

Injury Prevention Center recognized for community outreach



Many IPC programs focus on reaching area teens and young adults with messages about safe driving, the risks of drug and alcohol abuse, and violence prevention.

As a trauma surgeon, Akpofure Peter Ekeh, M.D., M.P.H., FACS, associate professor of surgery, applies his skills and expertise to save lives, repair damage, and help patients recover from serious injury. His most effective work, however, may be on behalf of people who never need his services.

In his role as director of the Injury Prevention Center of Greater Dayton (IPC), Ekeh oversees a variety of community-based programs designed to reduce preventable injury and death.

The IPC was founded in 1995 by the Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association and is now a joint project of the Department of Surgery and the Miami Valley Hospital Level I Trauma Program.

The center's longest-running program, Drive ALIVE is a four-week course for teens convicted of moving violations. Follow-up studies have shown that

participants are 50 percent less likely to commit another driving-related offense within six months.

The IPC also conducts alcohol education fairs at local schools to teach teens about the risks of underage drinking, and it participates in anti-violence programs for at-risk youth through schools and the juvenile court system. In addition, the Operation Street Smart program teaches parents, teachers, and others who work with teens to recognize street drugs and signs of their use.

In 2008, the *Dayton Business Journal* recognized the center with its annual Health Care Heroes Award for Community Outreach.

Shaun Hamilton, B.S., CHES, manager of the IPC and a student in the medical school's Master of Public Health program, was gratified by the recognition. He

attributes much of the center's success to careful, ongoing data analysis, including a review of records and statistics from the trauma center, the court system, and other regional and national sources. The data might reveal a spike in motor vehicle accidents, for example, or a high percentage of offenses involving substance abuse.

"At that point we develop programs and initiatives to see reductions in that area," Hamilton said.

The statistics can be daunting, indicating complex or widespread issues that may be difficult to address, but Hamilton embraces the challenge.

"We can't hide from the data," he said. "We've got to take it on." **VS**

