



## CITY OF MANCHESTER HEALTH DEPARTMENT MONTHLY BULLETIN – OCTOBER 2008



### Chronic Disease Prevention & Neighborhood Health Division

#### “Broken Windows” and Health

In communities throughout the country, there is a growing body of evidence linking the relationship between neighborhood deterioration measures and health outcomes. A similar connection was made in 1982, when social scientists, James Wilson and George Kelling, first published the “Broken Windows” theory exploring the relationship between the social environment, physical neighborhood conditions and crime. Their theory suggested that unsafe environments subject to vandalism filled with graffiti, deterioration, trash, and abandoned cars provided a signal that there were no rules and that no one cared. Public health researchers are now speculating that given an environment that tolerates behaviors that would otherwise be considered antisocial as described by authors Wilson and Kelling, residents may have few reasons not to engage in high-risk sexual, drug-use, and other unhealthy behaviors.



The Weed & Seed strategy, in partnership with the Mayor’s Graffiti Task Force, has been working with neighborhood watch groups to revitalize Manchester’s neighborhoods and build “collective efficacy” – residents’ willingness to help out for the common good - through beautification and restoration projects. As part of these efforts, Home Depot Manchester will be conducting their Month of Service on October 10<sup>th</sup> by placing community planters throughout Manchester’s Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area, filled with fall flora to brighten the community and enhance the City’s green spaces. The planters will be maintained by local business partners such as C.A. Hoitt Furniture, Brothers Pizza, Kay’s Bakery, Pappy’s Pizza and Absolute Styling, as well as several neighborhood watch groups. In addition, Home Depot will remove graffiti from the Adam D. Curtis Skate Park and along the Merrimack River Walk and Bridge, utilizing a newly donated power washer with other graffiti removal supplies generously provided by the National Coalition for Graffiti Removal. These public-private partnerships not only enhance quality of life, but may have implications for the long-term health and resilience of the community as well.

### Community Health Division

#### Accessing a Medical Home: Solutions for Refugees Resettling in Manchester

The City of Manchester has a rich history in welcoming new residents from all over the world and continues to embrace refugees from a variety of countries, including Bhutan, Iraq and Africa. Since July 1, 2008, a total of 125 new arrivals have resettled within the City of Manchester. The Division of Community Health enjoys meeting with families shortly after arrival to provide immunization assessments and updates, health orientation presentations, tuberculin skin testing, as well as lead screening and anemia screening for children. However, linking families to a comprehensive medical home is a priority as refugees often present with an array of complex health problems. Currently, the International Institute of New Hampshire works to ensure that families have access to health care.

For many years, a refugee’s point of access for primary health care services was either the Catholic Medical Center Refugee Clinic or Manchester Community Health Center. Recently, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Manchester and Child Health Services began accepting new arrivals within their practices. The additional options provide expanded access and assurance that families will receive comprehensive primary care within a medical home.

#### MISSION STATEMENT

*To improve the health of individuals, families, and the community through disease prevention, health promotion, and protection from environmental threats.*

## Environmental Health & Public Health Preparedness Division

### Environmental Health Response to Flooding

The Environmental Health Division plays an integral role in the response to flooding events. The Division maintains a 24/7 response capacity to public health emergencies. The Division worked closely with Manchester Fire, Police and Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments as well as and the NH Bureau of Emergency Management, NH Department of Environmental Services, Dam Bureau and Department of Transportation to assist in recovery efforts from the flooding of September 6,7. The Division visited over 30 food service establishments to assess possible impact of flooding on food items and facilities. The Division administrative staff sent out over 100 floods recovery guidance packets (developed after the flooding of 2006) to residents affected, using the Fire Department "run-sheets" from the event. The Department played an active role in briefing homeowners in the affected Crosbie Street neighborhood. We visited each house to offer an assessment of damage in conjunction with other agencies, as well as provide access to cleaning resources. We assisted in the coordination of services to repair the sewage pump station for the neighborhood. We visited the Manchester Police, Fire and Library to assure that proper clean up and containment measures were implemented, as well as visiting affected schools. We updated the Health Department and City's websites, to highlight flood recovery resources for the public. For more information on cleaning up after a flood, please call 624-6466.

## School Health Division

### School Health Advisory Council

The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) is meeting the second Wednesday of every month. We are focusing on the Health Education Curriculum this year, working with Mary Bubnis from the New Hampshire Department of Education. She has proposed a curriculum review day where vendors can bring published materials available for consideration in an effort to find a comprehensive K-12 curriculum for our schools. We are also helping to coordinate a Health Fair for parents of middle school-age students. It will be held at Hillside Middle School on October 23 at 7PM. Mini discussions will cover nutrition and physical activity, prescription drug abuse, depression, and W.A.I.T., a program designed to help students choose healthy behaviors.

## Monthly Spotlight

### Staff Recognition

**Anna Thomas:** Anna Thomas, MPH, Deputy Public Health Director has been selected as the recipient of this year's University of New Hampshire, Department of Health Management & Policy Alumni Recognition Award. The award acknowledges alumni who are making important contributions to the fields of health services administration and leadership and public health, who demonstrate the value of life-long learning, and whose contributions support the missions of the undergraduate and graduate programs. Deputy Director Thomas will receive her award at a ceremony during UNH's Homecoming Weekend on October 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Joan O'Neil:** The Health Department joined many in the community in mourning the recent passing of Joan O'Neil. Mrs. O'Neil spent many years as an administrative assistant at the MHD and was truly a special person to all who had the honor to work with her.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Visit our website at <http://www.manchesternh.gov/CityGov/HLT/Home.html>, or call 624-6466