LOCAL PROBLEM
Research has shown African Americans are at greatest risk of developing cardiovascular disease because of uncontrolled high blood pressure leading to hypertension. Obesity and inactivity are health risks affecting African Americans at younger ages developing hypertension. The American Heart Association suggests a healthy diet and lifestyle changes are the best weapons to fight cardiovascular disease. The identified problem is the significant difference in African Americans with cardiovascular disease disparities of morbidity and mortality. Literature indicates the implementation of effective strategies to produce healthier lifestyles and control high blood pressure.

PROJECT PURPOSE
The purpose of this project was to create a Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension (DASH) Toolkit to address the identified problem of uncontrolled high blood pressure in African Americans. The Toolkit consists of resource interventions for hypertension, emphasizing the DASH diet with the implementation of physical activity to promote healthier lifestyles.

METHODOLOGY
The Health Promotion Model (HPM) guided the implementation of the DASH dietary plan Toolkit by providing a practical approach to change. The setting was in a faith-based setting. The HPM framework elements applied to the project are individual characteristics and experiences, behavior-specific cognitions and affect, and behavioral outcomes. HPM framework elements were implemented during the pre-session, 1\textsuperscript{st} session, and 2\textsuperscript{nd} session of the DASH into a Healthier lifestyle event. Unhealthy behaviors (poor eating habits), and no physical activity were identified during the pre-session. In the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} session, Toolkits were provided to foster improved healthier behaviors, assessment data were obtained, and post-test surveys collected to determine the effectiveness of the Toolkit.

RESULTS
The outcome of the Toolkit survey findings indicated the effectiveness of the toolkit and showed an increase in awareness of a healthier lifestyle among African Americans. The participants scored an average of 19% (out of possible 100%) of the recommended weight loss goal of 5lbs or more within four weeks. Results from the hypertension self-care activity survey showed 25% of participants blood pressure controlled; the participants showed an increase in implementing healthier behaviors. These findings indicate the participants' knowledge and understanding of controlling hypertension with learned lifestyle modifications.
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE
There was an outstanding eager to learn about the DASH dietary plan during the implementation of the project. However, there was a need for teaching the components of the DASH dietary plan and AHA recommendations during the assessment phase. Many of the participants desired to know more detail information about the Toolkit based on the DASH dietary plan. As the sessions concluded, participants reported the Toolkit was easy to understand, found the content in the toolkit to be interesting and appropriate information for combating disparities in African Americans. The Toolkit also increased the participant’s awareness of a healthier lifestyle. Many of the participates desired to continue the sessions and reported the time was inadequate for a significant change in their physical assessments. Overall, this project was successful in one’s awareness of a healthier lifestyle to control high blood pressure.

*Keywords:* hypertension, lifestyle modifications, physical activity, DASH, toolkit

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