

# HEALTHY CITY THRIVING FAMILIES



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

July - September 2006

## Broadening public health emergency plans

Among Hurricane Katrina's many lessons is that a single emergency response plan may overlook some of the populations within a community. To ensure that Minneapolis' emergency responses would meet the needs of all residents, the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) has initiated targeted efforts to engage people in African American and American Indian communities in emergency preparedness planning.

In order to understand communities' unique needs, MDHFS has formed a committee of representatives from the African American community and a subcommittee within the Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors (MUID) group. From these teams, MDHFS will identify trusted leaders and form communication channels to use during an emergency.

As part of this process, MDHFS participated in an exercise in June to simulate a public health emergency, inviting members of various cultural

communities and community-based organizations to participate. Acting as patients during a simulated response to inhalation anthrax, participants experienced the processes of identifying medical needs and lining up for mass dispensing of medication. Their feedback after the drill emphasized the importance of building strong connections between different cultural communities and the government entities that serve them. MDHFS will use the feedback to develop communication systems that will effectively convey vital information during an emergency.

In addition, for several years, MDHFS has collaborated with Emergency and Community Health Outreach (ECHO), a program that provides life-saving health and safety information to people with limited English proficiency. For more information about working with community partners in a public health emergency, contact Janet Mengelkoch at 612-673-3729.



*MDHFS staff member Emily Wang helped triage participants from Sabathani Community Center in the June 16 simulated public health emergency exercise.*

## STD cases decline in Minneapolis; increase statewide

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are an ongoing health challenge in urban areas. Though Minneapolis has only 8 percent of the state's population, it accounts for 37 percent of Minnesota's gonorrhea cases and 22 percent of its chlamydia cases. Despite the disproportionate STD burden in Minneapolis, recent data reveal a slowdown and a decline in STD cases.

While the Minnesota Department of Health reported a record number of STD cases in Minnesota in 2005, the trends in Minneapolis have stabilized and even decreased. Outside of Minneapolis, the Minnesota cases of gonorrhea and chlamydia – the two most commonly reported STDs – increased by 57 percent and 64 percent, respectively, since 2001.

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## STD cases decline continued from page 1

In Minneapolis, chlamydia cases rose by only 4 percent and gonorrhea cases fell by 2 percent over the same time period.

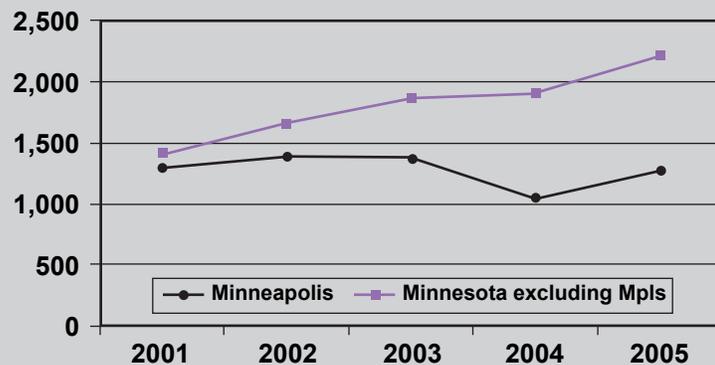
Racial disparities in STD cases have also improved in Minneapolis. In the late 1990s, Minneapolis had the highest African American gonorrhea rates among the 50 largest U.S. cities, according to a report published by the National Association of City and County Health Officials. From 2000 to 2004 however, the number of gonorrhea cases among African Americans fell by 46 percent in Minneapolis – the largest percentage decrease for any racial group in the city.

The Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support has an ongoing commitment to addressing STDs across communities in Minneapolis, and has partnered with community organizations to reduce the cases of STDs in Minneapolis.

Seen on da Streets is a collaborative project with Teen Age Medical Service and Fremont Clinic that reaches young men in their own communities and teaches them to make smart health choices. Peer advocates encourage young men to seek STD testing, and, in some cases, provide on-the-spot specimen collection for STD testing. In six public high schools in Minneapolis, the department also operates clinics that test and treat students for STDs. “The stability

in the number of cases of gonorrhea and chlamydia locally in the face of increases statewide highlights the importance of local action to address this issue. With sustained education, testing and treatment in our communities, we can continue to combat STDs and their potentially serious long-term complications,” said Minneapolis Commissioner of Health Gretchen Musicant. For more information, contact David Johnson, 612-673-3948.

### Cases of Gonorrhea by Area, 2001 to 2005



#### 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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## MDHFS awards grants to prevent youth violence

In June, the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) awarded seven grants totaling \$250,000 to help prevent youth violence in Minneapolis. Because research shows that youth who are disengaged from their families and communities are more likely to participate in violence, MDHFS issued a Request for Proposals for programs designed to connect youth to their families and communities. A volunteer panel of knowledgeable and diverse community representatives reviewed the 68 proposals received (requesting a total of \$3.25 million) and made funding recommendations. The following organizations received the two-year grants:

- Minneapolis Public Schools Broadway School will use \$38,000 to hire an associate educator who will develop a program using peer juries to reduce the number of students who are suspended or transferred for violent behavior.
- Plymouth Christian Youth Center will use \$39,800 to implement “Positive Cool,” an initiative to connect youth to the arts, technology and healthy relationships with adults.
- Little Earth Residents Association will use \$46,000 to develop a mentoring program for youth attending Nawayee Center School.
- The Confederation of the Somali Community of Minnesota will use \$21,200 to expand street-based outreach for Somali youth and to provide home visits to the parents of high-risk Somali youth.
- The Southeast Asian Refugee Community Home will use \$20,000 to offer recreation and enrichment activities to older Hmong youth in the Southeast Asian Diversion Program.
- The Division of Indian Work will use \$40,000 to hire a staff person to expand the cultural collaborative of Cante Ma Waste (My Heart is Good).
- Kwanzaa Community Church will use \$45,000 to add community outreach staff and employ youth at the Teen Connection Café in north Minneapolis.

For more information, contact Jan Fondell, 612-673-5527.

# New survey highlights needs of undocumented teenage mothers

A recent survey shows that undocumented teenage Latina mothers have the same needs as low-income teenage mothers from other cultural groups, but they also face unique challenges related to their immigration status and limited English.

The survey was conducted with 39 clients of the Alliance Home Visiting Program, which provides services that incorporate the customs, beliefs and language needs of undocumented, Latina teenage girls who are either pregnant or have a young baby. Similar to other low-income teenage mothers, these respondents indicated that their most common needs during pregnancy are health insurance, a health care provider and transportation. Childcare, money and contraceptive education were the most common postpartum needs. Unlike legal residents, these

undocumented teens often lack access to childcare assistance programs and health care coverage once the baby is born.

The survey also revealed the resources these young mothers rely upon. Most are, or consider themselves, married to their baby's father and report having a "good relationship." Many live with extended families. They credited the Alliance Home Visiting Program as an important source of postpartum assistance for breastfeeding education, infant care, and help accessing services and tangible items such as breast pumps and baby clothes.

Because most of these teenagers lack sufficient health care coverage, they are unable to qualify for other home visiting programs. As a result, the Alliance program is one

of the only sources of prenatal and postpartum home visiting services for undocumented teens. Cuts by the state Legislature to other home visiting programs and publicly funded health care programs have exacerbated the need for this particular home visiting program, but its funding and future are uncertain.

Annually, the Alliance Home Visiting Program serves approximately 350 clients in Hennepin County; 70% of whom live in Minneapolis. Funded by the Alliance for Families and Children in Hennepin County, the program is a collaborative effort between MDHFS, the Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency (MVNA), Bloomington Public Health, and Chicanos Latinos Unidos en Servicio (CLUES). For more information about this program, contact Patty Bowler, 612-673-3009.

## Urban Health Agenda

### City goals for the next five years

1. *A safe place to call home*  
Housing, health and safety
2. *One Minneapolis*  
Equal access, equal opportunity, equal input
3. *Lifelong learning second to none*  
Schools, libraries and innovations
4. *Connected communities*  
Great spaces and places, thriving neighborhoods
5. *Enriched environment*  
Greenspace, arts, sustainability
6. *A premier destination*  
Visitors, investment and vitality

For an electronic copy visit:

[www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/goals](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/goals)

MDHFS continues to develop an Urban Health Agenda for Minneapolis — a plan that will prioritize strategies for improving health and help determine where to allocate resources. The first step was aligning the health department goals with the new City goals. Corresponding with the health-related City goals, MDHFS defined the following goals for the next five years:

- Improve infant and child health (see City goals 2 and 3)
- Promote youth development and prevent violence (see City goal 1)
- Improve teen and young adult sexual health (see City goal 2)
- Increase physical activity and healthy nutrition (see City goals 1 and 4)
- Assure health care safety net for underserved populations (see City goal 2)
- Assure preparedness for public health emergencies, today and into the future (see City goals 1 and 2)

The next step in developing the Minneapolis Urban Health Agenda is to invite community residents, agencies and small businesses to help set priorities within these goals and identify effective strategies to achieve them. Toward this end, the department has convened a diverse group of advisors to develop a community engagement strategy that will be implemented this fall. For more information, contact Emily Wang, 612-673-2144.

# Healthy City Updates

## Steps to a HealthierMN - Minneapolis

Steps to a HealthierMN - Minneapolis is an initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that aims to help Americans live longer, better and healthier lives by reducing the burdens of diabetes, obesity and asthma through increasing physical activity, improving nutrition and decreasing tobacco use. To achieve its goals, Steps partners with clinics, Minneapolis Public Schools, worksites and community organizations. The following is a sample of the many Steps projects underway in Minneapolis. For more information, contact Janelle Peralez at 612-673-3815.

- ❑ As part of an initiative to add nutrition and fitness activities to existing park events, Steps and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board launched the Step It Up Scorecard Challenge, which rewards youth for increasing their physical activity.
- ❑ More than 800 City employees participated in the six-week Step It Up Walking Challenge.

Steps provided pedometers, log books and incentives designed to motivate people to increase their daily number of steps taken and improve their health. Lessons learned from the challenge will be applied to community-based walking initiatives.

- ❑ In collaboration with Steps, Emergency and Community Health Outreach (ECHO) produced two health shows – one on asthma and one on nutrition and physical activity – for Minnesota residents who speak limited English. The shows aired on TPT Channel 17 in Spanish, Somali, Khmer, Lao, Vietnamese and Hmong. To request a DVD with both shows, e-mail [Minneapolis.Steps@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:Minneapolis.Steps@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).
- ❑ The Minneapolis School Board is reviewing a district-wide policy on nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. A wellness committee of staff, parents, students and community members led by in part by Steps drafted the policy. The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 requires the policy be in place by the 2006-2007 school year in order for schools to participate in the federally funded school meal

## Embarazos Saludables, Familias Felices

In 2004, Catholic parish priests reported performing a growing number of infant and stillbirth funerals in the Latino community. In response, local public health departments (including MDHFS), the Minnesota Department of Health, church staff and community groups held a one-day workshop entitled Embarazos Saludables, Familias Felices (Healthy Pregnancies, Happy Families). On April 22, 53 clergy and lay representatives from seven Catholic parishes gathered to learn about community resources that provide health care and support to pregnant and parenting families or bereavement support when a baby dies. Workshop organizers will continue meeting to plan other faith-based strategies to improve Latino pregnancy outcomes. For more information, contact Patty Bowler, 612-673-3009.

## Staff Updates

MDHFS says goodbye to the remaining staff of the New Families Center, which closed on June 30 after its grant support ended. Greta Hanson served as a social worker, helping thousands of families find and keep health care coverage. Elsa Casiano and Hussein Amakulo provided bilingual support for the center's clients. Thanks goes to Greta, Elsa and Hussein for their outstanding service. MDHFS is working with the Minneapolis Public Schools and other partners to ensure that center functions such as applying for health care coverage, on-site immunizations and other community services will remain intact for the 2006-2007 school year.



*Staff member Janelle Peralez (far left) and intern Bethany Bloom (far right) from Steps to a HealthierMN - Minneapolis march in the Northeast Parade with children from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Youthline Outreach Mentorship Program.*