

HEALTHY CITY THRIVING FAMILIES



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

July - September 2008

Schools and Public Health Aligning Emergency Preparedness Efforts

Flooding in Iowa and the tragic 35W bridge collapse demonstrate that being prepared for emergencies saves lives and determines how well and how quickly a community recovers. That's why the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) has worked closely with Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) for the past year to help the district create integrated emergency plans that maximize responsiveness and recovery, as well as prevention efforts.

Over the past year, MDHFS' public health expertise has informed MPS' emergency planning in the areas of youth violence prevention, pandemic influenza planning,

mental and behavioral health issues, and emergency family assistance. Specifically, MDHFS has worked closely with school planning committees; participated in school emergency trainings conducted by federal trainers; and attended the Minnesota School Safety Conference, which focused on school shootings. MDHFS has also helped develop a "Go Kit" for school clinics so that basic medical supplies are portable and available to students and staff during an emergency.

As a result of this partnership, MPS has created a comprehensive emergency management plan that is coordinated

across its own schools and departments and aligned with National Incident Management System requirements and the City of Minneapolis' and MDHFS' emergency plans.

Schools are an integral part of society's infrastructure. A well-coordinated emergency plan can protect the well-being of children and families and help children get back to learning as quickly as possible after an emergency. For more information on this initiative, contact Pam Blixt at (612) 673-3933 or pam.blixt@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

The Senior Citizen Advisory Committee

The Senior Citizen Advisory Committee (SCAC) has been making recommendations to the mayor and city council on issues affecting senior citizens for the past 35 years. Its diverse, 23-member board brings special knowledge and experience to help enrich the lives of seniors. SCAC addresses a broad range of senior issues such as health, housing, safety, transportation and social connections. Members are appointed by the mayor and the city council president and then confirmed by the city council.

By creating policies that support independent living, promoting proper and cost-effective senior housing, promoting senior employment and volunteerism, and lobbying for reasonable health and medical costs, SCAC has articulated a vision for how seniors can thrive in

Minneapolis. In 2001, SCAC spearheaded the creation of the Skyway Senior Center (see article on next page) and most recently has been helping seniors learn about bicycling laws, the best biking routes, safety protocols and how seniors can bike to keep fit.

Ultimately, SCAC promotes public awareness around the vital role that seniors have in our communities, while encouraging seniors to be independent and yet connected with one another and younger generations. For more information about SCAC, please contact the Senior Ombudsman Ruth Kildow at (612) 673-3004 or ruth.kildow@ci.minneapolis.mn.us. You may also download "May We Help You: A Resource Guide for Seniors and Friends" at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/seniors.

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Reducing Secondhand Tobacco Smoke at Little Earth

Secondhand tobacco smoke poses significant health risks to children, especially children who have asthma and infants who may be at risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). MDFHS and Little Earth — an American Indian-owned subsidized housing complex in south Minneapolis — partner on a range of strategies to help reduce children's exposure to secondhand smoke.

In 2007, Lucy Arias, a Little Earth project coordinator, conducted a survey of residents and learned that 67 percent of homes with children under age seven reported smokers in the home. Of even greater concern was the discovery that smoking in the home, as opposed to outside, occurs in 52 percent of homes in which children have asthma or breathing problems. To address this, Arias launched an educational campaign and distributed hundreds of "Take It Outside" magnets, posters and window clings at community events.

Now known as the "Smoking Lady," Arias is complementing her awareness-raising efforts with environmental and policy changes to reduce indoor tobacco use. To encourage smoking outside, Little Earth has installed cigarette butt receptacles outside every cluster of residential units, the apartment buildings and main offices. In addition, she is making incremental progress on the passage of a mandatory smoke-free policy with the Little Earth Residents Association and Little Earth of United Tribes Housing Corp. Currently, apartment units become voluntarily smoke-free if the current resident agrees to it. Once that tenant moves out the unit becomes permanently smoke-free. Though striving for 100 percent smoke-free units, the two boards are negotiating a realistic, intermediary goal such as 50 percent of units will be smoke-free in the next five years.

Upcoming plans include connecting Little Earth residents with the City of Minneapolis Regulatory Service's Healthy Homes Project, which provides in-home environmental assessments and resources such as air filters to help families reduce asthma triggers and a nurse visit to help parents understand how to correctly administer their children's asthma medication. For more information, contact Lara Tiede at (612) 673-3815 or lara.tiede@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Medica Skyway Senior Center Promotes Physical Activity

Located in the heart of downtown Minneapolis, the Medica Skyway Senior Center has provided older adults with a vital link to a community of peers and resources since 2001. With a holistic approach to aging, the center provides a safe and friendly place for people to exercise, take classes, use a computer or just drop by to enjoy a cup of coffee with friends. The center also provides connections to services such as veteran's benefits and Medicare information. It had 15,000 visits by seniors and community members seeking resources for seniors in 2007.

In 2007, the Medica Skyway Senior Center expanded its physical fitness programs to include SilverSneakers®, a fitness program that focuses on strength training, mobility and balance. The program is offered for free to seniors with Medica or Humana Health insurance; others can participate for a low fee.

The center is open weekdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and provides the following fitness programs (schedule subject to change): SilverSneakers® Muscular Strength and Range of Motion on Mondays and Fridays; Tai Chi I and Tai Chi II on Tuesdays and Thursdays; Hatha Yoga (physical/energetic) on Wednesdays; and a free walking club on Thursdays. For more information about the Medica Skyway Senior Center, call (612) 370-3869.

The Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS)

VISION:

Healthy residents, communities and environments.



MISSION: to provide leadership in meeting the unique needs of our urban population by engaging partners in promoting individual, community and environmental health and eliminating disparities.

Gretchen Musicant, Commissioner

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Local amateur artists performed at the BIG HOMIES Jam sponsored by Seen on da Streets on May 16 and 17 at Powderhorn Park. The event promoted peace and health in the community and featured food provided by YouthLink, prizes, and live entertainment by local artists. Free screenings for gonorrhea, chlamydia and HIV were also available.

Emergency Preparedness Mini-grants Awarded to Community Organizations

To optimize emergency preparedness throughout Minneapolis, MDHFS held a four-part workshop this spring for emergency shelters and providers of supportive and transitional housing. To help ensure that their critical services continue to be provided during all types of emergency situations, the workshops offered information, resources and tools for emergency preparedness plan development. Topics included writing an emergency plan, educating staff on individual and family preparedness, and planning for pandemic influenza. MDHFS also offered \$500 mini-grants to those organizations that attended all four sessions and completed an emergency preparedness plan. A total of 54 organizations attended one or more of the sessions and 27 organizations participated in the mini-grant opportunity. For more information, please contact Janet Mengelkoch at (612) 673-3729 or janet.mengelkoch@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Twin Cities Healthy Start Consortium members go to D.C.

In April 2008, Twin Cities Healthy Start (TCHS) consortium members went to Washington D.C. to inform Congressional Representatives Keith Ellison (Fifth District) and Betty McCollum (Fourth District) about their work to reduce infant mortality and improve birth outcomes. Consortium members asked the legislators to take part in the Healthy Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 (s. 1760, H. R. 3267), which supports continued funding for Healthy Start projects nationally. Consortium members shared how TCHS has helped high-risk pregnant women have healthy babies.

TCHS is a collaborative among community-based agencies and the public health departments of Minneapolis and Saint Paul that targets at-risk families living in neighborhoods with high infant mortality rates. TCHS is receiving its tenth year of funding and is one of ninety-nine similar projects funded by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. For more information, please contact Twin Cities Healthy Start Project Director Doriscile Everett-O'Neal, at (612) 673-2622 or doris.o'neal@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.



On June 26, 135 youth and community members joined Minneapolis officials at the Youth Are Here Bus kick-off held at Green Central Park Elementary School. The program provides youth with safe bus routes to help them become more involved in summer programs. Since its launch in 2007, the buses have provided 13,000 rides: delivering children to libraries, parks and nonprofit organizations that provide enrichment opportunities. The buses serve the Near North, Camden, Central, Phillips, Powderhorn and Longfellow communities. The program is sponsored by the City of Minneapolis through MDHFS, Northway Community Trust, Greater Twin Cities United Way and Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board.

Urban Health Agenda: Increasing Access to Fresh Produce

People's consumption of fruits and vegetables depends in part on their ability to easily afford and access them. Some neighborhoods, particularly in north Minneapolis, have few grocery stores leaving residents to purchase more of their food from corner stores, convenience stores and gas stations where produce is non-existent, expensive or of poor quality. MDHFS, through its Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis initiative, provides support for the establishment of mini farmers markets in Minneapolis' communities.

These smaller-scale farmers markets have a maximum of five vendors who sell produce they have grown. Generally, these markets are located at sites that serve low-income communities such as senior high rises, community-based clinics, public housing complexes and churches. Individuals eligible for the Farmers Market Nutrition Program may use vouchers for \$20 of fresh produce. The Farmer's Market

Nutrition Program is a national program that provides vouchers to seniors and women with children for locally grown produce purchased directly from growers. Between 2005-2007, Steps funded the initiation of six markets that provided 103 market days and served 2,100 customers. After an initial year of Steps support, many of these markets became self-sustaining.

Until 2008, mini farmers markets were subject to the same licensing requirements and fees as major markets—a process that was too expensive and difficult for a community agency that simply wanted a few farmers to sell their produce once a week. In response, MDHFS, Regulatory Services and Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) developed a streamlined permitting process to make it easier and less expensive for organizations to host mini-markets and bring fresh and affordable produce to their neighborhoods. The process was made simpler by:

- eliminating business licensing requirements and associated fees;
- reducing approval time from weeks to days; and
- requiring only a one-time payment to establish a mini market.

To help organizations start and run markets on their own, MDHFS and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) recently held a mini-market training session and developed a “how-to” guide that provides tips for obtaining a permit, finding farmers and running a successful market. The guide is available on line at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs. Locations of mini farmers markets for summer 2008 are: Sabathani Community Center, Steven's Square, Ebenezer Park and Towers, The Artists Warren and Brian Coyle Center. For more information on mini farmers markets, please contact Aliyah Ali at (612) 673-3861 or aliyah.ali@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Healthy City Updates

Youth Violence Prevention Mini-grants

MDHFS has awarded 20 \$1,000 mini-grants for summer activities and projects for youth. These mini-grants support community-based projects to reduce violence in the community with strategies that use positive youth development practices. Funded projects include community gardening, youth service projects, college visits, athletic workshops and internships in bicycle repair and dental assistance. While diverse in project focus, all funded organizations emphasize the importance of engaging youth in positive relationships with healthy adults and positive opportunities within their community. For more information, please contact Jan Fondell at (612) 673-5527 or jan.fondell@ci.minneapolis.mn.us. The list of funded organizations is available on the MDHFS website: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs.

“Unnatural Causes” DVD Available

MDHFS has a copy of the “Unnatural Causes” DVD to loan out. “Unnatural Causes” is a four-hour documentary series shown on PBS this spring highlighting social and health inequities, ways that social conditions affect population health, and community-driven efforts to improve these conditions. The opening episode, “In Sickness and In Wealth,” presents the series’ overarching themes while each supporting episode is set in a different ethnic/racial community in the U.S. If you would like to borrow the DVD, please contact Bonnie Vang at (612) 673-2301 or bonnie.vang@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Health Storytelling Project DVD Available

MDHFS has worked closely with its Urban Health Agenda Community Advisory Committee to develop a short DVD reflecting the work of the Health Storytelling Project. The DVD documents the unique qualitative process of gathering and understanding key health themes that emerged through health storytelling events held in the African American, American Indian, Caucasian, Hmong, Latino, Somali and Vietnamese communities. The DVD can be especially helpful to organizations that work to engage diverse communities in informing health policies and programs that seek to eliminate health disparities. The DVD will be distributed this fall

to community partners, policy makers, health decision makers and funders. For more information, please contact Emily Wang at (612) 673-2144 or emily.wang@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

School-Based Clinic Services Honored at City Sesquicentennial Event

As part of its 150-birthday celebration, the City of Minneapolis recognized teams of employees who have changed the course of history. Donna Amidon, School Based Clinic Manager, received the Health Department award on behalf of MDHFS and the School Based Clinic program. Among the first in the country when initiated more than 20 years ago, the City’s school-based clinics (SBCs) were also among the first to include reproductive health services as part of their services. These clinics have been the health care safety net for many teens, especially teen immigrants and refugees. City staff have been community leaders in adolescent health by publishing research on adolescent reproductive health, helping convene other adolescent health providers, and advocating for comprehensive sexuality education and patient confidentiality. The team is now leading an effort to establish a statewide network of school-based health care to support current and new SBCs.

Funding Awards

School-Based Clinics Awarded Mental Health Grant

The School-Based Clinics program received an \$81,000, three-year grant from the Children’s Mental Health Collaborative of Hennepin County to provide mental health services for Hispanic students at the Roosevelt High School clinic.

Staff Updates

Erin Schroeder, Preparedness Specialist for MDHFS, recently completed her professional certification in Emergency Management from the Minnesota Department of Homeland Security. The program is recognized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and consists of 244 hours of training.

Congratulations to MDHFS Manager for School-Based Clinics **Donna Amidon** who received the “Advocate of the Year” award by the Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting on May 1. The award recognized Amidon’s work with the Coalition for Responsible Sex Education and her advocacy for teen pregnancy prevention through school-based

clinics. Amidon also recently received the “Presidential Award” from the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associate Practitioners’ Minnesota Chapter for her outstanding advocacy on children and youth health issues and equitable health insurance reimbursement for pediatric nurse practitioners.

New Staff

Grace Anderson has joined the Twin Cities Healthy Start team as a site coordinator working on outreach, health education, and case management for pregnant women and new mothers. Her background includes working at Hennepin County’s Child and Teen Check Up program as a senior community health worker, and at Methodist Hospital as a health advocate.

Bass Zanjani is the new Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator for the City of Minneapolis and will be working to implement the City’s “Blueprint for Action to Prevent Youth Violence in Minneapolis,” a multi-faceted action plan to reduce youth violence and crime. He has a diverse public policy background, having worked as chief of staff at NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center, as policy aide to two United States senators and as human rights policy advisor for the Baha’i International Community.

Nurse Practitioner, **Judy Kralewski**, has joined the Broadway School-Based Clinic. Kralewski has many years of experience in school-based clinics including four years at Southwest High School’s clinic.

Jared Erdmann joined the City’s Research and Program Development Division as an Epidemiologist in June. Erdmann worked at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota doing community program evaluations, served as research director for Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research, and spent two years in Honduras with the Peace Corps.

Special thanks

MDHFS would like to thank the following summer interns for their hard work: **Nou Khang** (Policy and Community Programs); **Jessie Pintor** (Community and Public Health Initiatives); **Nonye Harcourt** (Emergency Preparedness); and **Brenna Kruse** (Step Up intern at the Skyway Senior Center). Interns play an important role at MDHFS by spearheading important public health projects that might not otherwise be as successful without their efforts.