of South Los Angeles in their efforts to alleviate health and environmental impacts from the adjacent Baldwin Oil Fields.
- Educates decision makers about the negative health consequences related to the expansion of fast food restaurants in South Los Angeles.

3731 Stocker Street,
Suite 201
Los Angeles, CA 90008
(323) 295-9372
www.chc-inc.org

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- Creates "health zone" language to be used in the local general plan, three South LA community plans, and the METRO Crenshaw public transportation plan.
- As a founding member of the City of Los Angeles Food Policy Council, the Community Health Council continues to promote a "good food for all" agenda with the Council.
- Develops consumer guide and policy reports. For example, the Community Health Council recently developed a consumer guide for expired foods and a policy report on transforming the *Food Desert to a Food Oasis*.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- At least two new grocery stores were developed since the adoption of city finance and planning incentives to attract responsible grocery stores and sit-down restaurants to South Los Angeles.
- A Community Advisory Panel was established to oversee enforcement of a Los Angeles County ordinance regulating oil field use and parkland development in the Baldwin Hills Oil Field.
- The Los Angeles City Council passed an amendment to control fast food restaurant expansion in South Los Angeles.
- A worksite wellness program has been set up in 35 organizations or work units with more than 700 participants.
- A multi-sector coalition involving the food retail industry works to promote grocery store investment in South Los Angeles and established a private/public partnership to finance store development statewide.
- Legislation passed in California requires chain restaurants with 20 or more sites to provide calorie content for menu items at the point of sale.

Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC)
1600 Clifton Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30333
Tel: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6354
Email: CDCINFO@cdc.gov
Web: www.cdc.gov

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Community Health

