

Background

As the health department serving one of the largest and most diverse populations in Minnesota, Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health (SRPCPH) has been working on policy, system and environmental (PSE) changes to promote healthy eating, physical activity and tobacco reduction for most of the past decade. SRPCPH was one of four communities that participated in the highly successful Steps to a Healthier US grant from 2005-2009. During Steps, the department initiated working relationships with, among others, Saint Paul Public Schools, setting the stage for ongoing SHIP partnerships with the district. Another major outcome of the Steps grant period was Get Fit Twin Cities, a four-month metro-wide physical activity campaign implemented in partnership with the City of Minneapolis and numerous community organizations in 2007 and 2008 that resulted in thousands of Twin Cities residents accomplishing significant increases in physical activity, including residents reporting 4.5 tons of weight loss in 2007 alone.

SRPCPH has received SHIP funds during both of the previous grant periods. Initiatives during the past four years have led to a range of powerful, sustained PSE changes across Ramsey County, including: creating the Healthy Meals Coalition, resulting in healthier meals served to thousands of people every day in shelters and emergency meal programs; implementing EBT systems at local farmers markets; increasing healthy foods and physical activity options and system changes in the County's 5 public school districts; a unique partnership resulting in healthy food, physical activity and tobacco exposure reduction initiatives at Saint Paul Public Housing; development and implementation of tobacco reduction policies in numerous post-

secondary campuses and multi-unit housing sites; and development and promotion of the Go Ramsey! web portal, linking residents, organizations and communities to active living resources.

Overall Policy, Systems and Environmental Change Plan

Based on its work to date and guidance provided in the SHIP 2014-15 Request for Proposals, SPRCPH has developed a comprehensive plan to continue and amplify its work to reduce obesity rates and tobacco use and exposure in Ramsey County. The plan, summarized below, is built on the strong, trusting community partnerships and achievements realized over the past decade of work in our community, as well as new partnerships developed in response to the requirements of the present RFP.

Smoke Free Campuses and Smoke Free Housing: SPRCPH will contract with ANSR to continue/enhance smoke-free campus initiatives and will issue an RFP to select a vendor to re-start smoke-free multi-unit housing work, including senior housing, and be a partner/resource with Saint Paul Public Housing (PHA) and SPRCPH on tobacco efforts.

Active Living – Community: SPRCPH will partner with Active Living Ramsey Communities to develop an RFP for a consultant to develop a County-wide Active Living Plan on multi-modal transportation, including Central Corridor and active transportation for seniors, addressing barriers and opportunities for Public Housing residents and Health Equity partners (see below).

Active School and Healthy School Food: SPRCPH will continue/expand work with SHIP 2.0 districts (Saint Paul & Roseville) and will re-start work with Mounds View and North Saint Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale districts on healthy school food and active school day initiative, and will coordinate with White Bear Lake district on Bear Power initiative funded by Health Partners.

Healthy Eating for Communities: SPRCPH will build on/expand work of The Healthy Meals Coalition to increase access to healthy foods with a focus on system connection/capacity enhancement, including development and formal policy adoption of a system-wide Strategic Plan across partner agencies (shelters and emergency food programs) that serve over one million meals annually to people who arguably suffer the greatest health disparities in our community. Regional & municipal food policies will be promoted through the Saint Paul – Ramsey County Food and Nutrition Commission. Partnerships will be explored with innovative food delivery systems. Availability of local foods will be increased through partnership with other metro health departments and U of M Extension. Multiple healthy eating initiatives are included as part of Public Housing and Health Equity innovative strategies (see below).

Clinical-Community Linkages: SPRCPH will facilitate a planning process in partnership with community health care providers and diverse communities to promote healthy behaviors and prevent and reduce chronic diseases by identifying and promoting the use of best practices and strategies, and identifying community resources and gaps. We will work with interested local clinics and providers to identify, develop and pilot use of referral resources for preventive care and to increase physical activity and consumption of healthy foods, and reduce use of and exposure to tobacco. Through the Hmong community health equity innovative strategy, the Hmong Healthcare Coalition will develop best practice tools and guidelines for working with Hmong patients and families on chronic disease prevention and treatment options.

Advance Community Linkages with Health Reform: On the local level, SPRCPH will partner with local hospitals and health plans represented on our Community Health Services Advisory Committee/SHIP Community Leadership Team to share and integrate the results of their

Community Health Assessments and Action Plans with SPRCPH's Community Health Assessment, Strategic Planning and Community Health planning processes. On the regional/state level, SPRCPH will participate with the Metro Local Public Health Association, Minnesota Council of Health Plans, and Minnesota Hospital Association through the Center for Community Health to develop goals, strategies, and policies to improve community health.

Child Care: SPRCPH will work with Ramsey County Child Care Providers Together – Provider Collaborative Project, and other interested organizations to bring training/resources on healthy eating, physical activity and breast feeding to home child care providers County-wide.

Worksite Wellness: SPRCPH is requesting a waiver on this strategy.

Health Equity Innovative Strategies: Saint Paul Public Housing; American Indian, African

American, Latino, and Hmong Communities:

The discussion on health disparities beginning on the next page provides an overview of the significant numbers of people and impacts on individuals and communities experiencing health disparities in Ramsey County; the overview of partnerships with populations experiencing health disparities that follows highlights opportunities to make tangible changes in the lives of people suffering these disparities. Based on the skills and commitment of organizations and community assets in Ramsey County, SPRCPH has developed a set of five unique Health Equity Innovative Strategies, designed to work across SHIP strategy areas (healthy eating, active living and tobacco), implementing PSE changes to promote greater health equity based on authentic partnership and awareness of the unique histories, concerns and strengths of each community:

Based on SHIP 2.0 accomplishments and assessment conducted by Wilder Research (see appendix), SPRCPH will build on and expand focused and system-wide healthy eating, active

living/physical activity and tobacco initiatives with Saint Paul Public Housing leadership and residents, including seniors.

SPRCPH will contract with the Saint Paul Area Council of Churches (SPACC), building on their Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative with the local American Indian community to address SHIP priorities, and will work with the 8 African American churches that were part of SHIP 2.0 strategies to continue to support and expand policy and system changes underway.

SPRCPH will issue an RFP to develop and implement healthy eating, active living/physical activity and tobacco policy, system and environmental change strategies in partnership with the local Latino community.

SPRCPH will also work with the Hmong Healthcare Professionals Coalition and local health plans and clinics to adapt Institute for Clinical Systems Integration (ICSI) and other best practice strategies to increase cultural appropriateness, resulting in greater clinical effectiveness and impact in the Hmong community.

Summary Data on Health Disparities in Ramsey County

As noted in the previous discussion on Healthy Equity strategies, issues of health disparities affecting communities of color, people living in poverty, and older people are of unique significance in Ramsey County, as evidenced from the following data from the *2013 Ramsey County Community Health Assessment*:

- Ramsey County, at 33%, has the highest percentage of residents of color among all metro counties (the next closest is Hennepin County at 26%)
- The unemployment rate among African American residents in Ramsey County (16.4%) is more than double the rate among White county residents (7.8%)

- Seventeen percent of Ramsey County residents, and 24% of Saint Paul residents live in poverty, compared to 12% statewide; a staggering 36% of children living in Saint Paul live in poverty, compared to 15% statewide
- Analysis of poverty rates by race in Ramsey County reveal that 38% of Blacks/African Americans, 31% of Asians, and 27% of Latino residents live in poverty, compared to 9% of non-Hispanic Whites
- Ramsey County has a higher percentage of children younger than 18 living in single parent households (34%) than any other metro county or the state
- Sixteen percent of Ramsey County residents lack health insurance, compared to 9% statewide
- The infant mortality for Blacks/African Americans in Ramsey County (10.3%) is 2.5 times higher than that for Whites (4.2%)
- The percentage of adults with diabetes in Ramsey County has gone down from 7.7% in 2008 to 7.0% in 2010, but still exceeds the statewide percentage of 6.5%
- In Ramsey County, 31% of American Indian, 31% of Hispanic, and 30% of African American 9th grade students were overweight or obese compared to 20% of White 9th grade students
- Rates of obesity in children of color (American Indian, Latino, Black/African – American and Asian) exceed rates among White children by between 3-12%

Ramsey County is the smallest and most densely populated county in the state, with a population of 508,640 people according to the 2010 US Census. The data cited above paint a disturbing picture of the extent and impacts of health disparities and inequities in Ramsey

County. However, the description of partnerships that follows, and each of the strategy narratives and workplans that have been developed in response to the SHIP 3 RFP provide a roadmap and vision for achieving authentic, sustainable PSE changes designed to lead to far greater health equity within the unique and varied communities that comprise Ramsey County.

Partnerships

Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health has developed deep, trusting and effective partnerships with organizations serving, and communities and populations experiencing, health disparities. SHIP 3.0 grant strategies and workplans developed by SPRCPH are built around these partnerships, which allow us to work directly with people and communities affected by disparities and together developed PSE changes that will be meaningful and culturally appropriate.

Our work with the Healthy Meals Coalition provides access and voice to homeless, poor, and victims of family violence; our Saint Paul Public Housing initiatives engage diverse residents, many of whom are elderly and disabled, all suffering the effects of poverty, in creating PSE changes to improve their lives and communities; our Health Equity Community initiatives are designed to engage African American, American Indian, Hmong and Latino organizations and residents – the four communities suffering the greatest health disparities in Ramsey County – in efforts focused on reducing chronic disease and building toward health equity. Details on partnerships and engagement strategies are contained in each strategy narrative and workplan. SPRCPH commends the vision of MDH in articulating this emphasis on health equity, and looks forward to building on long-term partnerships in our local communities suffering the effects of health disparities under this grant.