

MINNEAPOLIS

HEALTHY CITY THRIVING FAMILIES



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

Spring 2009

Public Health Week Celebrated April 6-10

The Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) combined forces with the City's Regulatory Services Department's environmental health programs to hold an open house on April 8 in celebration of National Public Health Week. Visitors from other city departments and community agencies learned about a variety of public health efforts featured under the banner of "Healthy Minneapolis - Yes We Can!" Highlighted efforts include: environmental hazards testing such as lead, food safety, emergency preparedness, healthy eating, increased physical activity, and healthy aging. Youth related programs represented in the open house were:

healthy infants and safe sleep, school based clinic services and the prevention of violence and sexually transmitted diseases through street outreach.

Participants reported that they gained a new appreciation for the wide array of public health activities the City undertakes to protect and improve the wellbeing of its residents. The event also provided the opportunity for participants to network and make connections to benefit their own work to improve the health of residents.

Another highlight of Public Health Week was the University of Minnesota School of Public Health's annual film festival, which featured MDHFS'

"Multicultural Health Story Telling Project" DVD. The video documents the unique qualitative process of gathering and understanding key health themes through storytelling events among diverse cultural communities. The documentary screening was followed by a discussion led by Minneapolis Health Commissioner Gretchen Musicant and members of the storytelling advisory committee: Tony LookingElk, Otto Bremer Foundation; Doua Lee, Southeast Asian Community Council; and Farhiya Farah, Parents in Community Action Head Start.



MDHFS Staff Alisha Ragland explains healthy sleep practices for infants to George Pridmore, License Inspector in Licenses and Consumer Services.

INSIDE HCTF

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK
GRANT AWARDS**

PAGE TWO

**YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION
EFFORTS EXPANDING**

PAGE TWO

**REVISED CITY 2009 BUDGET
IMPACTS MINNEAPOLIS DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH AND FAMILY SUPPORT**

PAGE THREE

**URBAN HEALTH AGENDA:
ENGAGING CLINICS IN LEAD TESTING
AND PREVENTION**

PAGE THREE

HEALTHY CITY UPDATES

PAGE FOUR

Community Development Block Grant Awards

Through a competitive RFP process circulated to over 500 community agencies and individuals, the Minneapolis Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC) recommended to the City Council that \$552,000 in federal HUD Community Development Block Grants be awarded to nine organizations. 47 proposals were received for the three grant priority areas: Youth Violence Prevention, Teen Pregnancy Prevention and Underserved/Vulnerable Seniors.

In the priority area of **Youth Violence Prevention**, a total of \$181,500 was awarded to three agencies: Centro Cultural Chicano, Inc.; Minneapolis Urban League; and the Lao Family Community of Minnesota, Inc. All three agencies were funded to sponsor

education and support programs targeted to caregivers of youth 8-18 years old at risk for engaging in violence, a best practice outlined in the *Blueprint for Action: Preventing Youth Violence in Minneapolis*. (<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/yv.asp>).

In the priority area of **Teen Pregnancy Prevention**, a total of \$168,000 was awarded to three agencies to prevent initial or repeat pregnancies: Southside Community Health Services; Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches/ Division of Indian Work; and Minneapolis Public Schools Teenage Pregnant & Parenting Program.

In the priority area of **Underserved/Vulnerable Seniors** a total of \$202,500 was awarded to three agencies to

increase the ability of underserved and vulnerable seniors to live independently and reduce social isolation (either cultural or linguistic): Catholic Charities; Minnesota International Health Volunteers; and the Living at Home/Block Nurse Programs (Nokomis, Southeast, Longfellow/Seward).

Recipients were selected by a committee consisting of representatives from the PHAC and community members who reflected both expertise in the grant priority areas and cultural competency. PHAC recommendations were approved by the City Council in March and services are to begin June 1, 2009. For more information, please contact Becky McIntosh at 612-673-2884 or becky.mcintosh@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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Youth Violence Prevention Efforts Expanding

The City of Minneapolis established an executive committee to lead the strategic and fiduciary oversight for its youth violence prevention efforts. The committee is composed of City representatives including Police, and members from business, education, faith, and community organizations. In addition, residents from high-crime neighborhoods (Folwell, Hawthorne, Jordan, McKinley and Phillips) will serve on a community advisory group to provide resident and neighborhood association input on youth violence prevention work in their communities.

The City has introduced State legislation that would potentially position Minnesota as the first state in the nation to designate youth violence as a public health issue. The proposed legislation (S.F. 1235/H.F. 1328) seeks to align resources around prevention and intervention efforts to address risk factors in four pilot sites around the state. The bill's chief authors are Senator John Marty (DFL) and Representative Paul Thissen (DFL). Visit www.leg.mn.us for more information on the bill. For more information on the City's youth violence prevention efforts, contact Bass Zanjani at (612) 673-5438 or bass.zanjani@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

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>

Revised City 2009 Budget Impacts Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support

The Minneapolis City Council adopted a revised 2009 budget on March 12 to address a nearly \$30 million cut in state aid. In doing so, the Council approved the elimination of two MDHFS staff positions effective April 30, 2009: a vacant Office Support Specialist II for the Senior Ombudsperson's Office, and a Medical Laboratory Technician providing services to a Hennepin County Public Health clinic.

Since more cuts from the state are expected in 2010, Mayor Rybak recommended closing the Public Health Lab no later than January 1, 2010.

To weigh the impact of these closures, the City Council has asked MDHFS staff to report back to the City's Health, Energy and Environment Committee with the following information:

- Potential cost savings from closing the Public Health Lab and any additional costs incurred by other departments (including Police and Regulatory Services) because of the closure.
- After consulting with internal and external stakeholders, including the Senior Citizen's and Persons with

Disabilities Advisory Committees, report on measures to ensure that the Senior Ombudsperson Office's priority functions and the two advisory committees have sufficient administrative support. Options to be explored include office location, prioritization and range of services, and coordination within the City to maximize the use of available resources.

For more information, please contact Gretchen Musicant at (612) 673-3955 or gretchen.musicant@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Urban Health Agenda: Engaging Clinics in Lead Testing and Prevention

The Minneapolis Project for Lead-Safe Kids Clinic Outreach Project, funded by the Medica Foundation, advances the City's lead poisoning prevention goals by working with clinic staff. The project engages staff on their roles in testing children for lead and providing prevention resources to parents. Since 85 percent of Minneapolis homes are likely to contain lead, it is recommended that all Minneapolis children have their blood tested for lead at age one, again at age two, and up to age six if not tested previously.

Clinic education sessions update staff on lead poisoning information and practices including surveillance data, lead testing guidelines, family education materials, and how to make referrals to the Sustainable Resources Center (SRC) for free in-home lead education visits. The clinic project also provides clinics with lead check swabs for parents so they can check for lead in their homes. Parent instructions are

provided in English, Hmong, Somali and Spanish.

Pre- and post-survey data show these education sessions significantly increased clinic staff knowledge of lead poisoning prevention efforts. Survey highlights include significant increases among clinicians' awareness of the prevalence of childhood lead poisoning in the community (from 36 to 92 percent) and the SRC as a resource for families (from 18 to 94 percent).

Staff from MDHFS, SRC and Medica visited 25 Minneapolis clinics between September 2008 and March 2009, distributing 126 information binders and 2,440 in-home lead detection kits to clinics. Project materials are available at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/kids-home.asp>. For more information about this project, contact Megan Ellingson at (612) 673-3817 or megan.ellingson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.



A child gets screened for potential lead poisoning.



Peeling lead-based paint is hazardous when ingested by children.

Healthy City Updates

Homegrown Minneapolis: Building a Strong Local Food System

Homegrown Minneapolis is a new city-wide initiative that aims to positively impact its local food system. A strong local food system can benefit the public's health, local economy, food security, and environment. The goal of Homegrown Minneapolis is to develop a list of recommendations for ways in which the City can:

- Encourage the production and consumption of locally grown foods.
- Improve health by increasing access to fresh, healthy foods for all Minneapolis residents.
- Create employment and small business development opportunities related to urban food production.
- Connect Minneapolis residents to existing resources, such as local farmers markets.

Under the direction of MDHFS, this initiative has brought together more than 100 partners representing local business, government, schools, parks, community organizations, neighborhood associations, and individuals.

A draft report of recommendations will be available for public review and comment in May 2009, with a final report to be presented to Mayor Rybak and the City Council in June 2009. For more information contact Kristen Klingler at (612) 673-2910, kristen.klingler@ci.minneapolis.mn.us; or visit <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp>.

Housing Services Moves

MDHFS' Housing Services program has been transferred to the Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) under which the program work is better aligned. Now a service within CPED's Housing Development, Rehabilitation &

Ownership Division, Housing Services will continue to ensure that residents have access to suitable housing, and are aware of rental rights and fair housing regulations. Program staff, Tanya Cruz and Diana Buckanaga, who have been with MDHFS for over 15 years, will continue their work as housing advocates with CPED. Thanks to Tanya and Diana for their years of service to MDHFS.

Tuberculosis Identified in Homeless Community

Last summer five tuberculosis (TB) cases were identified in the homeless community, triggering a widespread contact investigation by Hennepin County Public Health Protection to prevent a significant outbreak. Since the five individuals were infected by the same unique TB genotype, transmission most likely occurred while the five were in close proximity to one another at homeless shelters. Since then, public health officials have focused on screening people at homeless shelters and drop-in centers frequented by the infected individuals, who are now receiving medical treatment and are no longer considered infectious.

This winter MDHFS employees assisted Hennepin County staff to step-up the investigation of identifying others exposed to the victims. The efforts included five evenings of testing at Harbor Light and Simpson shelters in Minneapolis. Of the 5,000 people identified as contacts, 279 are considered at high-risk of developing TB. Hennepin County continues to look for 69 high-risk contacts, while an additional 89 high-risk contacts are being investigated by Ramsey County Public Health.

According to the Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department, Minnesota TB cases peaked in 2001 and have been in decline since. A total of 689 new cases of TB were diagnosed in Hennepin County during 2000 through 2005. For more information, contact Pam Blixt at (612) 673-3933 or pam.blixt@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Reducing Youth Violence through Sex Education

In 2008, MDHFS partnered with other government and community organizations to form the Minneapolis Urban Initiative, which focuses on actualizing recommendations from the City's *Blueprint for Action: Preventing Youth Violence in Minneapolis*.

Addressing the root causes of youth violence through a holistic approach, the *Blueprint for Action* identifies teen pregnancy and its correlates (e.g., school dropout) as one of several critical factors in preventing youth violence. To address this factor, the Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP), a Minneapolis Urban Initiative partner, has been awarded a two-year grant from the National Institute for Reproductive Health. The grant will fund strategies to advocate for policy changes that would require public, charter and alternative schools in Minneapolis to teach evidence-based sexuality curriculum at least once between sixth and eighth grades. Research has shown that providing such sexuality education decreases teen pregnancy. For more information contact Coral Garner at (612) 673-5446 or coral.garner@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

New Staff

In January, Youth Development Specialist **David Carson** joined the Minneapolis Gang Prevention and Intervention Coordination Initiative. In collaboration with the Minneapolis Police Department and community partners, the project coordinates community-based gang prevention efforts for high-risk youth and youth with previous juvenile justice system involvement.

The School Based Clinic program welcomes **Suzanne Johnston**, a licensed marriage and family therapist. Suzanne is fluent in Spanish and will be working with local high school students from Latin America and South America. She has worked at La Familia, CLUES and the Osseo School District.