

Frances Ashe-Goins

October 2003 Calendar

As a child, Frances Ashe-Goins was always mending, bandaging and caring for her dolls. The eldest of five girls and one boy, she took care of everyone in the family. "They looked to me to fulfill that role," she said. It was natural that nursing would become part of her life.

Upon graduation from nursing school, Frances worked in several different hospital units. Through her experience, she realized that many health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, could be prevented if education was provided. After several years in the clinical setting, she became an education coordinator at a hospital in South Carolina.

"We have to teach people to help themselves," Frances said, adding that it's especially important among African American women as they make their families' health care choices. "We shouldn't have to live with poor health outcomes from diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and stroke, which commonly afflict African Americans. We can make small changes that will enable us to lead healthier, happier lives." It can be as simple as changing eating habits, exercising regularly or drinking water each day, she added.



Committed to disease prevention and helping women live longer and healthier, Frances is responsible for health policy analysis and program leadership in the national Office on Women's Health. She focuses on women's health issues, including HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, diabetes and minority health. She's a founder and coordinator of the National Nurses' Task Force on Violence Against Women, and her work for the National Committee on AIDS gave her the chance to coordinate the very first commission hearing with sports celebrity Magic Johnson.

Through her own life experiences, including the death of two nieces and one nephew, Frances has been able to develop disease prevention programs focusing on HIV/AIDS and lupus. In 2002, she was honored for her work in developing a health promotion/disease prevention model for

young women. "No matter what I'm working on or when, I do the best that I can for as long as I can," she said.

In the future, Frances plans to increase her efforts to mentor young people. "We have to be sure there's someone taking up the charge for health promotion and disease prevention," she said.

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- Frances Ashe-Goins