

MINNEAPOLIS

HEALTHY CITY THRIVING FAMILIES



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

December 2009

Public Health Lab Transition

In operation since 1895, the Minneapolis Health Department Laboratory was launched in response to the alarming increase in typhoid and diphtheria deaths. The historic Public Health Laboratory will close its doors at the end of 2009 as a result of budget reductions the City Council adopted due to a nearly \$30 million cut in state aid and other anticipated state cuts.

Over the ensuing decades, the Laboratory was pivotal in analyzing chemical and environmental samples to treat the root causes of public health threats such as contaminated water and milk, and sexually transmitted infections. In response, innovative solutions were instituted such as chlorinated water, sanitation standards for milk production, and the hiring of a female doctor in 1918 to provide medical treatment to women who were prostitutes.

Always ready to respond to the needs of the day, in the 1960s the Minneapolis health department broadened Laboratory services when clinics were established to meet the family planning, pediatric and maternity needs of low-income residents. These services were again expanded in the 1970s to serve the needs of adolescents through the School Based Clinic program.

More recently, the Laboratory has served evolving public health challenges such as testing for lead contamination and communicable diseases like HIV, along with the emergence of new food and water borne pathogens such as E.coli. Services were also provided to Hennepin County for their health screenings of new immigrant and refugee populations, and illegal drug identification for metro law enforcement.

The essential public health support provided by the Laboratory will continue through contracted vendors. For more information, please contact Barb Nisky-Johnson at (612) 673-2160 or Barbara.Nisky-Johnson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.



Throughout the years, the Lab has worked to ensure that the public's health has been protected including the safety of milk back in the 1930s.

Youth Violence Prevention Ramping Up

Averting injury and death among youth takes a multi-faceted, coordinated approach. While the City and its partners have worked diligently to reduce youth violence, which has been on the decrease since 2006, still far too many (4,538) Minneapolis youths were treated for assault-related injuries between 2006 and 2008 (Results Minneapolis, 2009).

In fulfillment of the City's *Blueprint for Action: Preventing Youth Violence in Minneapolis*, a prevention-based plan addressing the root causes of youth violence, three new innovative initiatives will now be working in tandem to address this critical issue.

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- **Hospital protocols for victims of gun violence**

A standardized protocol for emergency department (ED) staff serving youth ages 8 to 22 who are victims of gun violence is being piloted at HCMC and North Memorial. Led by MDHFS and intern physician Dave Dvorak, M.D., the program is similar to other types of interventions existing in the ED for victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse. The protocol triggers physicians and nurses to notify a hospital social worker, who does a formal assessment of the young person's needs to link them to the appropriate resources. To get them back on track and reduce their chances of being a repeat victim or perpetrator, the youth may get job training, conflict resolution or anger management skills, chemical dependency treatment,

mental health counseling, help leaving a gang, assistance with earning a GED, or even skills to parent their own children.

- **Youth violence hotline**

Debuting this fall is 1-866-Speak-Up, a hotline for youth to report weapons and other threats of violence at school or in their community. Minneapolis is also the first in the nation to launch the innovative text-messaging version of the hotline, which links the youth anonymously with a trained crisis counselor. Follow up includes providing reports of the calls and text messages to Minneapolis Public Schools and the Minneapolis Police Department, both partners in this initiative, for further investigation. The hotline is part of SPEAK UP, a national public awareness campaign against weapons-related violence. Locally, the hotline will be promoted

through outdoor advertising and television/radio public service announcements.

- **Somali youth violence prevention**

This past year, the Center for Policy and Planning was awarded a \$35,000 grant by MDHFS to implement a project to engage Somali parents, especially mothers, in an education program to train families to better identify signs of risky behavior in their children. The pilot program engages a range of Somali stakeholders including imams, disaffected youth, entrepreneurs and community residents. The program runs through the end of 2009.

For more information on these violence prevention initiatives, contact Bass Zanjani at (612) 673-5438 or bass.zanjani@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

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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Celebrating 10 Years of Healthy Start

Twin Cities Healthy Start (TCHS) celebrated its tenth anniversary on September 15 with Mayor R.T. Rybak and Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman who proclaimed the day as Twin Cities Healthy Start Day. The mayors praised TCHS for its work in helping save the lives of children and millions of dollars in health care costs. TCHS is dedicated to ensuring that low-income pregnant women receive the health care and social services they need to ensure healthy births. In June 2009, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded TCHS \$4.625 million to reduce infant mortality among the Minneapolis and Saint Paul African-American and American Indian communities over the next five years. For more information, contact Grace Anderson at (612) 673-3019 or grace.anderson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.



Shauntae Thompson, co-chair of the St. Paul African American Advisory Committee, shares her personal story of losing her child to SIDS at the TCHS event.

Receive Healthy City Thriving Families Electronically

As MDHFS strives to institute greener practices, we invite our *Healthy City Thriving Families* readers to receive our newsletter electronically instead of by mail. Each quarter, you'll receive the same great newsletter and can choose to unsubscribe at any time. To sign up, please visit: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/newsletter.asp>.

City Council Adopts Health Reform Recommendations

Over the summer, the U.S. Conference of Mayors addressed the impact of rising health care costs on the ability to provide city services. In Minneapolis alone, health insurance costs for city employees are projected to be \$59.2 million and \$3.1 million for dental insurance in 2010.

In response to this health care crisis, on Sept. 18 the City Council adopted health reform principles that allows the City to lobby with other cities for urban-specific recommendations to be included in the federal legislation on health care reform. The principles were developed by the Minneapolis Public Health Advisory Committee and emphasize the following:

- Support provisions strengthening public health and prevention such as health education; changing community norms; and making the healthy choice the easy choice.
- Include American Indian urban residents and lawfully residing immigrants in having health care coverage and access to health care with geographic and linguistic access.
- Make health care systems more affordable for patients by controlling administrative and clinical costs.
- Establish a comprehensive benefit set including primary and preventive care, physical and mental health, substance abuse, dental care and medications.
- Simplify the system so that patients can easily understand and use it.

To date, the prevention and Indian health care provisions were added to the Affordable Health Care for America Act (released on Oct. 29), which blends and updates the previous versions of the bills passed by the House of Representatives. For more information, please contact Emily Li-wen Wang at emily.wang@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or (612) 673-2144.

Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board develops *Call to Action* report

To bolster accountability to the health of children, the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board (YCB), in collaboration with MDHFS researchers, has produced an annual report to underscore the health status of Minneapolis children ages birth to 21. The *Call to Action* report highlights 14 key indicators to monitor the progress of children's health around safe and supportive environments; healthy development; and learning readiness and performance. Data are presented by race and ethnicity where possible to indicate any potential disparities. The results inform programming among YCB's collaborative partners: City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Schools, and Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board. For more information, contact Dave Johnson at (612) 673-3948 or David.Johnson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Urban Health Agenda: MDHFS H1N1 Response

Since last spring, the world has been experiencing an influenza pandemic that has been unsurpassed since the mid 1950s. While the mortality rate has been limited to about one percent nationwide, H1N1's rapid and wide-spread reach makes public health preparedness challenging.

With anticipated limits in vaccine supplies, MDHFS proposed ethical principles to the City Council to inform the City's public health response. To guide the distribution of vaccines, the Council adopted the *Elements of Proposed Ethical Frameworks for Rationing Scarce Resources During a Severe Pandemic* in October. The framework is founded on these ethical principles:

- Protect the population's health
- Protect public safety and civil order
- Treat people fairly, recognizing the moral equality of all

The City's public health response is headed by MDHFS's Commissioner of Health Gretchen Musicant in collaboration with a wide spectrum of City departments and disciplines. Preparedness is focused on continuity of City services and vaccinations.

MDHFS' goal is to provide vaccine clinics for underinsured and uninsured City residents who are considered to be most at risk: children; pregnant women; those living with or caring for infants less than

six months old; and adults with chronic health conditions. Distribution is based on vaccine availability as determined by the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease and Prevention Control.

MDHFS worked with the Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency to vaccinate 865 children at seven Minneapolis elementary schools in November. A second round of school-based vaccinations occurred in December at North and South High Schools. Additional clinics may be scheduled for the general public as needed. For more information, contact Pam Blixt at (612) 668-3933 or pam.blixt@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Healthy City Updates

New Funding Awards

The Senior Ombudsman Tax Preparation Assistance Program received a \$28,100 grant from the Minnesota Department of Revenue for its clerical staffing and operation. Program volunteers help seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income residents file federal and state tax returns and property tax refunds. The Friends of the Medica Skyway Senior Center is the grant's fiscal agent.

Staff Awards

- **Gretchen Musicant**, MDHFS's Commissioner of Health, was honored as one of the 100 Distinguished Alumni by the University of Minnesota's School of Nursing. The recognition was part of the School's Nov. 5 centennial celebration, which hailed alumni advancing health care issues and the nursing profession.
- On Sept. 17, MDHFS's **Emily Li-wen Wang** received a Community Partner Star award from the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health. She was recognized for her work with the School's students around MDHFS's Multicultural Health Storytelling Project, which she worked on with the Urban Health Agenda Community Advisory Committee. The award recognizes individuals who have served as mentors, preceptors, guest lecturers, field experience hosts and research partners at the School.
- In October, MDHFS's **Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis** (now called the Statewide Health Improvement Program or SHIP), received the State/Community Collaboration award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Directors of Health Promotion and Education. A competitive award, this accolade was presented to all four Steps communities in Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Health for their role in creating the SHIP program and obtaining funding. **Homegrown Minneapolis** also received a Certificate of Recognition from the Minnesota Department of Health for its significant contributions to public health.

New Staff

MDHFS received State Health Improvement Program funding to combat obesity and tobacco use and the following staff positions were primarily created as a result of this grant award.

- **Alison Moore** will coordinate SHIP's Healthy Housing, Healthy Communities project and other efforts to increase access to healthy food. Her experience includes working as a Health Policy Educator at the Tobacco Law Center, a community organizer in South Chicago and a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador.
- **Sarah Reuben-Meillier** has joined the SHIP staff and will continue her work with Minneapolis Public Schools to improve policies and practices related to nutrition and physical-activity. She will apply that experience to Minneapolis charter and alternative schools.
- **Amy Godecker** is MDHFS's new epidemiologist and hails from the University of Minnesota's State Healthcare Access Data Assistance Center. She has worked with the State of California on designing their first statewide review of maternal deaths and has extensive experience in the statistical analysis of complex survey data, and study and questionnaire design.
- New hire **Angela Hackel** will work on environmental health issues to reduce exposure to lead poisoning and other hazardous substances. She is also an adjunct professor at Concordia University specializing in environmental justice and community based participatory research and comes to MDHFS from the Search Institute.
- Homegrown Minneapolis welcomes interns **Greg Schweser**, a graduate of the Humphrey Institute with a degree in Urban and Regional Planning and **Kelly Wilder**, a graduate student at the Humphrey Institute. Greg is working jointly with MDHFS and the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development to develop a plan to guide the City's land use and planning decisions around urban food production and distribution. Kelly is developing an inventory of small business financing and training opportunities that help support urban agriculture and healthy food production and distribution.
- MDHFS also welcomes **Megin Halbbrook**, a graduate student at St. Thomas/St. Catherine Universities. Megan is working with the Senior Ombudsman's program and exploring resources for seniors and people with disabilities through the Medica Skyway Senior Center.
- SHIP intern **Andrew Pisansky** is a graduate student at the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health interested in organizational change, research design and analysis. Andrew will work on implementing evidence-based clinical guidelines as part of the SHIP grant.



Kevin Kling accepted the Eric Peterson Advocacy Award from the Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities at the October 21 Disability Employment Awareness month celebration. Kevin received the annual award for making a positive impact through his art, storytelling and theater from Chairwoman Margot Imdieke Cross.