

Hiawatha CARE Project: Fact Sheet

Issue: Health Disparities



Why are Health Disparities Important?

Health disparities or inequalities reflect differences in health status for different segments of the population. The Centers for Disease Control identifies health disparities as unfair health differences associated with economic, environmental, or social disadvantages that adversely affect groups of people.¹

How Do Health Disparities Affect Us Locally?

Minnesota has some of the nation's greatest disparities in health status and chronic disease between whites and populations of color.²

The state Legislature passed the Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative to close this gap in the health status in the following priority health areas: breast and cervical cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, healthy youth development, and violence and unintentional injuries.

Health Impacts

- Persons with lower income or without health insurance may not seek preventive health services until a condition becomes an emergency.
- Health disparities contribute to shorter life expectancy.
- Untreated health conditions can lead to chronic or debilitating illness or death.

Environmental Impacts

- N/A.

Financial Impacts

- Illness may prevent a person from working.
- Emergency room treatment costs more than preventative treatment.



Hiawatha CARE Project Partners

Alexander's Import Auto Repair	Hennepin County	Minnesota Department of Health
American Lung Association of Minnesota	Hennepin - University Partnership	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Blue Construction	Little Earth of United Tribes	Mississippi Watershed Management Org.
City of Minneapolis	Longfellow Business Association	Preventing Harm Minnesota
East Phillips Improvement Coalition	Longfellow Community Council	St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church
Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota	Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church & Longfellow Lutheran parishes	US Environmental Protection Agency
Gardening Matters	Minnehaha Creek Watershed District	Women's Environmental Institute

Hiawatha CARE Project - A project of Minnehaha-Hiawatha Community Works

What Can Individuals Do?

- Identify resources or organizations to help identify health hazards in the home (eg. lead paint, mold, household chemicals) and ways to address those hazards.
- Ask health providers questions to fully understand medical conditions, prescriptions, and any actions to prevent future problems.
- Work with health care providers to develop and follow treatment plans for any health conditions.

What Can the Community Do?

- Work with non-profits and government to set up programs to do home health audits or similar programs to share information on reducing home health hazards.
- Provide information on resources to help low income households address their health needs before they become emergencies.
- Coordinate community wide wellness programs that also target low income and populations of color.
- Educate community members to prevent illness and injury and to have good health.
- Support community gardens to help provide access to healthy, affordable food.

What Can the City, County, and State Do?

- Consider the impact of any policy on health. Conduct health impact assessments to evaluate potential impacts of a project or policy before it is built or implemented.
- Provide culturally-appropriate services to help community members prevent illnesses.
- Continue to identify and/or create new and innovative strategies to address disparities.
- Evaluate projects and programs to identify best practices.

For More Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm
www.cdc.gov/steps/health_disparities.htm,
www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/.

Minnesota Department of Health,
www.health.state.mn.us/ommh

Unnatural Causes, www.unnaturalcauses.org/

Prevention Institute, www.preventioninstitute.org

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthy Communities Program. www.cdc.gov/healthycommunitiesprogram/overview/healthequity.htm
2. Minnesota Department of Health. Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative: Report to the Minnesota Legislature 2011. www.health.state.mn.us/ommh/publications/legislative_rpt2011.pdf

To have an application for Minnesota Health Care Programs sent to you, call (612) 596-8500

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What is the CARE Project?

The Hiawatha CARE Project is a new effort to address environmental toxins in western Longfellow and East Phillips. The project brings together two dozen business, community, government, and non-profit agencies in a community-

driven effort to identify, prioritize, and address environmental risks in the area.

The project was initiated in December 2010 when Hennepin County received a \$100,000 Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) award from the

US Environmental Protection Agency. The CARE program supports local collaborations to reduce toxins in the local community.

More Information:

www.minnehaha-hiawatha.com/care
612.348.9344.