



SAINT PAUL – RAMSEY COUNTY
COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL AND THE RAMSEY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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MINUTES
COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
February 4, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT

Nancy Appleton
Hanna Cooper
Dorii Gbolo
Marissa Hendrickson
Thomas Kottke
Bruce Larson
Barbara Lehn
David Muhovich
Christopher Mullin
Regina Rippel
Jack Rossbach
Kerri-Elizabeth Sawyer
Pam Schmidt
Esther Tatley
Milo Thompson

MEMBERS EXCUSED

Patricia Carlson
Catherine Croghan
Doriscile Everett-O'Neal
Coral Garner
Mark Garnett
John Heiderscheidt
Barbara LeTourneau
Sheri Smith
Robert Tracy

GUESTS/STAFF

Paul Ellringer
Elijah Nyambane
Rob Fulton
Anna Haubrich
Richard Ragan
Jim Yannarely

Chairperson Hanna Cooper opened the meeting, had members introduce themselves, and then introduced the speakers for the evening.

The Health Effects of Fungi (MOLD) in Residential Construction 1990-2009

Paul Ellringer PE, CIH from Air Tamarack is here to talk about the health effects of fungi (mold) in residential construction 1990-2009.

The health problems that have been related to mold/fungi include odor, respiratory and skin allergies, hypersensitivity reactions and asthma.

It is estimated that 30% of the US population has asthma and allergies. There has been a 300% increase from 1982 to 2006.

Mayo Clinic did a study of allergic fungal sinusitis in 1999. They studied 210 patients diagnosed with rhino sinusitis (runny nose). It was determined that nasal polyps were caused by fungal infections.

Most studies have shown that *Penicillium* and *Aspergillus* species are the most commonly found fungal species in fungal infested buildings.

The mold related problems seen in residential homes is caused by (1) below grade wall failures resulting in wet basements (2) inadequate window flashings, and (3) lack of adequate drainage planes on above grade walls.

All buildings need a good below grade wall design and adequate landscaping. Below grade wall designs common in housing from 1990 to 2009 is extremely poor.

The city of Woodbury in Washington County tracks housing problems and has determined that 40% of all stucco houses have failed.

Canada has a mold "guideline" that Paul Ellringer likes to follow. Its basis is settled dust mold samples, a ratio of more than 0.7 and you have a moldy house.

Normal visible mold should be less than 1% of floor area 1-3% is borderline. Wood moisture in a home would be less than 15%.

Paul Ellringer feels poly should be banned because it traps moisture between the cement block and the poly and it never dries in that space. It's like rain. It's just plain wrong to have a vapor barrier on the "warm" side. The most commonly used material in construction to trap moisture is polyethylene vapor barriers. Polyethylene was not used in housing before 1980. You want a weak vapor retarder, poly is too strong Use oil-based craft paper faced fiberglass.

Foam insulation below grade allows walls to dry inside and is 100 times better than polyethylene. Building code people presently encourage poly and fibrous glass but it is not required by the code. Housing officials don't have to reduce or change the building/house code, they just need to interpret it differently. Poly is 20x too strong. It holds moisture in, whereas the barrier needs to breathe.

Foam insulation is better for our climate and the way our homes are constructed. It is a better air and bulk water barrier. The state eliminated the energy code and there was a law suit over the ability to use certain materials. Tyvek has problems Water vapor can pass through, but not liquid water.

Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control

Anna Haubrich and Jim Yannarely spoke on Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control

There are seven attributes to a healthy home:

A dry home

A clean home

A well-ventilated home

A combustion product safe home

A pest-free home

A toxic chemical-free home

A comfortable home

Lead Update

Lead is hazardous to children because it is a neurotoxin and early exposure affects the brain and can cause permanent damage. Symptoms are easily misdiagnosed and that delays treatment.

Lead poisoning is determined using a blood lead level (BLL) test.

Lead was used in paint because it provides primary pigment, added color, increased durability, acted as a drying agent, was a good mildew inhibitor, and was a corrosion inhibitor.

Lead is found in soil, water, dishware, toys, candy, electronics and paint. Homes built before 1940, 87% have/had lead-based paint. All housing has 40%.

There has been a shift in the prevention strategy from health to housing, identifying deteriorating painted windows and replacing them and focusing on high risk neighborhoods. The number of active lead poisoning cases has dropped from 422 in 1992 to 38 in 2008.

The strategy is a housing based primary prevention and not a "chase the child" with lead poisoning program.

Asthma Update

Following the lead program, grant funds were redirected from health agencies to housing agencies.

The program evaluates pet dander, second-hand smoke, dust mites, rodents, and cockroaches.

The cleanliness of the home is important to prevent asthma events. The intervention product list includes: vacuum cleaner with HEPA filter, air cleaner in child's room, bed and pillow encasements, a pest management kit, a quality furnace filter, smoke and CO detectors, and a household fire extinguisher.

There have been more than 500 homes assessed both in Ramsey and Hennepin Counties with the resulting stats: fewer days of school missed, fewer emergency room visits, improved health.

In the future the department will strengthen the work between environmental health and family health and increase the work with community partners.

Chair's Report

In March the committee will review drafts of recommendations from the topics of multi-cultural story telling DVD, binge drinking among college students, and healthy homes.

Director's Report

Budget

The governor's budget did not make cuts in the local public health grant, but there is a payment shift that will affect the department's budget.

We might possibly see some increase in the areas of TB lab work, SCORE funding, the state health improvement program. The stimulus budget for wellness and immunizations shows an increase also.

Abigail Drain Covers Law for all Public Swimming Pools

We had to close 13 public swimming pools. 11 are making changes and 2 will close permanently.

The Department conducted a Board workshop on the topics of banning trans fats and requiring caloric labeling on menu boards. We are uncertain exactly where this will go.

There has been a sharp increase in the number of HIB influenza cases in the last year. The CDC and MDH will be doing a throat swab study and 6 staff from Ramsey County have volunteered to assist.

Dakota County has experienced an epidemic of pertusis. We are conducting a special project in Ramsey County since we find a large amount of adult pertusis.

We are still chasing down some of the residents of the Workhouse to get them tested for TB. We have seen a 75% conversion rate for individuals exposed in this outbreak.

Adjourned at 7:30 pm.