Beat: Music

HIP HOP PUBLIC HEALTH Launches 20 SECONDS OR MORE INITIATIVE

INITIATIVE HARNESSING THE POWER OF MUSIC

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USPA NEWS - Hip Hop Public Health (HHPH) the national nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering positive health behavior change through the power of hip hop music since 2005, launched on April 14, 20 Seconds or More, a new initiative to encourage hand washing and other safety protocols among the nation's youth.

The focal point of 20 Seconds or More is a lively, three-minute music video featuring pioneering rapper and community health advocate, Doug E. Fresh, along with more than 40 noted individuals from the entertainment, sports, medical, civic and business sectors. These include a range of talents such as rappers DMC, Monie Love and Chuck D, pop and R&B singers Ashanti and Jordin Sparks, along with Jamie Foxx, Cedric The Entertainer, UNC NBA prospect Cole Anthony, Olympian Benita Fitzgerald Mosley and many others. Dr. Olajide Williams, Chief of Staff, Department of Neurology, NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center, and Doug E. Fresh are the Co-Founders of HHPH and are spearheading the initiative with HHPH Executive Director and CEO, Lori Rose Benson. Philanthropic support for the initiative has been provided by the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation and the Bristol Myers Squibb Black Organization for Leadership Development, an employee resource group.

Hip Hop Public Health produced the song 20 Seconds or More in response to messaging failures governing the pandemic in the US. The song was written by Artie Green, and features Doug E. Fresh and Gerry Gunn with medical oversight by Dr. Williams. 20 Seconds or More is available on Spotify and will be on additional streaming music platforms this week, with the hopes of inspiring dance/rapping challenges to share these resources widely. The song's catchy refrain, "Wash your hands everybody, and everybody just wash your hands," is inspired by the classic hip hop riff that began with Big Hank and has been adopted by MCs and hip hop fans of all ages and backgrounds as a global anthem.

"The main goal of 20 Seconds or More is to bring together art, science and social media innovation to help fight the COVID-19 health crisis plaguing our nation and the world today," says Doug E. Fresh. "As an artist and a health advocate, I have the responsibility of using my platform and my voice to make a change, beginning with young people, to help save lives and stop the spread of this virus."

"Without a doubt, COVID-19 is one of the most challenging health crises of modern times," says Dr. Olajide Williams. "Personal safety measures are important against the highly contagious Coronavirus, whose infectious profile includes a large number of silent 'asymptomatic' carriers (18-30%) capable of infecting others, and those with mild manifestations of the disease."

The few community defenses against the devastating effects of COVID-19 include home quarantine, social distancing, and proper frequent hand washing. Data shows that these practices mitigate the spread of the virus and have helped to reduce transmission and sickness in countries that have implemented them.

Adds Dr. Williams, "We now know that younger people are more likely to have mild manifestations or silent infection compared to older individuals, and that communities of color are disproportionately affected. These groups need targeted health communication solutions for improving compliance with hand washing, social distancing and home quarantine. 20 Seconds or More is such a campaign, designed to motivate young people and communities of color to engage in regular hand washing and social distancing, while also appealing to the general public."

"This is the era of personal responsibility, when the simple things we choose to do or not do have life and death consequences," says Lori Rose Benson, Executive Director and CEO of Hip Hop Public Health. "Personal responsibility is empowered by education, social conditioning, and cultural relevance. We could therefore think of no better way to get this message across than by launching 20 Seconds or More. This is a life-saving, action-oriented platform that enables young people and all of us to recognize and utilize our power for the collective good health of our communities, the nation and the world."

In addition to the song and video, HHPH has created multiple opportunities for the public to get involved in the 20 Seconds or More movement. Working in collaboration with OPEN, the Online Physical Education Network, HHPH created free lesson plans and other health educational materials to be shared with teachers, school leaders, parents and students to support remote learning and staying

active at home. HHPH has also created opportunities for young people, educators and artists to serve as Ambassadors, or "HHPH MCs" charged with utilizing their social networks and platforms to inspire dance and rap challenges, while encouraging adherence to COVID-19 safety protocols. HHPH's network of MCs (Masters of Culture) helps to amplify key health messages to empower youth and teach them how to care for their physical and mental health.

HHPH is also sharing frequent updates and information regarding COVID-19 through a series of studies, papers and interactive sessions with Dr. Williams. These include the COVID-19 Industry Rapid Response Q&A with The Partnership for a Healthier America and HHPH's latest blog post with engaging resources for families to stay active at home.

The 20 Seconds or More video was produced by IDEKO, a New York based experiential production agency.

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