



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Feel Better MN wins national award

Local public health initiative receives “Healthy Living Innovation Award” from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

SAINT PAUL, MN. (November 1, 2011) Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health has received a national award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for its “Exercise Your Right to Feel Better Minnesota” campaign. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius presented the 2011 Healthy Living Innovation Award to Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health on Thursday, Oct. 27 at a national conference in Washington, D.C.

Public health’s Exercise Your Right to Feel Better Minnesota campaign was one of eight national winners of the awards which were designed to highlight innovative health promotion projects that have demonstrated a significant impact on the health of the community. “The 2011 Healthy Living Innovation Awards represented an exciting chance to foster the spread of effective, community-based efforts that employ innovative approaches to promote healthy weight, physical activity and nutrition,” said Secretary Sebelius. “Communities across the United States submitted creative, replicable and sustainable innovations that demonstrate outstanding leadership and promising results.”

The awards are a part of Secretary Sebelius’ Healthy Weight Initiative and HHS’ continuing focus on promoting prevention and recognizing organizations that implement innovative approaches to address chronic diseases and promote healthier lifestyles. Nominated organizations had to have an innovative project in at least one of three health promotion areas: healthy weight, physical activity, and nutrition. Awards were granted based on the criteria of creativity and innovation, leadership, sustainability, replicability, and results/outcomes. The selection process included public voting on nominees and recommendations by a panel of experts.

“Feel Better Minnesota is about empowering individuals, families and communities to make the healthy choice, the easy choice,” said Rina McManus, Director of Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health. “We are honored to receive national recognition for this innovative campaign and are thankful to our community partners who have helped make this happen,” said McManus.

Feel Better Minnesota was originally developed through the Steps to a Healthier Saint Paul grant funded by the Minnesota Department of Health, using federal funds provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The campaign was designed as a way to engage individuals, schools, and community agencies on steps they could take to achieve a healthier lifestyle. Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health partnered with two local advertising legends to create a fun, energetic musical TV show produced by Twin Cities Public Television. The show provides simple, easy steps on healthy eating and physical activity shared by local musicians, health experts and residents. A set of free web-based and print materials accompany the show and constitute the Feel Better Minnesota toolkit.

Since its launch in October 2009, Feel Better Minnesota has reached over 300,000 individuals, numerous organizations and diverse communities across Minnesota. More than a dozen businesses, government, nonprofit and health care agencies have adopted the Feel Better Minnesota theme and materials to promote healthy living and developed initiatives to make the healthy choice, the easy choice.

“Feel Better Minnesota was intended to provide a unified and `sticky` message to help individuals take health into their own hands, while at the same time serve as a vehicle to inspire, larger, systems-level changes,” said Donald Gault, Healthy Communities Section Manager with Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health. Gault said the Saint Paul Public School’s integration of Feel Better Minnesota concepts and materials in various special events and initiatives is a great example of how the campaign can help bring about systems change and supports the ongoing chronic disease prevention work of the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP).

More information about Exercise Your Right to Feel Better Minnesota is available on the web at www.feelbetterminnesota.org