

MINNEAPOLIS

HEALTHY CITY THRIVING FAMILIES



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

Spring 2011

Number of Teen Births Declining, yet Need in Minneapolis Remains High

A new report produced by the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) on the status of teen births and parenting in Hennepin County and Minneapolis, *Teen Parent Report Card*, highlights a significant reduction in teen births in the last decade, but cautions that further success relies on providing teen families continued support. Teen parents face increased risks of school dropout, unemployment, family instability, economic dependence, and criminal activity. Because these outcomes strain society at large, the report cautions that in order for teen families to become independent, contributing members of society they must continue to receive appropriate supports to ensure a greater chance of success.

The report card cites that the birth rate for younger teens in Minneapolis has fallen 45 percent between 2000 and 2009, and the rate for teens ages 18 and 19 has fallen 23 percent. The number of teen mothers has also fallen 29 percent. While these trends are promising, the rate of teen births in Minneapolis is 3.7 times greater than the rate in Hennepin County, accounting for 60 percent of teen parents county wide. Additionally, preventing second births to teens is critical to decreasing the chaos in the lives of teen families, and while

these numbers had been decreasing between 2000 and 2007, second births increased during 2008 and 2009, indicating a need for continued vigilance.

To ensure teen families stay on the right track to attaining stability and independence, the report emphasizes the importance of key protective factors:

- Connecting teens to supportive services
- Keeping teen parents in school
- Providing high-quality child care for the children of teens
- Preventing subsequent pregnancies

The report also provides direction on systems improvements that can improve the rate of success among teen parents:

- Increasing awareness among government agencies and social services that pregnant and parenting teen mothers, the fathers and their children are a distinct population with unique needs
- Improving coordination among agencies serving teens to ensure teens have access to a full range of supports to increase their educational and economic success
- Improving access to culturally appropriate support services and educational options for teens

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More Farmers Markets Accepting EBT

Minneapolis residents had more reasons to buy fruits and vegetables this past summer with the launch of a new initiative to make the acceptance of Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) available for the first time at the Minneapolis Farmers Market and Northeast Farmers Market. EBT is the debit card system used by recipients of federal food assistance to purchase food items. EBT has been available in retail outlets such as grocery stores and convenience stores for years, but until this past summer only the Midtown Farmers Market accepted

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market-wide EBT. Expanding EBT to more farmers markets provides people living on tight budgets with increased access to fresh produce, which may decrease their risk factors for developing a chronic disease over time.

EBT users were also able to increase their purchasing power through the Market Bucks program, which provided a matching coupon of up to \$5 to purchase EBT-eligible foods at the farmers market. As a result of the program, over 500 unique customers used EBT at the Minneapolis and Northeast Farmers Markets during the 2010 market season, with EBT sales nearing \$14,000. Additionally, there were over \$4,000 in Market Bucks redemptions. Customers expressed strong support for the program, saying “Fruits and vegetables are more affordable here than at the

grocery stores,” and that “it makes it easy for me to shop here.”

Project partners include the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, and Hennepin County. The EBT farmers market project is funded through the Statewide Health Improvement Program and Market Bucks is funded by the Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant and Blue Cross Blue Shield Prevention Center. For more information, please contact Alison Moore at 612-673-3536 or alison.moore@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

MNVA Leadership Transition

The Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency (MVNA) has announced the retirement of its long-serving Executive Director Mary Ann Blade. During her tenure, MVNA worked closely with MDHFS to connect pregnant and parenting teens with public health nurses, a critical strategy in improving the development of babies born to teens while helping mothers finish school and prevent a second teen pregnancy.

As of February 14, Jen Van Liew has been working as the new MVNA Executive Director and hails from the Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa where she served as President and CEO since 2003. As a registered nurse, Van Liew brings more than 33 years of experience from a variety of health care settings. She holds a Ph.D. in Health Science, International Health from Touro University in Cypress, California and a Master of Science in Nursing Administration from Drake University. For more information, contact MDHFS Commissioner of Health Gretchen Musicant at 612-673-3955 or gretchen.musicant@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

“Reflections: Health & My Community”

Youth Photography Exhibit

Reflections: Health & My Community, a photography exhibit exploring the impact of the environment on health, is making the rounds of four housing complexes participating in the Healthy Housing, Healthy Communities initiative: Brian Coyle Center, Heritage Park, Little Earth and Seward Towers. The exhibit profiles the work of seven teens from diverse backgrounds who live in or near Healthy Housing sites.

Reflections used Photovoice, a photography-based research method, to put cameras in the hands of teens to document their perceptions of the barriers and supports to healthy living in their communities. The exhibit provides a touchstone for engaging youth and residents in changing their communities to make healthy living easier. These efforts focus on increasing access to healthy food and physical activity, while decreasing exposure to secondhand smoke through smoke-free building policies.

To learn more about this project, visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/ship-housing.asp or watch a video about the Photovoice project at: healthinmyhometown.org. For questions, contact Alison Moore at 612-673-3536 or alison.moore@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.



Youth Photovoice participants, from left: Mohamed Jama, Mary Metchnek, Omar Ahmed, Alysha Waddles and Kaalid Omar

The Minneapolis Department
of Health and Family Support
(MDHFS)



VISION:
Healthy residents,
communities and
environments.

MISSION: To promote health equity in Minneapolis and meet the unique needs of our urban population by providing leadership and fostering partnerships.

Gretchen Musicant,
Commissioner

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Community Development Block Grant 2011-13 Awards Announced

The City's Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC), with support from MDHFS staff, has completed another competitive two-year request for proposals (RFP) process for federal Community Development Block Grant Public Service funds. A total of 54 proposals were received with requests for \$3.6 million in funding for the available budget of \$400,000. The funding priorities identified for the 2011-13 cycle are:

- **Youth Violence Prevention** based on alignment with recommendations from the Blueprint for Action: Preventing Youth Violence in Minneapolis.
- **Sexual Health** for teen pregnancy prevention programs and the prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections among high-risk adolescents and young adults.

- **Senior Health and Independent Living** to ensure health maintenance and support independent living for underserved and vulnerable seniors.

The RFP review committee consisted of 35 representatives from PHAC and the community who had expertise in the priority areas and cultural competency. The following agencies were approved for funding: Living at Home/Block Nurse Programs (Nokomis, Southeast, Longfellow/Seward); Minneapolis American Indian Center; Minneapolis Public Schools Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Program; Hennepin Healthcare System; Southeast Asian Community Council; and Holy Rosary Church.

Four additional proposals were approved pending the availability of additional funding or if any of the funded agencies is unable to comply with programmatic requirements: African Community Services; CAPI USA; MIGIZI Communications; and Minnesota African Women's Association. For more information, contact Becky McIntosh at 612-673-2884 or becky.mcintosh@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Teen Births Declining

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For more information on the **Teen Parent Report Card** or to receive a copy of the report, contact David Johnson at david.johnson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or 612-673-3948.

Urban Health Agenda:

North 4 Project Helping Youth Rise Out of Gang Life

A new joint initiative between MDHFS and Minneapolis' Employment and Training Program is helping 30 gang-involved youth find employment to set them on a path to a better future. The North 4 Project is working with youth ages 14 to 21 who live in four North Minneapolis neighborhoods most impacted by crime and violence: Hawthorne, Jordan, Folwell and McKinley. North 4 began in June 2010, with the first of three cohorts of 10 males ages 18 to 21 being selected to take part in the project. Participation in the project was a competitive process based on the young men's leadership qualities, attendance, and an interview process. Each project cohort runs for 33 weeks and includes the following activities:

- A week-long job readiness and development training
- Subsidized work experience that transitions into unsubsidized job placements combined with weekly training to build support, refine skills and explore opportunities
- Ongoing intensive case management, advocacy and strengths-based coaching to ensure participants remain focused on securing unsubsidized employment, while addressing obstacles that might hinder success

With the first North 4 cohort having completed the program in February 2011, nine of the 10 young men are still involved. All remaining participants continue to take part in trainings and eight are

working, with three being placed in unsubsidized jobs and another in an AmeriCorps program providing additional supports. With the annual costs for incarcerating an adult in Minnesota being approximately \$33,000, and costs for juveniles in Hennepin County sometimes exceeding \$100,000, this project will likely prove to be a cost-effective intervention as these young men are at high risk for incarceration based on their gang affiliations.

North 4 will continue through May 2012 and was made possible through the leadership of Congressman Keith Ellison. For questions, contact Jan Fondell at 612-673-5527 or janice.fondell@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Healthy City Updates

Momentum Grows for Minneapolis Local Food Policy Council

Homegrown Minneapolis convened a community gathering on January 20 to explore the idea of a local food policy council to oversee the improvement of the growing, processing, distribution, consumption and waste recovery of locally grown foods. Over 60 Minneapolis residents reaffirmed the need for a food policy council and provided input on its purpose and guiding principles. The proposed council will bring together stakeholders from diverse food-related sectors to develop recommendations on how to improve the local food system, which may influence related City policies and ordinances. The next steps will determine the council structure, membership and how it will be funded. The council is anticipated to begin its work by fall 2011. The food policy council planning work has been funded by Hennepin County through its Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthy Eating Minnesota grant. For more information, please contact June Mathiowetz at 612-673-2027 or june.mathiowetz@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Minneapolis Launches Local Food Resource Hubs Network

A new effort to help Minneapolis residents gain food security and better access to fresh produce has been launched by the Local Food Resource Hubs Network this March. The Hubs and Network provide members with seeds, seedlings and classes at a discounted price. Members pay a yearly fee and are asked to participate in at least one Hub event, such as a volunteer work day or seed distribution event, in order to be eligible for resources beyond seeds and seedlings. Six

hundred membership spots are available during this pilot year at the three hubs located in **North Minneapolis, Powderhorn/Central, and Phillips/Ventura Village**. This project is funded by the Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant and was a recommendation in the Homegrown Minneapolis Report. For more information, please contact June Mathiowetz at 612-673-2027 or june.mathiowetz@ci.minneapolis.mn.us; membership information is available at www.gardeningmatters.org/hubs.

Minnesota Leading the Nation in Anthrax Emergency Preparedness

In January 2011, MDHFS participated in emergency response drills for the possible aerosolized release of anthrax. In the event of a terrorism attack using anthrax, the public must receive antibiotics within 48 hours to prevent deaths. To respond swiftly to this need, the United States Postal Service was selected as a means of delivering antibiotics directly to households, which would augment the mass public dispensation of antibiotics at centralized sites. With 125 participants and observers, the "Postal Plan" drills involved the Minnesota Departments of Health and Human Services, local public health agencies, law enforcement, and the United States Postal Service. Minnesota is the first state in the nation to have implemented its "Postal Plan," with the drills evaluating response steps for antibiotic distribution, security, and public communication along with developing the standards for performance measurements for such exercises across the country. For more information, contact Pam Blixt at 612-673-3933 or pam.blixt@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Staff Updates:

Congratulations to the recipients of MDFHS' Skipper Award, a monthly accolade given to an individual or division for accomplishments that contribute to MDFHS' or the City's goals, or provides extraordinary contributions to a team work environment. Awardees are: November - **Alison Moore, Alyssa Banks and Ifrah Biyoow**, Photovoice Exhibit; December - **Stacye Ballard**, Research; January - **Sarah Reingold**, School Based Clinics and February - **Becky McIntosh**, Administration.

New Staff:

Marie Capra has joined the School Based Clinic team as the new Mental Health Supervisor. She brings a wealth of experience working in mental health with adolescents in school settings and was previously the Director of Youth and Family Services at Guadalupe Alternative Programs. She is an adjunct faculty member at Argosy University, has a Master's degree in counseling psychology from the University of St. Thomas and is a licensed marriage and family therapist.

Skyway Senior Center Reopens Thanks to UCare Sponsorship



Nancy Feldman, UCare President and CEO, and Terry Diebold, Chair of the City's Senior Citizen's Advisory Committee and Chair of the Friends of the Skyway Senior Center, celebrate the grand reopening of the UCare Skyway Senior Center on January 26, which was made possible through the generous sponsorship of UCare.