

Nova Southeastern University's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine AMWA HOSTS FIRST WOMEN IN DISTRESS HEALTH FAIR

On Thursday April 11, 2019, NSU MD AMWA hosted their first Women's Health Fair at Women in Distress of South Florida. The first of its kind for NSU MD and at the establishment alike, the event was preceded by a buzz of excitement and weeks of planning to ensure maximum value for the participants. Boasting involvement by Hollywood Institute of Beauty Careers, Broward County Addiction Center, and other community establishments in addition to NSU MD AMWA students, the event provided a safe setting for women to not only learn about topics relating to their own health, but to learn about community-wide opportunities and affairs.

With the emphasis of the event being on women's health education, NSU MD AMWA organized three tables of health-related topics: **Heart Health, Exercise and Nutrition, as well as Women's Health.**

At the **Heart Health** table, participants were educated on vital signs and other such measurements that have become so commonplace in the medical field that comprehension by patients is often neglected entirely. Participants had the opportunity to have their blood pressure, pulse oximetry, and blood glucose values measured. Medical students ensured that these values were explained rather than merely stated – a change that was visibly and undoubtedly appreciated by the participants. After having the numbers of her blood pressure reading explained to her on a physiologic basis by NSU MD student Samantha Marazita, one participant gratefully expressed that she had never before understood what the measurement meant for her health – in her experience, “they never tell you what the numbers mean.”



Sam Marazita taking the blood pressure of a resident of the Women in Distress Center.



From Left to Right: Uma Ramoutar, Becky Li, Mashtura Hasan, Haley Ehrlich, Jacob Oster and Samantha Marazita.

NSU MD AMWA members Becky Li and Mashtura Hasan shuffled between blood pressure, pulse, and blood glucose readings and explanations, ensuring that any of the participants' questions that they may have previously felt uncomfortable asking were answered.



Mashtura Hasan (left) and Becky Li (right) greet one of the first attendees of the Health Fair to explain the use of glucometers and the importance of maintaining healthy glucose levels.

The **Exercise and Nutrition** table aimed to educate participants on more than the importance of making healthy choices, but on their potential to take control of their health by modifying their exercise and dietary habits with emphasis on affordable and attainable choices. With a Bachelor of Science in Applied Physiology and Kinesiology, NSU MD AMWA member Jacob Oster shared his knowledge with participants and willingly answered any of the questions they had – questions which,

to his surprise, were not focused on the specifics of exercise (as most participants already had a solid understanding) but were instead focused on encompassing exercise in an already busy life routine. Flyers designed specifically to appeal to the demographic of patients in South Florida as part of the Caribbean Diaspora Health Project (CDHP) led by Dr. Farzanna Haffizulla presented participants with feasible and appealing ideas for nutrition and exercise. With her background as Project Manager of CDHP and a Master's in Public Health from Columbia University, NSU MD employee Anjali Ramoutar distributed the appropriate flyers to participants with an explanation tailored to their demographic or specific interests.



Exercise and Nutrition flyers printed in English and Spanish provided by Dr. Farzanna Haffizulla's Caribbean Diaspora Health Project (CDHP).



Anjali Ramoutar (left) and Jacob Oster (right) discuss various healthy yet culturally suitable nutrition options with health fair attendee.

Perhaps the pinnacle of the event, the **Women's Health** table attracted participants with the vast amount of information provided. With visuals on women's screenings, breast cancer, sexually transmitted infections, and menopausal changes to the body, participants gained a basic understanding of these topics. Further education was offered by demonstration of breast self-exams and pelvic exams by NSU MD AMWA students Nuverah Mohsin and

Haley Ehrlich using anatomic models gratuitously provided by NSU MD's Dr. Elizabeth Gray. On the benefit of using anatomic models at the event, AMWA Co-president Haley excitedly realized that participants "felt more empowered and comfortable talking about their own bodies after learning from the models and seeing through a physician's eyes. The atmosphere was inviting, allowing the women to feel as though they could communicate more freely with me." Arguably more beneficial than the visuals and models was the opportunity for participants to speak with the medical students to clarify many common misconceptions regarding their health. Participants were gifted a feminine hygiene goody bag to thank them for their patronage.



Haley Ehrlich demonstrates the process of a pelvic exam on a model.



Nuverah Mohsin demonstrates several techniques for self-breast exams while challenging participants to see if they can find a lump. An immense success in all regards, the Women in Distress Health Fair was an enlightening experience for both the medical students and participants alike. Inspired by the event to do more, NSU MD AMWA is eager to plan their next event.

Sincerest gratitude to Women in Distress Hotty M. and NSU MD's Dr. Haffizulla and Dr. Gray for their contribution and dedication. Article written by and photos taken by NSU MD AMWA Historian Uma Ramoutar