



## Faith-based Organizations' Response to HIV

- YOUR Blessed Health (YBH) leverages faith-based organizations (FBOs) as collaborative partners to provide ***access to HIV/STI health information*** to enhance awareness and promote prevention
- YBH programming highly individualized according to organization-specific guidelines (e.g., church) of ***appropriateness*** (e.g., condom demonstrations)
- YBH impact on congregants and community members has been published, but the impact on the ***faith leaders themselves*** has not been described

Gap in understanding sexual health information seeking and sharing behaviors of faith leaders who participated in STI education and prevention

## Research questions

1. What has been the impact of YBH on faith leader's ***attitudes*** concerning their role in HIV/STI prevention and treatment?
2. What are the facilitators and barriers to ***implementing*** HIV/STI prevention in faith-based organizations?
3. How can health education researchers and practitioners ***support*** African American faith leaders in HIV/STI prevention?
4. What has been the impact of YBH on ***congregants' attitudes*** concerning HIV/STI prevention and treatment?

## Interviews

- In-depth individual interviews with African American faith leaders who participated in at least one STI/HIV (YBH) information session

## Qualitative Analysis I

- Reviewed interview transcripts, extracted quotes and developed preliminary themes based on interviews
- 28 Interviews (4 “First Ladies”) completed as of 11.1.2019

## Qualitative Analysis II

- Straussian grounded theory - systematic approach for analyzing interview transcripts (next step).

## Survey Distribution & Analysis

- Results from the analysis of the interviews inform paper-based survey
- Targeting 100 completed surveys from faith leaders, their partner and/or other leaders in their FBO (i.e., spouse, deacon), and members of their congregation (Spring 2020)

## Sample

- 28 Black/African American faith leaders (as of 11.1.2019)
- Ages ranged from **35** to **84**, median age was **65.5** years

Faith/Denomination	
Non-Denominational Christian	12
Baptist	8
Pentecostal/COGIC	6
Lutheran	1
Muslim	1

Age	
30-39	1
40-49	2
50-59	2
60-69	16
70-79	6
80-89	1

Gender	
Male	18
Female	10

Years as Faith Leader			
0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39
2	11	9	6

## Leaders embraced role as conduits of sexual health info.

- After **becoming aware** of magnitude of HIV pandemic (Genesse County), embraced role as conduits to sexual health information
- Included sexual health information in church (e.g., sermons, meetings) to **promote health** in their congregations and communities - part of **role** to pastor to the “whole man” or “whole person”
- Remained dedicated to **promoting abstinence** until marriage but were willing to discuss modes of prevention of STIs and unwanted pregnancies
- Some maintained view of **LGBTQ issues** (e.g., same-sex relationships) as anti-church teaching (“individual is in crisis”), but several neutral on the topic in a sexual health context
- Continued to **seek sexual health information** (e.g., online, health department, and hospitals) at YBH conclusion, while others did not
- Recommended to continue to educate faith leaders about STI/HIV prevention and STI/HIV **prevalence statistics** specific to their **communities** with information distilled, so that it is shared easily with congregations

## Five Themes

### Awareness

“YBH kinda opened up my mindset to venture out of ... just a one-track message of salvation.” (P11)

“YBH was a catalyst for us to bring the physical dimension to our congregations, because we are operating in what we call ‘traditional ignorance’” (P04)

“Personally, it impacted me with a hurt that you might not understand. To be able to see our people be infected and knowing that they don't have to be.” (P15)

### Continued to Seek Info.

“If I'm out ... in the dentist or doctor's office, and I see magazines on sexual health, where before I would just, maybe pass that up and go for a sports magazines... now I'm knocking that wall, I'm digging into it now. So I'm more intrigued with what's going on, as I relates to HIV and STI.” (P05)

### Role as Church Leader

“I'm a total man pastor ... A shepherd from the head to the foot... Totally involved... With the sex life... Yeah, with their education. Total man.” (P03)

### Situated in Church Teaching

“I say, 'God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.' And so we just touch on it slightly to let them know that it (same-sex relationships) is not biblical, that's not moral, that's not even human.” (P14)

### Recommended More Info.

“Make it easy for them to give good information, so the newsletter should not be thick with narrative. It should be data and bullet points, and eye-catching topics.” (P04)

## Summary Findings to Date

1. Their **responsibility** to provide sexual health information, part of their duty to minister to the whole **person**.
2. YBH provided a **variety** of sexual health information – from prevalence to risk reduction strategies which had profound effect. They continued to **seek** and **share sexual** health information for years after YBH.
3. Despite their identities as faith leaders including a responsibility to share sexual health information, their **faith beliefs** concerning LGBTQ identities may present **barriers** to providing inclusive sexual health education.



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