

# MINNEAPOLIS

## HEALTHY CITY THRIVING FAMILIES



A Quarterly Update from the City of Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support

April - June 2005

### *Seen on da Streets* shows success



*Seen on da Streets*, an innovative new project addressing the sexual health of young men, has made tremendous strides in reaching it's goals. Through a unique combination of approaches, health outreach workers spoke with nearly 4000 people in areas of Minneapolis that have some of the highest sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates in the state. The goal of the project is to educate young men about protecting themselves and partners from STIs and unplanned pregnancies.

The project's outreach activities happen in locations where younger men congregate, such as city parks, neighborhood store parking lots, barber shops and nightclubs. Dave Johnson, coordinator for the project, says "The staff [outreach workers and youth advocates] are from the community and are familiar with the 'hustling' mentality that sells a product on the street. While this type of activity is often seen in a negative light, the workers capitalize on this approach to sell other young men on the importance of healthy sexual practices. This type of outreach requires not only knowledge and skill, but must also be genuine." Johnson said the key for success is for outreach workers to understand their clients' situations, which builds the trust and respect necessary for helping young men make healthy choices.

*Seen on da Streets* workers found that 71 percent of the 1800 young men interviewed reported having multiple sexual partners in the past six months. One-third of the sexually active young men reported not using condoms during every sexual encounter and 41 percent reported never having been tested for an STI. Additionally, nearly 30 percent had not seen a doctor in the past year for any reason. Among the 467 young men who were tested, 77 (16.5 percent) tested positive for STIs.

Minneapolis has the highest rates of gonorrhea and chlamydia among African Americans in 50 of the largest cities in the United States. In 2000, reported rates in Minneapolis for the two infections were 40 and 28 times higher than national rates. Rates are highest among African American men 15 to 24 years old. Since 75 percent of these young men live in five communities (Camden, Near North, Central, Phillips, Powderhorn), *Seen on da Streets* has focused in these areas.

*Seen on da Streets* is a collaborative program between the MDHFS; Teen Age Medical Service (TAMS), the adolescent outpatient clinic of Children's Hospitals and Clinics; and Fremont Clinic, a part of Fremont Community Health Services, Inc. Fremont Clinic's outreach program started in 2002 with funding from the Minnesota Department of Health, which continues to provide funding and technical assistance for this program.

The teams of outreach workers and youth advocates have succeeded by actively engaging young men in their community, and by improving services to young men in community clinics. They have become trusted resources for health information and health services in the community. For more information about *Seen on da Streets*, contact Dave Johnson at 612/673-3948.



Ten *Seen on da Streets* workers from TAMS and Fremont Clinic received awards in February for their exceptional work. V.J. Smith (left), advisory council member, presented a certificate to Marlon Moore (right), from the Fremont Clinic.

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# City/County joint advisory committee studying urban health

On the recommendation of a 2004 blue ribbon panel, the Minneapolis Public Health Advisory Committee and the Hennepin County Community Health Services Advisory Committee have met jointly three times to begin addressing these urban health issues: early childhood screening, healthy weight, and mental health.

In February, this group had an in-depth look at early childhood screening. Carol Miller, program manager for Hennepin County Human Services and the Youth Coordinating Board, gave an overview of current

efforts to increase the number of preschoolers who receive comprehensive health and development screenings before kindergarten. It is important to get more three year olds screened so that any issues identified can be addressed well before the start of school. Issues can range from mental health concerns to developmental delays to problems with hearing or vision.

The Joint Health Advisory Committee endorses the goal of screening more children by the age of three. Recommendations for action will be developed at the next meeting in May. Contact Gretchen Musicant at 612/673-3955 for more information.



*A young Minneapolis resident gets checked for hearing problems. Early detection of hearing and vision problems can help children succeed once they get into kindergarten. Three year olds also get their progress checked on many other issues during these screening sessions.*

## The Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS)

works to ensure that all families are healthy and fully share in the social and economic opportunities of the City of Minneapolis. The MDHFS reaches residents by working in partnership with community organizations, other units of government, schools, and health and human service agencies.



**Gretchen Musicant, Commissioner**

**Council Member  
Natalie Johnson Lee, Chair  
Health & Human Services  
Committee**

**612/673-2301  
[www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs)**

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## 24: Minneapolis prepares in real time

The popular prime-time television show “24” features federal workers in a counter-terrorism unit, responding to emergencies in real time. Thirteen Minneapolis representatives recently participated in a week-long exercise with echoes of “24,” including simulating the first 48 hours after a major disaster. The exercise, held in Anniston, AL during the week of February 6, brought together 79 Twin Cities metro area professionals to practice regional communication and cooperation during a health or medical emergency. Twelve participants were from the City of Minneapolis, including MDHFS. Other disciplines represented included fire, emergency medical services, hospitals, law enforcement, emergency management, the Red Cross, communications, and attorneys.

The Anniston exercise was sponsored by the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS), which began in 1996 and is currently funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The primary focus of the MMRS program is to develop or enhance existing emergency preparedness systems to effectively respond to a public health or medical crisis, especially in a weapons of mass destruction event. Through training efforts such as the Anniston exercise, staff in fields such as law enforcement, fire, Hazmat, emergency medical services, hospitals and public health are able to prepare to respond in the first 48 hours of a public health or medical crisis. For more information on emergency preparedness or the Metropolitan Medical Response System, contact Pam Blixt at 612/673-3933.

# Gretchen Musicant is Minneapolis' new health commissioner

Gretchen Musicant began a two-year appointment as health commissioner on Feb. 15, 2005. Musicant will oversee all programs and operations of the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS), with a budget of approximately \$12.5 million and 67 full-time employees.

Musicant had been serving as the City's director for Public Health Initiatives at the MDHFS for the past six years. In this role, Musicant was responsible for six school-based clinics, the New Families Center (for recent immigrants and other families new to the Minneapolis school district), Healthy Start (a program to lower infant mortality in

African-American and Native American populations) and several other programs addressing maternal, child and adolescent health. She was responsible for an annual budget of \$4 million, with a staff of 28.

Musicant has a bachelor's degree in Nursing and a master's degree in Public Health, both from the University of Minnesota. Prior to working for the MDHFS, Musicant worked for 10 years as a government affairs specialist for the Minnesota Nurses Association and for five years as the vice president of community health for the Minnesota Hospital Association. She has chaired several statewide and regional public health initiatives and served on many community agency boards. Musicant will keep her phone number of 612/673-3955.



## Urban Health Agenda: Budget proposals impact Minneapolis

Earlier this year the governor and president proposed their upcoming budgets (2006-2007 and 2006 respectively). The health of Minneapolis residents is likely to be negatively affected by both of the proposals. Each budget contains many health-related cuts with few health program increases. The largest potential impacts are from proposed health care cuts, early childcare freezes and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) cuts.

As a result of the governor's budget, an estimated 46,000 or more Minnesotans will lose their health insurance by the end of 2007. Even more Minnesotans would lose health insurance as a result of the president's budget. The governor proposes reducing the income limit eligibility for MinnesotaCare, an insurance program designed to support working families without affordable health insurance. The cuts reduce MinnesotaCare income eligibility for adult parents and caretakers to those with gross incomes no greater than 190 percent of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG is \$35,815 for a family of four). In addition, coverage of adults without

children is eliminated. Some of these current MinnesotaCare recipients would now be eligible for General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC). These adults would be eligible if their gross income exceeds 75% of the FPG, with assets under \$1000, and medical expenses equal to the difference between their income and 75% of the FPG. Hospital only coverage for GAMC recipients would be discontinued.

At the federal level, the president proposes large cuts to Medical Assistance and the state Children's Health Insurance Program (part of MinnesotaCare). Around 580,000 Minnesotans receive health care through Medicaid; Medicaid also funds public hospitals, community health centers and many of the physicians who provide care for Minneapolis' low-income residents. For this budget cycle the governor has set aside \$75 million of the state's surpluses to offset potential Medicaid cuts, but this funding is only temporary.

In addition to the proposed health care cuts, reduced funding for CDBG and freezing childcare reimbursement rates will also impact residents. In 2005, the City of Minneapolis received \$16 million in CDBG

funding. This money was disbursed through many City departments and/or released to the community. MDHFS alone manages \$690,000 in CDBG grants to 17 agencies for programs such as subsidized daycare, more than 1,400 medical and dental visits, mental health services, health education programming and social support services. The president's budget proposes to consolidate CDBG funding with other programs and then drastically reduce their total appropriation. The governor calls for freezing the amount the state reimburses child care providers with the child care assistance program. The freeze means that families will continue to lose access to affordable child care.

Other federal cuts can affect lead poisoning prevention efforts, housing support and emergency preparedness. Changes in the state budget may include increases or new funding for addressing methamphetamine use and mental health, and a positive alternative grant program for counselling pregnant women. These proposals are far from final, and are being reviewed and debated by the legislative branches of both the state and federal governments. For more information, contact Patty Bowler at 612/673-3009.

# Healthy City Updates

## New funding awards

MDHFS received \$85,000 from the Minnesota Partnership for Action Against Tobacco (MPAAT) to **study the effect of the new smoke-free indoor air policy** in Minneapolis. The grant period is from February 1, 2005 to April 30, 2006, and will include economic impact, ordinance compliance and enforcement, and public opinion components. For more information, contact Pat Harrison at 612/673-3883.

The Minneapolis **Public Health Laboratory** will receive \$10,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice through the Minnesota Department of Safety. The grant, from the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant Program, will be used to improve the lab's capacity to identify illicit drugs. Contact Tom Oehler at 612/673-2160 for more information.

The **Skyway Senior Center** received \$5,000 from the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority for operating expenses.

## Perfect score on outreach to prevent lead poisoning

The MDHFS lead poisoning prevention outreach project has received 100 out of a possible 100 points from HUD on the grant period from October 2003 through December 2004. The letter states that "Minneapolis... is exceeding its benchmark standards. The City of Minneapolis' overall performance is excellent." For more information on this project, contact Megan Ellingson at 612/673-3817.

## Recreating Our Reality

On March 3, MDHFS joined Minneapolis Civil Rights, Hennepin County and others as co-sponsors of the American Indian Families Project's Symposium *Recreating Our Reality: a day to learn and grow together*. More than 275 people from Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, schools, agencies, and communities participated in this day-long event designed to bring American Indian strengths and assets to the forefront of discussion and design. The American Indian Families Project is housed in the Hennepin County Office of Planning and Development.

## Public Health Advisory Committee

MDHFS is advised by the Minneapolis Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC). This group has appointed members from the Mayor's Office and each of the City Council wards, as well as representatives from various health and social services professions. New PHAC members in 2005 include **Mitchell Davis**, 5<sup>th</sup> Ward representative, **Jay Jaffee**, 13<sup>th</sup> Ward representative, **Lori Olson**, member-at-large for the City's Environmental Health Division, and **Dr. Robert Veniga**, representing the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health. Currently there are ward representation opportunities open for wards 2, 4, and 9. Any interested citizens are welcome at PHAC meetings. Contact Becky McIntosh at 612/673-2884 for more information.

## April is Fair Housing Month

April 2005 marks the 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fair Housing Act. MDHFS' Housing Advocates can be reached at 612/673-3003 for help in resolving landlord-tenant issues, and other housing concerns.

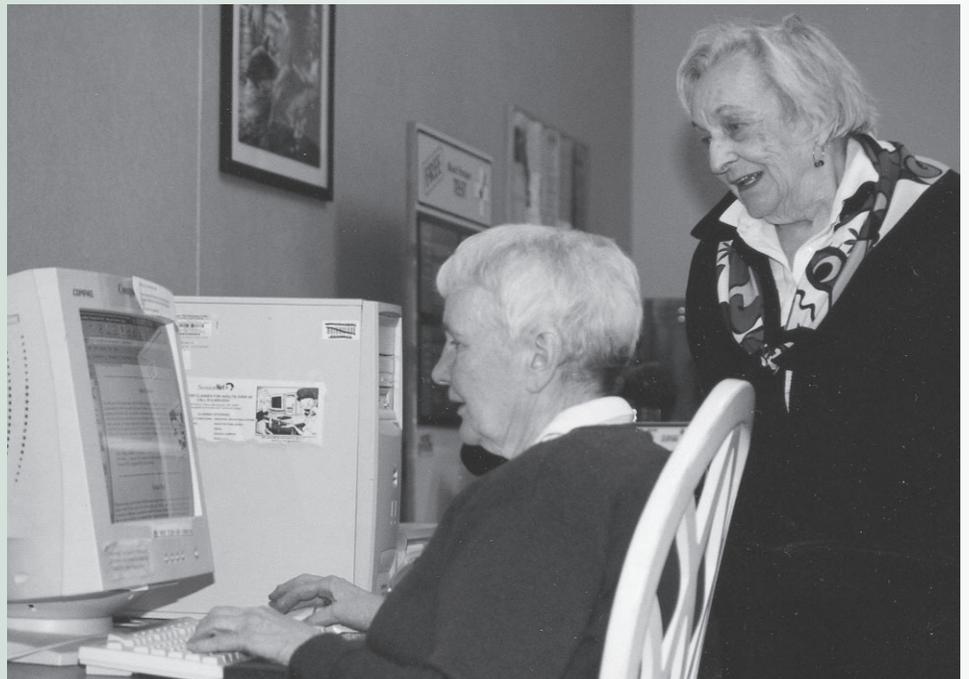
## Urban Indian Day on the Hill

On March 9, the Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors (MUID) Group sponsored this event at the Minnesota Capitol to communicate urban Indian issues to legislative leaders. Participants visited with legislators about health care, community safety, housing, economic development, jobs and training, education, and natural resources. The event culminated in a rally in the Capitol rotunda. MDHFS worked closely with the MUID planning committee to organize this event.

## Staff on the Move

**Stephanie Graves**, Twin Cities Healthy Start health educator, has been selected by the MN Public Health Association to join the Emerging Leaders Network. As one of 12 participants, Graves will participate in retreats and training designed to groom future public health leaders.

**Rachel Larsen**, intern, has joined MDHFS to follow up elevated blood lead levels in Minneapolis children. Larsen is a senior at Macalester College, and will continue at MDHFS through August.



*At the Skyway Senior Center, Barbara Nylan (seated), from the Friends of the Skyway Senior Center Board, works at one of the computers with guidance from Madeline Hamermesh, volunteer computer tutor. Many seniors take advantage of the computer tutoring program, which helps advance the mission of the Skyway Senior Center to provide services and activities in a safe, friendly, comfortable place for adults 55 and over who live, work, and visit downtown Minneapolis. The center's life-enrichment and wellness programs help participants form friendships, learn new skills, and improve their overall quality of life. New visitors are welcomed during operating hours of Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Skyway Senior Center is located at 950 Nicollet Mall, Suite 290, and the phone number is 612/370-3869.*