

MINNEAPOLIS

HEALTHY CITY THRIVING FAMILIES



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

October - December 2006

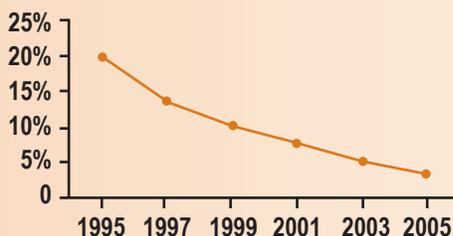
MDHFS supports Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

Between Oct. 22 and 28, MDHFS and community partners will sponsor community events to raise awareness about lead poisoning, which they aim to eliminate in Minneapolis by 2010. Exposure to lead and lead poisoning can cause serious irreversible health and learning problems in children.

With a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, MDHFS sponsors community-based agencies to educate residents on the harmful consequences of lead poisoning and to help families reduce their children's exposure to lead. Through these agencies, the department links families and property owners with services to remove

the lead in their homes and provides outreach services at community events, daycare sites, churches and in-home visits. MDHFS also works with housing programs such as Section 8 and Housing Inspections to incorporate lead hazard reduction into their ongoing activities.

Elevated lead levels among children under age 6 tested for lead



The City is well on its way to reaching the 2010 goal. In 1995, 19.8% (2160) of Minneapolis children under age 6 who were tested had lead poisoning. By 2005, only 3.5% (406) of tested children had lead poisoning. In the same time period, the lead testing rate for Minneapolis children between 1-2 years-old (the target ages for testing) increased from 51% to 70%.

In September, several health insurance plans were financially penalized by the Minnesota Department of Human Services for not meeting their lead testing goals for children on Medical Assistance. Enforcement of regulations like these, along with positive incentives for families and making testing more accessible, are all part of a comprehensive effort to test all Minneapolis children between 1-2 years of age.

Events during Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, Oct. 22 to 28, 2006

ECHO (Emergency and Community Health Outreach)

Television special about lead in six languages (Spanish, Vietnamese, Hmong, Lao, Khmer and Somali).

Where: TPT Channel 17

Date: Sunday, Oct. 22

Time: 8 p.m.

To watch the show on the Web, visit www.echohminnesota.org. Click on "ECHO TV."

Fifth annual Health-O-Ween

Games and costumes for kids (while supplies last). Free lead tests. Please bring a non-perishable food item for the food shelf.

Where: The Waite House

2529 13th Ave. S., Minneapolis

Date: Monday, Oct. 23

Time: 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Mall of America Lead Education Day

Games and puppet shows for the kids. Free lead tests.

Where: Mall of America, Sears Court

Date: Tuesday, Oct. 24

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"Jimmy's Getting Better"

Showing of a nationally acclaimed video that recounts the impact of childhood lead poisoning. The screenwriter/director will introduce the video and answer questions. Light refreshments will be provided.

Where: Minneapolis City Hall

350 S. Fifth St., Room 319

Date: Thursday, Oct. 26

Time: 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

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Peer outreach workers honored at City Hall

On Sept. 13, City and community leaders honored Seen on da Streets youth workers for their efforts to reduce sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and teen pregnancies in Minneapolis.

City of Minneapolis Council members, the police chief and Minneapolis MADDADS (Men Against Destruction, Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder) Director, V.J. Smith, officially recognized:

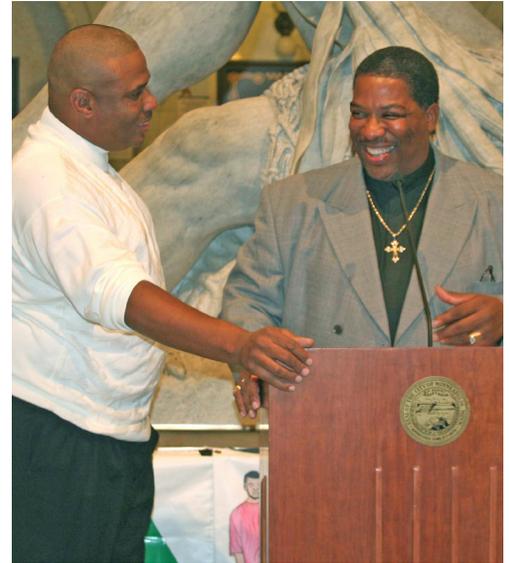
Darius Armstrong, Fred Evans, Desmond Grady, Wendell Johnson, Alysha Price and Christopher Watson from Fremont Clinic; and

Marcus Durant, Leon Martin, Chris Rowe, Chaquita Thomas and Tremayne Williams from Teenage Medical Service (TAMS) clinic.

These young workers reach out as peers to young men who may not use

traditional health venues at schools and clinics. At parks, community businesses, bus stops and street corners, they approach and educate young men about smart reproductive health choices and encourage them to get tested for STDs. In some cases, they can even conduct on-the-spot testing for sexually transmitted infections. They have also developed public service messages that play on local radio stations. Annually, Seen on da Streets workers connect with 3,000 young men in Minneapolis. Their efforts appear to be working, especially in the African American community where cases of gonorrhea fell by 46 percent between 2000 and 2004.

Seen on da Streets is a collaborative project of the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, Teenage Medical Service of Children's Hospitals and Clinics and Fremont Community Health Services. For more information, contact Dave Johnson, 612-673-3948.



V.J. Smith, MADDADS Director (right) and Fred Evans, Fremont Clinic Adolescent Health Coordinator (left) honor Seen on da Streets outreach workers.

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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Serving new families for another year

Families who are new to Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) will be able to access health and other services during school registration for at least another year.

Previously, MDHFS and MPS sponsored services such as school registration, immunizations and referral services at the New Families Center. When its grant funding ended in June, the Center merged with MPS' Family Resource Centers to create Family Connections Centers (FCCs).

The FCCs are primarily used by families who are new to the United States and often have a limited command of English. The services provided at the FCCs help families settle quickly into their new community and remove health barriers that could affect children's ability to learn.

The FCCs, located at the Laura Ingalls Wilder and Broadway schools in the Powderhorn and Near North neighborhoods help families register their children for school, obtain health care coverage and make referrals to health, social service and educational programs. They are staffed with bicultural and bilingual teams that include nurses, social workers, site coordinators, parent liaisons and community health workers.

The Youth Coordinating Board, MPS and MDHFS provided funding for the current academic year. Offering these services beyond this year depends on receiving grant funds and in-kind contributions from partner agencies. For more information, contact Coral Garner, 612-673-5446.

Preparing for pandemic flu

In its efforts to enhance Minneapolis' preparedness for a range of emergencies — natural, biological, chemical and radiological — the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) is helping the City and community agencies prepare for the possibility of a pandemic flu outbreak. Because pandemics affect the whole world and could sicken and kill millions of people, they present unique challenges:

- An estimated 30 percent to 40 percent of the workforce could be “out sick” for weeks — either ill themselves, taking care of others or afraid to come to work. Businesses may close or discontinue operations because of drastic staff reductions. Health care facilities would have fewer employees to care for more patients. Similarly, the ability of Police and Fire departments to respond to calls and fires would be diminished.

- The U.S. economy, which relies on just-in-time supplies of pharmaceuticals, food, gasoline and other imports, could be severely disrupted if transportation systems break down or countries, states or municipalities close their borders to keep the flu virus from spreading.
- The practice of dispatching health care and public safety professionals to help a stricken city deal with an emergency would not work because a flu pandemic would hit all cities simultaneously, leaving few people to send to other cities.

To help community agencies that serve low income, multicultural and vulnerable populations prepare for potential emergencies, MDHFS gave small grants to seven community clinics, a home health agency and three other community organizations. With training and guidance

from the department, agencies developed strategies for protecting their personnel and serving their patients or clients during a pandemic flu outbreak. For example, some clinics developed strategies for keeping down the number of people in their waiting rooms and temporarily discontinuing non-essential visits. MDHFS is expanding the training to include more agencies.

Health and Family Support is spearheading similar planning efforts within the City. Since May, MDHFS has helped convene the Pandemic Influenza Continuity of Operations [COOP] Task Force. With representatives from every City department, COOP is developing plans to protect City employees and assure basic public safety and lifesaving services during a pandemic. The Task Force is also developing plans for maintaining the legal chain of command among elected officials if any are unable to fulfill their duties. For more information, contact Marie Hauser, 612-673-2534.

Urban Health Agenda: Improving access to healthy foods in Minneapolis neighborhoods

Fruits and vegetables are essential for a healthy diet, yet fewer than three in 10 Minneapolis residents eat their recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day. People fail to eat these healthy foods because of cost, not knowing how to prepare them, taste, and having little or no access to a range of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food access as having well-maintained places offering a variety of nutritious and affordable food that reflects the cultural makeup of the community. Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis conducted focus groups with city residents in 2005 and found limited access to healthy food in Minneapolis neighborhoods with high rates of obesity and diabetes and low rates of good nutritional practices.

To make it easier for people in these neighborhoods to get high-quality foods, Steps awarded grants to the Northside Food Project and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. Over the past year, both organizations launched weekly farmers' markets in the Phillips and Near North communities and implemented education efforts on the importance of good nutrition. They are also developing a system for farmers' market vendors to donate excess food to local food shelves. “There isn't one solution to increasing

access to high quality foods,” said Angela Dawson, director of the Northside Food Project, “We're looking at the whole food system in north Minneapolis. We're building relationships with Northside residents and other organizations to establish the food project as a community resource that will be sustainable in the long run.”

Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis is an MDHFS initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, that aims to improve health by increasing physical activity, improving nutrition and decreasing tobacco use. For more information, contact Janelle Peralez, 612-673-3815.



Ebenezer Park Farmers' Market in South Minneapolis; run by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy; funded by Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis.

Healthy City Updates

Grants received

- Twin Cities Healthy Start (TCHS) will receive its eighth year of funding to reduce infant mortality and improve infant health. The program targets African American and American Indian women and infants and other at-risk families living in Minneapolis and Saint Paul neighborhoods that have high infant mortality rates. TCHS is a collaboration between MDHFS, the Saint Paul - Ramsey County Department of Public Health and community-based clinics and agencies. The grant is from the U.S. Health Resources Services Administration for \$925,000.
- The Medica Skyway Senior Center, operated by the MDHFS Senior Ombudsman, received a \$1,000 general operating grant from the TCF Foundation.

Infant mortality report released

MDHFS recently released a report showing reductions in the rate of infant mortality in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The report, *Monitoring Infant Mortality in Minneapolis and St. Paul*, also provides updated statistical information on preterm birth and low birth weights. To receive a copy, visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs or contact MDHFS at 612-673-2301.

MDHFS staff news

- Janelle Peralez, MPH, RD has been hired as the permanent coordinator for Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis. For the last year, she has served as Steps' interim director. Janelle came to MDHFS as a Prevention Specialist, placed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In this role, she coordinated the Maternal Case Management Excellence Project with Healthy Start and community clinic partners.
- Erin Schroeder from MDHFS and six other Twin Cities emergency responders participated in efforts to contain the Boundary Waters fire that burned over the summer. As part of their training to form a Metro Area All Hazards Incident Management Team, Erin and the other responders shadowed the team that was responsible for the Cavity Lake Fire. Erin worked with the Public Information Team to keep the community up-to-date on progress to contain the fire. Erin learned incident management principles that can be applied to any incident requiring large-scale emergency management.



Erin Schroeder conducts a radio interview with the local Grand Marais Station, updating listeners on the Cavity Lake Fire in the Boundary Waters.

Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis planning fitness campaign

Right after the holidays and just when it's hardest to exercise in Minnesota, Steps to a Healthier Minneapolis and its counterpart in Saint Paul will launch Get Fit Twin Cities. This four-month campaign — running from Jan. 10 to May 10, 2007 — will engage teams of Minneapolis and Saint Paul residents to increase physical activity and maintain healthy weight. To support Minneapolis participants, Steps is improving access to fitness and wellness opportunities. Details will be available in City Talk, on the web and through the media. For more information, contact Janelle Peralez, 612-673-3815.

Healthy Start honors families

Twin Cities Healthy Start (TCHS) celebrated families' commitment to raising healthy babies at its annual meeting in September. The event, titled "Celebrate Life," gathered 175 people who participate in TCHS to share food and stories and learn about child and teen check-ups and immunizations. To honor their participation in the program, TCHS staff awarded parents and soon-to-be mothers with Certificates of Achievement and T-shirts. The event was held at the Minnesota Science Museum as a fun venue for families to explore with their children.