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Symposium and conference look at diseases affecting African Americans and Hispanics; part of the second annual Houston Juneteenth Multicultural Health Festival

Houston, TX (June 4, 2008) - About 400 medical officials, community leaders, pastors and business owners will gather in downtown Houston during the second annual Houston Juneteenth Multicultural Health Festival (HJMHF) presented by UnitedHealth Group for a symposium and conference that focuses on chronic life-threatening diseases affecting African Americans and Hispanic Americans.

This unique health event will offer a **separate track** for medical professionals and another for community leaders, pastors, and business owners. The symposium and health conference are included in the activities associated with the Houston Juneteenth Multicultural Health Festival presented by UnitedHealth Group that kicks off June 21 at Discovery Green Park from noon to 6 p.m.

Both tracks will take place simultaneously at the Four Seasons Hotel. The track for medical officials will run from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The track for community leaders is scheduled for 9.m. to noon.

The Houston Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Symposium will focus on early detection, diagnosis, complications, organ donation and transplantation. This track will offer continuing medical education credits for primary care physicians, nurse practitioners and other health officials.

The State of Health Minority Conference, the track for business and community leaders, will focus on diabetes, high blood pressure, HIV/AIDS, leading diseases affecting many minorities. During the conference, these business and community leaders will receive a resource guide that includes a list of available clinics and programs designed to help uninsured or underinsured Houstonians.

Dr. Wadi Suki, a professor at Baylor College of Medicine, is the chairman for the health conference.

Minority health conference and CKD symposium manager Dorcas Ukpe said the event's purpose is to improve the health outlook for the high percentage of African American and Hispanics who are uninsured or underinsured in Houston. Statistics show that about 82 percent of African Americans and 87 percent of Hispanics living in Houston do not have health insurance.

"People will be screened during the festival and they'll need to know where they go from there. The goal of the conference is to help bridge that gap," said Ukpe. "It's the reason why we combined the festival with screening and education. These diseases are prevalent in the minority



community. With early diagnoses and intervention, people can get on the transplant list earlier, and hopefully live longer and more productive lives.”

Top 10 leading illnesses among African Americans and other ethnic groups:

1. Heart Disease
2. Cancer
3. Stroke
4. Diabetes
5. Obesity
6. Infant mortality (SIDS)
7. High Blood Pressure (hypertension)
8. HIV/AIDS
9. Chronic respiratory disease (emphysema, bronchitis, asthma)
10. Kidney disease

For additional information and media downloads regarding the event visit <http://www.houstonhealthfestival.org/press.html>

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