

MINNEAPOLIS

HEALTHY CITY THRIVING FAMILIES



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

October - December 2008

Seen on da Streets: Successful and Sustained

Seen on da Streets serves young men in Minneapolis by reducing barriers to health services and providing health education to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and reduce teen pregnancy. The first five years of the project, ending in September 2008, were funded by a \$1.3 million U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant. In that time the project recorded more than 11,000 contacts with young men.

The Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) partners with Teen Age Medical Service (TAMS) and the Fremont Clinic to bring health education and services to underserved young males through a peer-outreach model employing youth advocates. Teams of youth advocates seek out young men where they congregate – parks, barber shops, community centers, busses, schools, churches, local businesses and street corners – in order to meet them on their turf. During these conversations, advocates inform the young men about the dangers of untreated sexually transmitted diseases and the importance of medical screening and care.

In certain instances, the advocates provide on-site screening for gonorrhea and chlamydia to reduce barriers to care. This strategy has resulted in over 1,000 screenings, reaching males who otherwise would not have gone to a clinic, and providing a link to clinical services that can lead to more comprehensive care.

“Guys won’t typically come to a clinic unless they’re in pain,” said Fred Evans, Community Health Coordinator for Fremont Clinic. “Gonorrhea and chlamydia often don’t cause any symptoms, so a guy might not know he has an infection. We work to make sure that young people know this and have access to health care to keep themselves healthy.”

The project also uses innovative marketing strategies to reach their target audience. Staff create messages that resonate with youth by using music, video, radio and the Internet. “These days, young people won’t pay attention to you unless the message is loud and flashy,” said Tremayne Williams, Outreach Specialist at TAMS. “We’ve got our finger on the pulse of the youth in our community, meaning we know the beat they’re dancing to so we can be more effective when we’re trying to reach them.”

Spurred by the project’s innovative approach and its success in reaching young males, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) extended project funding through the end of 2008, after which MDHFS will begin funding project staff. During the five-year federal grant period, MDHFS also contributed \$40,000 to the project and MDH paid for some of the testing costs. For more information, contact David Johnson at (612) 673-3948 or david.johnson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Urban Health Forum

On December 3, the Urban Health Forum convened for its fourth annual gathering “Listening to Community Voices to Build Healthy Communities.” As a joint meeting of the public health advisory committees of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and St. Paul-Ramsey County, the Urban Health Forum addresses public health issues facing urban communities. Framing the cross-jurisdictional dialogue were the findings from the Minneapolis Multicultural Health Storytelling Project, a recent MDFHS community engagement initiative involving intergenerational storytelling. The goal of the forum was to develop new approaches to healthy youth development, healthy eating and health access, with an emphasis on supporting families and cultural assets. For more information, contact Emily Li-wen Wang at (612) 673-2144 or emily.wang@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

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Minneapolis-Hennepin County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Work Group receives Community Health Service Award

On October 1, 2008, Minnesota Commissioner of Health Dr. Sanne Magnan presented a *Certificate of Recognition* to the Minneapolis-Hennepin County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Work Group. The award was presented at the annual Community Health Conference, which honors people making significant contributions toward improving public health.

The Work Group has collaborated to help reduce childhood lead poisoning in Hennepin County by over 50 percent since the Work Group's inception in 2002. In 2001, six percent of screened Hennepin County children less than six years old

had elevated blood lead levels, while in 2006 this figure had fallen to two percent. During the same interval, the proportion of Hennepin children screened for lead rose from 18 percent to 24 percent, with 5,487 more children screened in 2006 than in 2001.

The Work Group has contributed to these results through a variety of strategies that support a comprehensive approach to lead poisoning prevention and intervention:

- Outreach, education and public information
- Increasing blood lead testing
- Lead hazard evaluations and risk assessments
- Control of lead hazards in housing



The Sustainable Resource Center's Community Health Educator Piedad Epple teaches kids and their parents about lead safety with the help of puppets such as Leadie Eddie at the Hmong American Partnership (HAP) on November 17. MDHFS teamed-up with HAP, the Sustainable Resources Center and local health plans for the education event where 58 children were tested for lead.

The Work Group was established by the Minneapolis City Council and Hennepin County Board of Commissioners and is composed of elected officials and staff from the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota Department of Health and non-profit agencies involved in public health initiatives. For more information, contact Megan Ellingson at (612) 673-3817 or megan.ellingson@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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Minnesota Coalition of School Based Clinics

The Minnesota Coalition of School Based Clinics (MCSBC) convened for the first time in November to discuss the kind of support communities may need to start or expand school based clinics. MDHFS staff were integral in planning and facilitating the event, as well as offering their ideas and experiences in operating such clinics. Among the topics discussed were: the role of school nurses in the clinics; collaboration between school districts and medical services; funding challenges; policy issues; and building community support for the clinics.

Although there have been school-based clinics in Minneapolis and Saint Paul since the 1980s, until recently there were not clinics in the metro suburbs or greater Minnesota. Now a few school-linked clinics have opened in the suburbs and there is growing interest in starting clinics in Rochester, Worthington, and Stillwater. Some high schools such as Stillwater and Hopkins already offer some mental and chemical health services and are interested in expanding services.

With limited funding and lack of clinic start-up knowledge topping the list of barriers, MCSBC hopes to address these challenges and expand vital health care services to youth and children throughout the state. For more information, contact Donna Amidon at (612) 673-5305 or donna.amidon@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

A Planned Emergency

It is not often that responders get advanced notice of an emergency, but that is exactly what happens when an “Event of National Significance” (ENS) occurs in your city. The Republican National Convention, a local ENS that occurred on September 1-4, provided responders with the opportunity to develop plans in advance for a variety of possible disaster scenarios. The MDHFS Emergency Preparedness Team helped lead efforts to coordinate planning with the Minnesota Department of Health and other local metropolitan public health agencies.

Through months of planning, the group succeeded in its goal to reduce duplicative efforts and to ensure coordinated planning between the local and state health departments. As a result, the Health and Medical Joint Operations Center (HM-JOC) was established for round-the-clock support. The HM-JOC centralized regional surveillance and preparedness information of public health, medical care, and emergency medical services and connected to federal organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. At the same time, MDHFS’ Emergency Preparedness staff and

department leaders helped staff a multi-department Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and provided trained emergency staff from 8 a.m. until 12 midnight during the convention.

Fortunately, there were no public health emergencies during the RNC. But both the HM-JOC and the EOC operation provided the opportunity to build and strengthen relationships, practice skills and plans, and solidify MDHFS’ preparedness strategies. For more information, contact Pam Blixt at (612) 673-3933 or pam.blixt@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Urban Health Agenda: Providing Parent Support

MDHFS has funded three culturally-focused community programs to help parents be more successful in raising healthy and happy teens. The community programs that were selected through a competitive grant process to deliver these services are: Project Murua through the Minneapolis Urban League; Comunicacion Familiar through Holy Rosary Church in collaboration with Lutheran Social Services; and Kwanzaa Community Church Parent Support Project. Strategies will focus on improving the child-parent connection by providing support, education and skill-building opportunities for parents to increase their confidence and competence. MDHFS estimates that more than 200 families will be served annually. These services are part of the department’s commitment to reducing youth violence through the implementation of the Blueprint for Action—a strategic plan to prevent youth violence. Increasing the resources available to parents of teens is a key component to preventing youth violence, as is strengthening a teen’s familial and cultural ties.

During the development process of the City’s Youth Violence Blueprint for Action last year, MDHFS staff repeatedly heard of the need to increase support for parents of teens. Parents voiced concerns that they simply did not know what to do when they sensed their child was heading down the

wrong path and did not know where to turn for help. Moreover, parents were not sure of the warning signs of risky behaviors. For more information, contact Jan Fondell at (612) 673-5527 or janice.fondell@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.



Karen Kelley-Ariwoola of the Minneapolis Foundation addresses the media at a Youth Violence Prevention press conference held to provide an update on progress made on recommendations in the City’s Blueprint for Action to Prevent Youth Violence. Also attending were members of the City’s Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee and a Project Murua parent.

Healthy City Updates

Funding Awards

- MDHFS received a two-year, \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Gang Prevention Coordination Assistance program. In collaboration with the Minneapolis Police Department and community partners, the project will coordinate community-based efforts to prevent gang involvement among high-risk youth and youth who have had previous involvement with the juvenile justice system. Youth who have been involved with gangs will be also assisted in re-entering the broader community. The project will be guided by recommendations of the City's Blueprint for Action to Prevent Youth Violence, a strategic plan framing youth violence as a public health problem.
- The Friends of the Medica® Skyway Senior Center received a \$35,444 grant from the Minnesota Department of Revenue to support the Minneapolis Senior Ombudsman's Taxpayer Assistance program. The program's volunteers help Minneapolis seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income residents file federal and state tax returns and state property tax and rental rebates.
- The Friends of the Medica® Skyway Senior Center received an \$11,000 grant from the Stevens Square Foundation to support the Medica® Skyway Senior Center programs and volunteering.

Flu Shots

For the past seven years, MDHFS has coordinated flu shot clinics for city employees through a partnership with the Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency. This year there were 19 clinics scheduled between October 14 and November 26 for employees and their dependents in locations around the city. The number of staff vaccinated has increased significantly in the past few years from 923 in 2005 to 1,233 in 2006, and 2,227 in 2007. The goal for 2008 is to continue to increase the number of staff and their family members protected from the flu so that city services remain at full capacity during the flu season. For more information, contact Becky McIntosh at (612) 673-2884 or becky.mcintosh@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Maternal and Child Health Grants Awarded

MDHFS has awarded three community agencies a total of \$120,000 in Maternal and Child Health grants to improve pregnancy outcomes for women with substance abuse and/or mental health problems. Proposals were evaluated based on their innovative approaches to support women who do not engage in traditional behavioral therapies. Funded organizations are Centro Cultural Chicano, Inc., Division of Indian Work, and Minneapolis Urban League. These agencies have extensive backgrounds in working toward decreasing health disparities and will provide unique and culturally-specific mental health services to high-risk pregnant women in Minneapolis. For more information, contact Stephanie Graves at (612) 673-2638 or stephanie.graves@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

MDHFS Green Team

MDHFS has formed an internal workgroup called the Green Team to implement measures that align with the City's Sustainability Initiative, which seeks to create a safe, healthy, environmentally friendly city. To date, the team has tapped into the knowledge and experience of similar teams in other City departments to learn about their sustainability efforts and those of the broader community. For more information contact Jared Erdmann at (612) 673-2638 or jared.erdmann@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Staff Updates

- **Kristen Klinger**, a prevention specialist from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will be working with MDHFS for the next two years on a variety of projects related to Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis. She will work to increase access to healthy foods, physical activity and conducting health impact assessments.
- **Marie Hauser**, a MDHFS pandemic preparedness specialist, has been asked by the Minnesota Department of Health to work on a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding health care system integration and adaptability for a potential pandemic. Marie will retain her position at MDHFS as she completes this yearlong mobility assignment.

Receive Healthy City; Thriving Families Electronically

As MDHFS strives to institute greener practices, we invite our *Healthy City; Thriving Families* readers to receive our quarterly newsletter electronically instead of by mail. Each quarter, you'll receive the same great newsletter and can choose to unsubscribe at any time. You can tell your coworkers, family and friends that there's never been a better time to subscribe to *Healthy City; Thriving Families* so they can keep updated on the City's many public health initiatives and partnerships. To sign up for the electronic version of the newsletter, please visit: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/newsletter.asp>