

# MINNEAPOLIS

# HEALTHY CITY THRIVING FAMILIES



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

January - March 2004

## Reaching Out to Young Men

Although young males are a difficult audience to reach, MDHFS is working on many fronts to meet the needs of young men in Minneapolis. Traditionally, young men and teens have a distrust of health systems, which is something that Marlon Moore, adolescent health coordinator at Fremont Clinic, wants to change using a new brand of outreach. "Street outreach is the best way to reach our young men, because they don't come to us," explains Moore. "In order to reach them, we need to show them that we trust and care about them, and step outside the box to do things a little differently."

Convincing young men to use community health care services just got easier for Moore and his staff of peer outreach workers, thanks to a newly awarded federal grant aimed at improving reproductive health services for African American men ages 15 - 24.

MDHFS was awarded the grant this winter, and is partnering with Fremont Community Health Services, Inc., and Teen Age Medical Services (TAMS) of Children's Hospitals and Clinics to reach young men who are not connected with schools or workplaces. The project will focus on North and South Minneapolis communities with higher than average STI (sexually transmitted infections) and teen pregnancy rates.

In another arena, MDHFS is conducting focus group research (funded by the Sheltering Arms Foundation) to better reach male students enrolled in Minneapolis Public Schools. School-Based Clinics at MPS high schools attract a high number of female students, but visits by

male students are infrequent. The focus groups will be completed in early 2004, with recommended strategies to make the clinics more male-friendly and welcoming.



Peter Myers, a social worker with the School-Based Clinics, tells the story of one student, Tim, who agreed to be in a focus group. Although Tim had never come to a School Based Clinic before the focus group, he started dropping by on the days that Myers was there. Myers eventually discovered that Tim, a quiet and reserved guy, was the father of a 15 month old baby. Three hours after this conversation, Tim was in a dad's support group, also facilitated by Myers.

Myers is also involved in another effort to reach out to new fathers using a grant from the Minneapolis Public Schools. Along with Southside Community Health Services, School-Based Clinic staff work to identify new dads within the schools. The new fathers are then connected to social and other supportive services. The goal of this project is to keep the new dads in school, and prevent second pregnancies.

For more information on the research project, contact Pat Harrison at 612/673-3883 or Donna Amidon, School-Based Clinic Manager, at 612/673-5305.

## Using SARS to Practice for the Worst

Imagine that a local family has just returned to the Twin Cities from Taiwan with SARS. This potential scenario greeted the directors of all metro local public health agencies during a mock exercise last fall. By the end of this exercise, SARS had spread throughout the metro area and local health officials were discussing the logistics of implementing quarantine procedures.

Communication between agencies to coordinate services, determine legal authorities, and delineate roles in assisting hospitals and clinics with

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## USING SARS

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screening and discharge were among issues debated by the group of 50 participants.

In addition to the health department directors, participants also included emergency managers, City attorneys, and emergency management planning staff. Ken Dahl, Gretchen Musicant, Kristi Rollwagen, Susan Trammell, Becky McIntosh, and Pam Blixt represented the City of Minneapolis.

The next opportunity to “practice for the worst” will occur during a metro-wide exercise in February. For more information, contact Pam Blixt at (612) 673-3933.

### 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.



City of Minneapolis

### Ken Dahl, Interim Director

**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)

If you need this document in an alternative format, please call 612/673-2301 or TTY 612/673-2157 (General City Information). Please allow a reasonable amount of time for special needs accommodation.



PARENTS OF 0-5 YEAR OLDS

# Talk, read and write with your child every day!

Recognizing letters, numbers and colors, and understanding that a book is read from left to right, top to bottom and front to back are important skills that children entering kindergarten need to succeed in school. Unfortunately, too many children are entering kindergarten without these skills.

Parent involvement is key to getting children ready for school. To make that easier, MDHFS, Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, Friends of the Minneapolis Public Library, Reach Out and Read, and Reading Rx are collaborating to give parents the tools they need to get their children ready for school. This new effort is based on an earlier pilot implemented by some of these same partners.

With support from a federal Early Learning Opportunities Act grant, about 10,000 Minneapolis children ages 0-5 and their parents will receive important literacy information during visits to participating community clinics. This includes:

- Information about the importance of building early literacy skills;
- A free children's book, complete with a special “this book belongs to you” sticker that explains how to find the library nearest you;
- A “Talk, read and write with your child every day” fact card (available in English, Hmong, Somali and Spanish).

For more information, contact Megan Ellingson at 612/673-3817.



*Margot Imdieke Cross, Chair of the Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities (MACPD), welcomes Pete Feigal, artist, writer and nationally renowned speaker on disability, to the Disability Employment Awareness Month Awards Reception on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Pete presented a memorable and moving keynote to City officials, community leaders, award recipients and committee members. More information on MACPD is available at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/disabilities-committee](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/disabilities-committee) or by calling the Senior Ombudsman at 612/673-3004 or TTY 612/673-2157.*

Photo by Bill Smoger

# Skyway Senior Center Celebrates 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary

Alice Rainville, Friends of the Skyway Senior Center Board Member and past City Council President, and Mayor RT Rybak celebrate the 2 year Anniversary for the Skyway Senior Center last October. Another cause for celebration is the official IRS non-profit designation for Friends of the Skyway Senior Center, Inc. This designation puts MDHFS in a better position to raise much needed funds to operate the center. In addition to Alice Rainville, other Board Members include current Council Member Lisa Goodman and many senior center participants. For more information, contact Melinda Ludwiczak at 612/370-3869.



Alice Rainville and Mayor RT Rybak

## Urban Health Agenda: Developing a Voice in Minnesota

Newly immigrated families, people living in poverty, teenage parents, elderly without health insurance, high school students with sexually transmitted infections – these are the faces of urban health. Urban communities across the country are home to a disproportionate number of people living in poverty who feel isolated and lack community connectedness.

According to Dr. Nicholas Freudenberg “the failure to achieve more than 15% of the goals identified in (the national) Healthy People 2000 stems in large measure from the disproportionate burden of certain problems in urban areas.” (*Time for a National Agenda to Improve the Health of Urban Populations* in the American Journal of Public Health 2000;90:837-840)

Minneapolis is no stranger to this challenge, and is working to convey the unique health needs of urban populations to state and federal policymakers to assure focused and adequate investments. While the issues are complicated, it's clear that eliminating

Minnesota's health disparities involves a substantial focus on urban areas where affected populations are concentrated.

Minneapolis is already taking action to address unique health issues facing urban communities:

- During the 2003 Legislative session, Minneapolis, Ramsey and Hennepin Counties advocated for a funding formula for local public health grants that recognizes risk factors facing urban communities.
- In November, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Ramsey County and the cities of Bloomington, Edina and Richfield sent a letter to the Minnesota Commissioner of Health supporting the creation of an Urban Regional Immunization Registry. The registry would be created for urban populations who frequently change homes, schools and clinics; include more immigrants; are more dependent on safety net providers; and more likely to be uninsured and sporadic in health care utilization. In addition, more urban health care providers practice in large systems with

high volumes of clinics, making it more difficult to track medical records.

- In response to a request from the CDC for input in shaping the future of national public health, MDHFS suggested that the CDC spearhead a national effort to adequately address urban issues. Strategies include making data available by city so that municipalities can easily compare information; closely linking social conditions to health; and developing best practices that apply to urban settings.
- The Blue Ribbon Panel on Public Health in Minneapolis, convened by the Minneapolis City Council and the Hennepin County Board this fall has discussed the value in establishing an Urban Health Agenda for Minneapolis. The Panel's final report will be available in early 2004.

For more information on these efforts contact Gretchen Musicant, Director of Public Health Initiatives, at 612/673-3955.

# Healthy City Updates

## American Public Health Association conference

Three projects from MDHFS were presented in November at the 131<sup>st</sup> Annual American Public Health Association (APHA) conference in San Francisco. MDHFS researcher David Rak presented about the health and well-being of Minneapolis immigrants. The presentation featured data from the SHAPE 2002 adult health survey, and was prepared by Gopal Narayan, Pat Harrison, and Rak. *Key strengths and challenges in the Minneapolis lesbian, gay, and bisexual community* was presented as a poster session. A third project highlighted the strategies used in Minneapolis to increase childhood blood lead testing. Authors included MDHFS staff Megan Ellingson and Rak, as well as Megan Curran, Sue Gunderson, and Johanna Miller from Sustainable Resources Center. For copies or more information, contact David Rak at 612/673-3141.

## American Indian Summit November 13<sup>th</sup>

This event, sponsored by the City of Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights, drew over 200 participants. The three goals of the event were 1) building relationships with representatives of local government, 2) educating elected officials and policymakers about Urban American Indians, and 3) developing inroads within the policy-making arena for stronger American Indian participation and the advancement of Native causes. Bill Carter, American Indian Community Advocate, helped plan the Summit, and Diana Buckanaga, Housing Advocate, exhibited.

## American Journal of Public Health

Abbey Sidebottom, MDHFS researcher, along with 2 co-authors, has published an article in the November edition of the American Journal of Public Health. This prestigious publication is a national, peer-reviewed journal which accepts only 20% of all submissions for publication. *Decreasing Barriers for Teens: Evaluation of a New Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Strategy in School-Based Clinics* compares two methods for providing contraceptives to sexually active adolescents. For a copy, contact Abbey Sidebottom at 612/673-3931.

## Skyway News/ Southwest Journal Article

The December 1 issue of Skyway News and December 8 issue of Southwest Journal highlighted Pam Blixt, MDHFS Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. *Her job is planning for your worst nightmare* featured photos of Pam with her "to go" kit, suggestions for developing a personal emergency preparedness plan, as well as Minneapolis' and other metro public health agencies' emergency plans.

## 8 New Funding Awards

### Reproductive Health Services for Young Men

This research grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Public Health and Science grant is one of 15 awarded nationally to address the neglected health care needs of men. The five-year, \$260,000 annual award aims to increase the use of health care, especially testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), among young men ages 15 to 24 years. See story on page 1 for more information.

### HUD Lead Outreach Grant

Working with Sustainable Resources Center to spearhead a consortium of organizations concerned with reducing childhood exposure to lead paint, MDHFS has received a grant of \$370,824 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to promote enrollment of low-income housing units into lead hazard treatment programs. Outreach strategies will include blood lead level testing at community sites and a media campaign. Target groups will include families with children under age 6, pregnant women, and landlords and contractors. For more information, contact Megan Ellingson at 612/673-3817.

### MN Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs

MDHFS will manage two grants it has received from the MN Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs. Under the first grant of \$175,000, YouthLink will conduct strategies to reduce instances of violence and crime committed by GLBT youth and against them. For more information, contact Megan Ellingson at 612/673-3817. Through the second grant of \$167,271, Urban Venture's MAD DADS program will support neighborhood street patrols, youth development, community crime prevention planning, and organizational strategic planning. Contact Carrie Day-Aspinwall at 612/673-3548 for more information.

### MN Department of Health, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

The MN Department of Health has awarded a grant of \$68,618 over two years for the Maternal Alcohol Use and Prenatal Alcohol Exposure Prevention Initiative. MDHFS' researchers and Twin Cities Healthy Start will team up to train Healthy Start staff in motivational interviewing. In addition, support groups will be created for pregnant women struggling with alcohol, and community champions who have recovered from chemical dependency will be identified to help facilitate the support groups and provide individual coaching. For more information, contact Pat Harrison at 612/673-3883.

### MN Department of Public Safety, After School Programming

MDHFS will also manage a federal grant from the MN Department of Public Safety for \$130,000 over 2 years for after school programming. Phillips Community Television will provide media production and youth development services under this grant. Contact Carrie Day-Aspinwall at 612/673-3548 for more information.

### MN Department of Revenue, Tax Assistance

The Minneapolis Senior Ombudsman and Nokomis Healthy Seniors Program have jointly received a grant of \$15,941 from the Department of Revenue to support its tax-payer assistance services, including an upgrade to e-filing capacity. The program assists new arrival, disabled, senior citizen, low-income, and home-bound households with their tax returns. For further information on taxpayer assistance, contact the Minneapolis Senior Ombudsman at 612/673-3004.

### Boston Scientific, Twin Cities Healthy Start

Twin Cities Healthy Start has been awarded \$2,500 from Boston Scientific, to be used for training community lay health workers to conduct health education and parent support groups. The American Indian Family Center serves as fiscal agent. The purpose of Twin Cities Healthy Start is to improve birth and infant health outcomes among the African American and American Indian communities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. For more information, contact Coral Garner at 612/673-5446.