



## **Multnomah County Community Health Council 2012 Citizen Budget Advisory Committee**

**Process:** The Multnomah County Community Health Council serves as the Health Department's community advisory board and CBAC. It is also the federally-mandated governing body of Multnomah County's health center. The mission of the Community Health Council is to provide input and direction for community health center activities (including primary care, dental, early childhood services, nursing, school based, pharmacy and diagnostic imaging services) and advise the Department on current and emerging matters in public health, including program reviews, policy development and budget recommendations. It is an appointed group, including members of the community with an interest in public health, representatives from local health and social service organizations and most importantly, consumer members who utilize the Health Department's clinical services. One of our most important functions as a Council is to review and monitor Health Department's annual budget.

The Council works closely with the Director and staff of the Health Department, meeting monthly throughout the year to provide community guidance on a wide variety of public health services, programs and policies affecting Multnomah County residents. Additionally, the Council receives quarterly updates regarding the Health Department's finances from the Business Services Director as well as monthly updates on budget issues from the Department Director.

### **Major Changes:**

- Federal Stimulus money (ARRA) will enable us to add an additional provider team that will allow us to increase the number of patients we can serve
- The potential opening of a school based health center site at Centennial High School
- The opening of a school based health center site at Franklin High School due to the closure of Marshall High School
- Potential impacts with state budget cuts to core public health programs

**Recommendations/Concerns/Emerging Issues:** We believe that Multnomah County's most significant priority should be to ensure the health and well-being of all county residents. Adequately funding to sustain the County's current clinical health system is critical in order to do this. The County's primary care clinics are the front line in supporting our most vulnerable neighbors. As the income gap

continues to grow, exacerbating health disparities, our County health clinics become an even more indispensable resource for the community at large.

The continuation of service integration and preserving access are high priorities for the Health Department. Our continued service integration is demonstrated through our medical home model, called Building Better Care, has enabled us to improve our quality while simultaneously increasing access to needed services. ARRA funding allowed health centers to add provider teams which lead to increases dental services by 17% , primary care, including school based health centers, have seen an 11% increase in usage. Although the specifics on how state and federal health care reform may impact us are not clear, we are committed to working with the Health Department in providing high quality services to our patients.

Continued service integration would be enhanced through the implementation of electronic dental records. Health care is becoming automated throughout the country. This much needed service should be supported by the Commissioners because it will enhance the Health Department's quality of clinical services and promote enhanced clinical documentation and treatment planning. The long term benefits and savings are substantial and we urge the Commissioners to support the implementation of electronic dental records.

We are preserving access with the opening of a school based health center at Franklin High School due to the closure of Marshall High School. Both sites anticipate operational start up costs and we urge the Commissioners to support this much needed service to the community. School based health centers provide a safe haven for students to receive comprehensive primary care services in an environment that specializes in this population.

Another major concern is potential state budget reduction to public health that could significantly reduce core public health functions, jeopardize leveraged funding through grants and matching funds and could put Multnomah County Health Department out of compliance with state regulations. The proposed reductions specifically impact the STD/HIV/Hep C and communicable disease services programs. These services monitor the health status and protect people from health problems and health hazards.

For example, proposed reductions to STD/HIV/HCV funding would reduce number of staff to investigate sexually transmitted disease cases reportable to the state, a best practice in STD prevention, which could severely reduce our ability to successfully address the spread of STDs in our county. Reductions would also

result in fewer HIV/HCV/syphilis community test sites even among high-risk populations. In addition, the elimination of funding related to immunizations could result in staff cuts that support families, schools and daycares in complying with school exclusion laws resulting in children missing school days and the potential spread of vaccine-preventable diseases. Additionally, Community Immunization Program services would be severely restricted eliminating community-based clinics and provision of vaccine to anyone not pre-screened to be eligible for reduced-cost vaccine provided by the federal government.

We urge the Commissioners to advocate on a state level to protect these core public health programs. Investing in the health of our community is an investment in Multnomah County.

**Community Health Council Members:**

Harold Odhiambo, Chair

Amy Anderson, Vice Chair

Bonnie Malone Secretary/Treasurer

Cheri Slack Member at Large

Donna Sather, Consumer Member

Ruth Duran, Consumer Member

Veronica Rodriguez, Consumer Member

Martin Davidson, Consumer Member

Sonto Yare, Consumer Member

Lynn Ketch, Community Member

Mauricio Somilleda, Consumer member