

**Name of the UAB Grand Challenge:**

Let's Get Down 35211

**Principal point of contact:**

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**Description of the problem to be addressed:**

Cardiovascular deaths include deaths from heart disease, stroke, hypertension, heart attack and heart failure. Heart disease causes one in every four U.S. deaths and is the leading cause of death in both men and women. Stroke is the fifth-leading cause of death. Cardiovascular deaths vary by race and ethnicity. Non-Hispanic blacks have nearly twice the rate of avoidable deaths from heart disease, stroke and hypertensive disease as non-Hispanic whites.<sup>1</sup> Alabama ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation in terms of cardiovascular deaths with 339.6 deaths per 100,000 population, 44% higher than the national rate of 189.7 deaths per 100,000 population. Strokes kill 56 per 100,000 in Alabama while the national rate is 45. Alabama also ranks at the bottom in terms of risk factors for cardiovascular disease: 44.4% of Alabama's population have high cholesterol (ranking of 50<sup>th</sup>), 40.3% have high blood pressure (ranking of 49<sup>th</sup>), 35% are obese (ranking of 49<sup>th</sup>), 14.6% have diabetes (ranking of 49<sup>th</sup>), 29.4% are physically inactive (ranking of 44<sup>th</sup>), and 21.5% are smokers (ranking of 42<sup>nd</sup>). In 2015, 3.2 million Alabamians (66 percent of the state's population) had at least one chronic disease; 1.4 million had two or more chronic conditions.<sup>2</sup> According to the Partnership to Prevent Chronic Disease, 23,000 lives could be saved annually in Alabama through better prevention and treatment of chronic disease.

Heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death and disability in Jefferson County and high blood pressure is the leading cause of heart disease and stroke. "Let's Get Down 35211" is a unique project aimed at making a difference in morbidity and mortality in the 35211 zip code of Jefferson County, an area shown by UAB to have the highest complication rates from uncontrolled high blood pressure. Those living in the 35211 zip code are older and predominantly African American, both of which are additional risk factors for high blood pressure. The value of this project is that it targets a defined area and utilizes a variety of trusted community partners in a primary and secondary prevention approach to identify and manage high blood pressure in an at-risk population with the goal of improving health and quality of life while positively impacting morbidity and mortality.

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<sup>1</sup> United Health Foundation: America's Health Rankings, 2017

<sup>2</sup> Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease, [www.FightChronicDisease.org/Alabama](http://www.FightChronicDisease.org/Alabama)

**Desired outcomes and conceptualization of the plan:**

The desired outcome of “Let’s Get Down 35211” is to identify high blood pressure in those previously unaware and improve blood pressure control for hypertensive residents of the 35211 zip code. This will be accomplished by screening and educating residents and linking them to ongoing sources for health care. The project is a partnership that includes Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH), UAB School of Nursing, three local churches in the 35211 zip code that collectively have 7,000 members (Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church Health Ministry, More Than Conquerors Church Bethesda Life Center, and New Hope Baptist Church Health Ministry), and Connection Health (to train Community Health Workers [CHWs] that will assist with the project).

Initial plans include designing an approach to screening all adults within the 35211 zip code, training CHWs, identifying appropriate educational resources, and arranging referral sites for individuals identified with high blood pressure. Staff from JCDH, faculty and students from UAB School of Nursing, Health Ministry staff from the three churches, and the Connection Health Executive Director will be involved in all aspects of the planning and implementation of this unique Grand Challenge. The project will utilize the American Heart Association’s *Check, Change, Control* tracker, which is a software program that allows project staff to conduct blood pressure screening, recording, trending, individual teaching, and referral. This information will be particularly useful for project evaluation purposes.

**List of potential team members:**

Jefferson County Department of Health – Mark Wilson, MD (Health Officer) and Monique Mullins, MPH (Administrative Analyst)

UAB School of Nursing – Whitney Pollio, EdD, RN and Deborah Bowers, DNP, CRNP (Community Health Nursing faculty)

Connection Health – Dr. Angela Baumann (Executive Director)

Health Ministry Staff from Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, More Than Conquerors Church Bethesda Life Center, and New Hope Baptist Church