



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: AFRICAN CABDRIVERS HEALTH STUDY

Chicago is home to the fifth largest population of African immigrants in the United States; close to 4% of all immigrants in Chicago are Africans. Most African immigrants are of working age, more than half have bachelor's degrees or higher and more than 90% speak English well or very well. Despite these advantages, many African struggle to find well-paying jobs and at least 18% lives in poverty. Of the 21% of all Africans who work in service occupations, taxicab drivers are estimated to make up a significant proportion; 60% of taxicab drivers in Chicago are foreign- born; and 6% of taxicab drivers nationwide are African.

Being a taxicab driver exposes individuals to a variety of occupational hazards, which includes stress, long sedentary work hours and violence that likely create health problems. Yet we know very little of the health-related needs of taxicab drivers in general and African taxicab drivers specifically. With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), it is important to identify the needs of this population and design appropriate outreach strategies to overcome barriers to healthcare.

Against this backdrop, the United African Organization (UAO) conducted a health survey among Chicago's African taxicab drivers to assess their health needs, including insurance coverage and health services use, with the hope of working with partners to address issues and barriers to services. The African Cabdrivers Health Survey was administered to 527 African taxicab drivers between October 2012 and January 2013.

Findings from the survey indicate that African taxicab drivers have significant health-related needs. Specifically, half of the respondents' annual earnings were at or below the federal poverty level, and 66% had no health insurance. Furthermore, a third of participants had not been to a doctor in over a year; 1 in 5 respondents did not know if they had diabetes or high blood pressure; two-thirds did not know about community health centers; 71% use emergency rooms, hospitals or other safety net health providers as their usual source of care; and many live in medically underserved communities or in health professional shortage areas.

In light of these findings, the study identified the following as important needs among African taxicab drivers in Chicago:

- Education on the Affordable Care Act and provisions that affect them;
- Linkages to programs that will enable them to make informed choices about health insurance options on the upcoming Health Insurance Exchange;
- Education and resources related to life insurance;
- Education and resources related to primary health care services, including community health centers;
- Health education initiatives that are culturally appropriate and accessible to help them adopt preventative behaviors that can mitigate the health hazards common in the occupation.

This population also needs champions, like the United African Organization, to advocate for affordable health insurance coverage and policies that increase the availability of primary health services in underserved communities and in a format that is culturally appropriate. We hope that this report becomes the catalyst for dialogue among stakeholders to improve access and health outcomes for cabdrivers in Chicago.



*\*\*\*This study is made possible, in part, by support from **BlueCross BlueShield Foundation of Illinois**\*\*\**

**For a copy of the full study, please contact us:**