

logo not found or type unknown

Pointing to Research Showing Over 50 Percent of Virgin Islanders With High Blood Pressure, East End Medical Ramps Up Outreach and Educational Events

Health / **Published On June 13, 2021 06:54 AM /**

Kyle Murphy **June 13, 2021**

Image not found or type unknown



"Eat & Exercise" participants during Friday's event organized by the East End Medical Center, Tutu Park Mall and the St. Thomas Rotary Club. By. KYLE MURPHY FOR VI CONSORTIUM

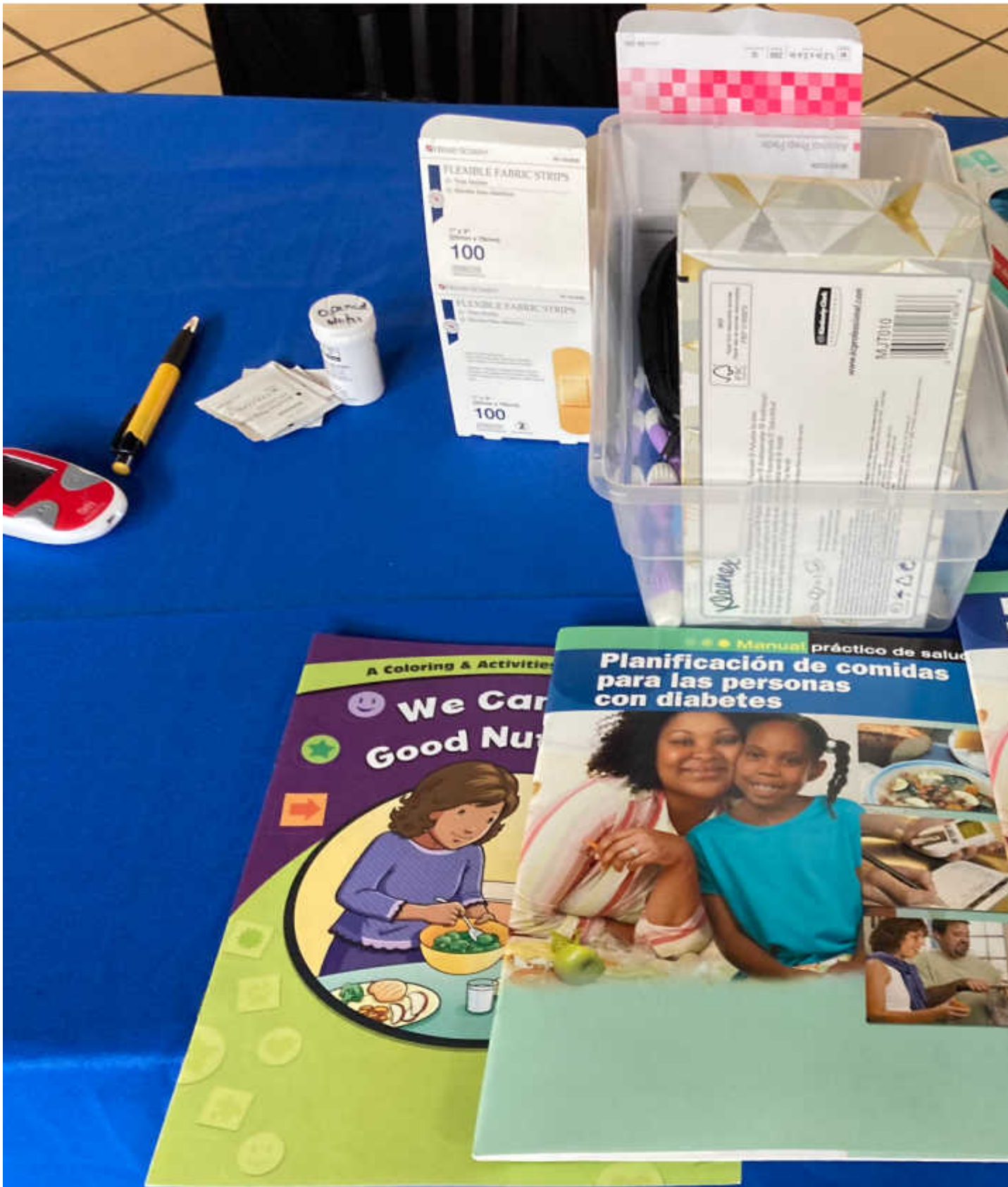
ST. THOMAS — The East End Medical Center in St. Thomas on Friday hosted what it named the “Eat and Exercise” event that provided glucose & hypertension screening, nutritional facts, and “Soca Fitness” sessions. The event was open to the public at Tutu Park Mall.

Moletto Smith Jr., East End Medical executive director, stated, “One of our core missions is to support individuals with hypertension and diabetes. That's one of our core functions. We do

several varying types of activities throughout the years and over the years to support folks to maintain better health, particularly around maintaining good blood sugar as well as blood pressure.”

He said East End Medical has several outreach events and projects that utilizes technology to support blood pressure readings, among other functions.

People attending the event were to register and receive a gift bag with healthy snacks, a glucose monitoring system, blood glucose tests strips and more. Participants also headed to an area where glucose and hypertension screening were performed. Also available were free pamphlets in both English and Spanish that provided nutritional information for diabetic meal planning and more.

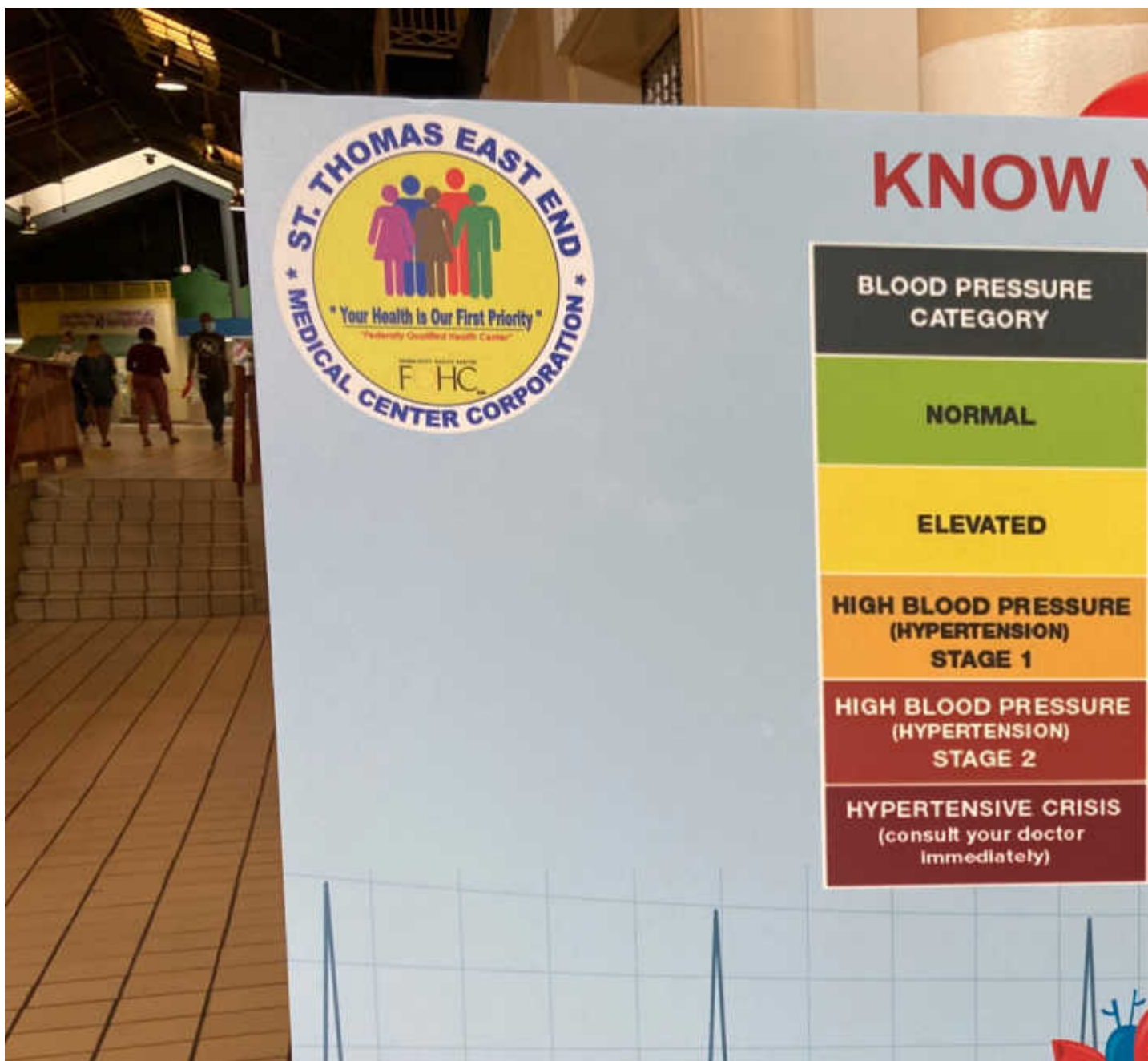


“This event was really a brainchild of our medical director in support with our public relations outreach officer and their joint teams,” Mr. Smith said. “This event was really put together to bring education to the public.”

He added, “It’s one of the events that is good for the community... We had a very high turnout early on — people were actually waiting before we opened to be here.” Mr. Smith expressed delight that the organization was able to put the event together. “This is not a one and done event. These are going to be ongoing events of the health center,” he stated. “We just ask the community to listen out, look out and be a part of helping our community health.”

Aside from the health benefits of the "Eat and Exercise" event, Mr. Smith said he wanted participants to "generally be knowledgeable, aware and take some active steps to manage or control both diabetes and hypertension, and to prevent themselves from getting both of those.”

Dr. Barbara Douglas, medical director of the East End Medical Center, said hypertension is prevalent in the Virgin islands community. "There has been some research done that shows more than 50 percent of people of the Virgin Islands have hypertension and the results are stroke, heart attack, kidney disease," she said. "There are a lot dialysis units on island and amputation of limbs.”



She also provided diet tips: "If you can control the sugar, the fat, the salt in the diet you are ahead of the game."

Relative to diabetes, Dr. Douglas said important to keeping the disease at bay "is of course making sure there isn't any high sugar type foods and drinks: juices and sodas, and starches: potatoes, rice. Not that you can't eat those things but the amounts to be controlled," she said. In regards to hypertension, she stated, "When you look at some of the delicacies on island such as salt fish, which is high in salt — even when people boil it it's still there — all of those things add to the problem."

Audria Thomas, pediatrician and allergist for East End Medical Center, said knowledge is key. "If they are familiar with their family history then they would be more conscious of the fact that they need to be good healthy eaters and exercisers. I think as a pediatrician we want those kids to learn at an early age."

She added, "Just like you brush your teeth it should be a normal thing to exercise, it should be a normal thing to eat good. We encourage fruits and vegetables."

Ms. Thomas warned, "You can have diabetes at an early age and the earlier you have diabetes the more complications you can have later in life. We are just trying to teach the community and also to know that they have somewhere to come if you need to be guided in that way. It starts not at adulthood, it starts at an early age."

The East End Medical Center partnered with Tutu Park Mall and the St. Thomas Rotary Club for the event.