

Public Health Advisory Committee Annual Report – 2012

The Public Health Advisory Committee underwent several changes this year, including new departmental staff as committee coordinators: Aliyah Ali coordinated the committee from January–July 2012; and Margaret Schuster from August 2012–present. The committee, consisting of 22 members, currently has no vacancies with 9 new members joining the group. **Highlights / accomplishments from 2012 include:**

Topic / Area	Action / Result	
Minneapolis Swims	Action:	Support Minneapolis Swims in seeking funding for the renovation of the Philips Pool.
	Result:	The Legislature included this in the bonding bill that was signed by the governor.
Downtown TMO's Dero Zap Program	Action:	Support the downtown program in which the City of Minneapolis, as an employer, will participate.
	Result:	9 ZAP readers installed in downtown Minneapolis mid-August 2012; recorded 113 active riders in August & September; their goal is 500 active riders by the end of summer 2013.
Recreational Fires	Action:	A formal request from the Public Safety Civil Rights and Health Committee of the City Council to review recreational fire ordinance and consider possible improvements from a health and safety perspective.
	Result:	PHAC supported the recommendations from CEAC that included greater emphasis on enforcing current ordinances; increasing awareness through public education; and a provision to restrict burning on Air Quality Alert days. CEAC/PHAC formally presented to the PSCR&H committee November 2012.
Climate Action Plan	Action:	A request by the Minneapolis Sustainability Program Coordinator for PHAC to respond to the draft Climate Action Plan.
	Result:	PHAC endorsed the strategies and goals outlined in the Climate Action Plan with a suggestion that next steps include a comprehensive approach addressing other environmental factors that put the public's health at risk.
Public Education / Partnership Recognition	Action:	Highlight the work of Public Health in Minneapolis and the partners who contribute to it.
	Result:	A celebration was held on April 4 in the City Hall Rotunda which included an awards announcement and a list of nominees. Council Member Gordon emceed; proclamations from Mayor Rybak and Senator Franken's office were presented.
Committee Operations	Action:	Examine the functions of the committee; streamline operations, increase effectiveness in engaging community, enhance diversity in committee membership / representation, and utilize sub-committees to support departmental goals/priority issues / community needs.
	Result:	PHAC discussions / survey of membership led to the creation of 3 sub-committees: policy & planning, collaboration & engagement, and committee operations/communication & recruiting.

Along with these accomplishments, PHAC received informative presentations on various public health related matters, which include:

- **SHIP and Healthy Living (January 2012)**

Lara Tiede, MDHFS, shared information about Healthy Living Minneapolis program: Create a healthier population in Minneapolis by focusing on healthy eating, physical activity, and smoke-free living. Lara presented the Department's efforts for outreach in promoting these values throughout the city.

- **Identifying Community Strengths and Gaps in Emergency Preparedness (February 2012)**

Pam Blixt and Sarah Reingold, MDHFS, presented a Community Risk Assessment designed to identify gaps and current readiness regarding emergency preparedness, especially as it relates to communities of color, and to create a five-year plan. Gaps identified include: communication and alternative communication methods; access to resources for shelter and housing; having only partial plans in place and need for drill exercises; having enough volunteers; and, considering unknown scenarios.

- **Native American Somali Friendship Committee (February 2012)**

Amina Saleh, Community Organizer with The Family Partnership, and Wade Keezer, Ojibwe Band member and longtime South Minneapolis resident, shared successes from this partnership that developed as a result of tension between the Native American and Somali communities: greater mutual respect for each other; some improvements in levels of mistrust toward police; increased parental involvement in groups focused on ending violence; and, relationship building and storytelling is beginning to outweigh the actual violence. The greatest source of frustration is the breakdown of communication within the community. The Family Partnership is seeking guidance from PHAC and City support to build on their successes so far.

- **Senior Strategic Planning (March 2012)**

Ahmed Muhumud, NCR Access and Outreach Manager, presented information on Minneapolis' long-term strategic planning to attract seniors to and retain seniors in the city. Past census data showed that Minneapolis population is getting younger; several council members are looking into this and inquiring how to make sure the city's population is able to "age in place." The #1 public health issue for seniors is isolation, especially for immigrant seniors who may have other unique issues.

- **Social Media and Public Health (March 2012)**

John Schrom, PHAC co-chair, educated the committee on social media and how it can be used effectively in public health. Facebook, 4 Square, Last FM, and Twitter are used more frequently as another tool to spread information quickly to specific audiences based on the incident. For example, notifying parents of students in a specific school or district with information about a school closure. One movement on West Coast includes an app for domestic abuse prevention. Issues to be worked on are: privacy, HIPAA, legality, and defining the role that the PHAC may play.

- Health Implications of Recreational Fires (May 2012)**

Greg Pratt, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, provided a presentation regarding the current issue of recreational fires and the health implications. This presentation helped clarify that MPCA does not have definitive data connecting urban recreational fires to increased prevalence of asthma and/or asthmatic incidents. There are many pollutants that affect Minneapolis residents and, while recreational fires are one source of pollution, the available data show that it is less of a factor than several other sources such as automotive combustion. Despite the lack of data associating recreational fires with adverse population health effects, recreational fires can pose a health risk for individuals regardless of their personal health. PHAC has been directed by the PSCR&H Committee of the Council to explore the health implications of recreational fires and provide input to the Committee.
- Results: Communities Putting Prevention to Work (May 2012)**

Noya Woodrich, member of the Youth Violence Prevention (YVP) Executive Committee and previous PHAC member, provided an update to PHAC. Focus areas from the Blueprint for Action include: Goal 1- Every youth has a trusted adult; and Goal 2- Intervene at first sign of risk. Alyssa Banks, YVP Coordinator, reports quarterly with updates from community partners, both public and private. Violence in downtown Minneapolis has increased, especially with groups of youth “rushing in” on their victim, termed as “click mobs.” This activity has caused concern for safety among those who work, live in, and visit the downtown area. An increased police and security presence is helping to reduce the amount of loitering along Hennepin Ave and Nicollet Mall.
- MN HIV Prevention Plan (June 2012)**

Peter Carr, STD and AIDS Director, Minnesota Department of Health, presented 2011 AIDS and STD data. Funding continues to be available based on data. While trends show there are fewer new cases overall, those who receive treatment live longer and need continued healthcare support from community systems, which are primarily located in Minneapolis. It was recommended that community partners continue to seek out grant opportunities from other sources to help fill the gaps from federal and state funding.
- Results: Valuing Our Individual Cultures Through Engagement (VOICE) (July 2012)**

Maria Sarabia, CDC Prevention Specialist working in MDHFS, presented the VOICE Project: a community engagement strategy that uses story-based dialogue among populations that experience high-risk health issues. VOICE is targeting Minneapolis’ priority communities to achieve health equity as it relates to obesity prevention. This strategy succeeds by fostering partnerships, promoting inclusion, sharing knowledge and understanding, and promoting sustainability.
- Above the Falls Health Impact Assessment related to planning efforts along the Upper Mississippi Riverfront (September 2012)**, presented by Dave Johnson, MDHFS and Joe Bernard, CPED. This grant focuses on examining / evaluating the original Upper Riverfront plan, proposing improvements based on a health impact assessment and community input, and creating one master plan for the area along the Upper Mississippi Riverfront in north & northeast Minneapolis.

- Sustainability: City of Minneapolis Climate Action Plan (October 2012)**

Brendan Slotterback, Minneapolis Sustainability Program Coordinator, presented information on the City's Climate Action Plan, focusing on improving energy efficiency in city buildings, reducing automotive traffic by promoting alternative commuting options, and reducing waste. PHAC has been asked to provide a response to the plan by December 1; an ad hoc subcommittee is reviewing this.
- The changing demographic of the Senior population & their changing needs (October 2012)**

Christina Kendrick, MDHFS Coordinator UCARE Skyway Senior Center, reviewed the changing demographic of the Senior population as related to the UCare Skyway Senior Center. The most recent census data show the greatest population increase (nationally) in the 50-75 year old age category, with the 60-64 age group seeing an increase of over 70% growth. Locally, more "seniors" choose to work longer and not retire in the more traditional sense, and choose to "age in place," rather than move south to warmer climates. This center is not a public health resource per se, but offers a gathering place with a wide array of services and socialization in the heart of downtown and, among other things, addresses the problem of social isolation among seniors. MDHFS officials work with UCare and other possible partners for continued financial support of the senior center beyond the current funding period. Friends of the Skyway Senior Center, a non-profit organization, raise funds to support the Center. Current funding for operations and programs is provided by UCare through 2013 with facility space provided by the building owner Ryan White.
- Health Effects of Noise (November 2012)**

PHAC committee member Dr. Happy Reynolds presented information on the health issues related to noise pollution. She covered topics such as sound levels and human response; causal connections between noise, community and individual reactions, modifiers and health effects; and, possible long term effects of noise exposure.
- Human Trafficking (November 2012)**

Amy Kenzie, Program Coordinator Sexual Violence Prevention Program, Coordinator MN Human Trafficking Task Force, MDH, presented *Sex Trafficking: It's Not Inevitable, It is Preventable*. Cordelia Anderson, President, Sensibilities Prevention Services also presented a *Public Health Approach to Sex Trafficking*. Both presenters gave information on the importance of early intervention as a means of prevention, emphasized societal contributions to skewed perceptions of appropriate sexual behavior, the overemphasis on "correcting" behavior through the criminal justice system, and the necessity to use a public health lens to examine the complicated factors related to the sexual exploitation/sex trafficking /sexual and child abuse.
- No PHAC meeting in December 2012*