



Reaching Out to African-American Psychiatrists with Information about AD/HD

by Bryan Goodman, M.A.

Karen Taylor-Crawford, M.D., (above) emphasized the importance of diagnosis and treatment in her address to members of the National Medical Association about AD/HD across the lifespan.

CHADD reached out to a group of the nation's African-American psychiatrists on August 6 as a part of the National Medical Association's annual convention, held this year in Honolulu, Hawaii. The NMA is the nation's oldest and largest organization serving physicians of African descent.

CHADD sponsored a dinner and presentation for 50 African-American psychiatrists. Former CHADD professional advisory board member Karen Taylor-Crawford, M.D., spoke to the group about attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) across the lifespan, touching on the history of the disorder, the evaluation process and importance of treatment.

A special video was played featuring a mother who talked about her son's treatment and subsequent success. She compared that with her brother who she believes has the disorder, but was never diagnosed and is now incarcerated. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-Texas), a leading expert on mental health care in Congress, also spoke in the video. Look for the video on CHADD's Web site (www.chadd.org).

The physicians in attendance seemed extremely interested in the presentation, and many followed up with questions. "I was delighted to see that the audience was so engaged," said E. Clarke Ross, CHADD's CEO. "Part of having an effective social movement means reaching people who are on the front lines. Doctors have to be armed with information to make a difference in their offices, hospitals, and communities. I think these doctors walked away with the information they need to effectively help their patients and communities."

CHADD's work with the NMA is crucial given reports that show African Americans with mental health disorders as being underdiagnosed, undertreated, underresearched and otherwise underserved. In 2001, the U.S. Surgeon General released a report entitled

Mental Health: Culture, Race and Ethnicity, which documented that African-American children were less likely than Caucasian youth to receive quality mental health services. Since then, CHADD has been proactive in supporting the Surgeon General's recommendations.

CHADD has worked closely with the NMA's section on psychiatry and behavioral science over the last several years. In 2005, the NMA passed a resolution acknowledging that AD/HD is a real neurobiological disorder that can adversely affect African Americans. The current chair of the psychiatry section, Diane Buckingham, M.D., is also a member of the CHADD professional advisory board.

CHADD recently held a community forum about AD/HD in African Americans in suburban Washington, D.C. There are also plans to reach out to members of Congress about AD/HD in the African-American community through distribution of the video featuring Congresswoman Jackson-Lee. **A**

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Over the last several years, CHADD has worked closely with the NMA to address disparities in AD/HD diagnosis and treatment. Pictured (left to right) are Karen Taylor-Crawford, M.D. (former CHADD professional advisory board member); Diane Buckingham, M.D. (current NMA psychiatry section chair and CHADD professional advisory board member); and E. Clarke Ross, D.P.A. (CEO of CHADD).