COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AS A MEANS OF IMPROVING HEALTH DISPARITIES: MOVING FROM ANALYSIS PARALYSIS TO ACTION
Workshop ~ Partnership Leadership & Governance

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The story of the Dallas County Coalition to Reduce Diabetes and Heart Disease was the topic of this workshop. The formation of the coalition was addressed along with how they got stuck in analysis and how they got free. Participants learned about the movement to action and the results to date and discussed community assessment for the common identification of health disparities.

The Dallas-Ft. Worth Hospital Council established an ad hoc needs assessment task force, which selected diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol as the first issues to be addressed. The assessment team included business leaders and community organizations and held several briefing sessions to determine areas of focus. The council developed the Dallas Area Coalition to Reduce Diabetes and Heart Disease to create a continuum of care to decrease morbidity and mortality of the African-American population with diabetes and hypertension and the elderly Caucasian population by 2005, and to increase the level of awareness and knowledge of risk that would lead to behavioral change.

One of the projects developed by the Council was “Diabetes Mellitus: The Epidemic in Our Backyard,” a CME program for doctors and nurses in the Dallas area which attracted over 200 participants during its first session. Next steps for the Council include institutionalizing the CME program, implementing a listserv for professionals and advocates, and a public education campaign.