



# MANCHESTER HEALTH DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT SUMMARY, OCTOBER 2007

## RESIDENT MOBILIZATION

### **PROGRAM LISTING:**

***Arbovirus Surveillance & Control***

***Chronic Disease Prevention***

***Communicable Disease Control***

***Community Epidemiology***

***Dental Health***

***Environmental Planning and Pollution Control***

***Food Protection***

***HIV Prevention***

***Homeless Healthcare Project***

***Immunizations***

***Institutional Inspections***

***Lead Poisoning Prevention***

***Public Health Investigations***

***Public Health Preparedness***

***Refugee Health***

***School Health***

***Sexually Transmitted Disease Control***

***Tuberculosis Control***

***Water Quality***

***Youth Health Promotion***

### **Summary of Program**

Many factors influence health and well-being in a community, and many entities and individuals in the community have a role to play in identifying and responding to priority needs. While mobilizing residents around neighborhood problem solving has been an effective approach to improving public health disparities; community involvement, in collaboration with local government, may hold implications for public safety as well. Applying an epidemiological approach to crime and violence in communities requires an understanding of the underlying causes and major risk factors that contribute to their occurrence. These determinants also guide localities to potential solutions. This philosophy has been employed and tested throughout over 300 U.S. Department of Justice-funded Weed & Seed sites nationally, and has shown promise within the City of Manchester.

One of the overarching goals of the Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Neighborhood Health within the Manchester Health Department is to actively engage residents in community health and quality of life improvement activities. As a starting point, the Division has been working collaboratively with the Manchester Police Department and other community organizations, to strengthen resident involvement in crime prevention and neighborhood revitalization efforts under the umbrella of the Manchester Weed & Seed strategy. There are multiple, proven advantages of mobilizing resident leaders around neighborhood health including the ability to capitalize on the knowledge they have about their community, the ownership they hold of where they live and the quality of life they would like for their families and neighbors, and the experience they have acquired from overcoming barriers to care and overturning life challenges into opportunities. Public accountability is also at the core of this work and calls for residents to be part of community solutions rather than perpetuating apathy.

### **Summary of Activities**

Studies have shown that neighborhood watch programs are one of the most cost effective and important anti-crime strategies in the country. The Division is currently working in collaboration with the Manchester Police Department to expand the number of residents participating in watch groups and to broaden volunteer opportunities to include initiatives which improve neighborhood health and quality of life.

- The Division, through the Weed & Seed strategy, has secured an Americorps VISTA "City Liaison" to help organize and expand the work of neighborhood watch groups (NWGs) throughout the City.
- Over 50 NWGs have been formed to date. Eleven NWGs have registered nationally with the National Sheriff's Association's "USA on Watch" Program.
- Neighborhood mobilization efforts have resulted in the participation of over 800 residents.
- The City Liaison is offering monthly training for NWG Captains on topics beneficial to the development of volunteers and neighborhood revitalization efforts.
- NWGs vary across the City in their level of activity and issues of interest. Examples of their contribution include active resident patrols, fundraisers to benefit youth, neighborhood beautification projects and safety clinics for the elderly.

### **Program Notes and Trends**

Watch programs not only hold the potential for reducing crime in neighborhoods and enhancing social cohesion and activism, but many communities across the country are capitalizing on this citizen force for public health preparedness and improvement activities. Within the next year, the Division will explore the feasibility of offering first responder and health liaison training for NWG residents, as an additional opportunity for volunteers to contribute to their community, beyond traditional crime prevention efforts. The goal of the City Liaison, in collaboration with the Weed & Seed strategy, is to successfully develop watch groups in every area of the City to foster social networks and enhance communication among members. Additionally, by registering at least 20 watch groups with the National Sheriff's Association, the Manchester community can become a competitive applicant for NWG funding and secure the resources necessary to sustain neighborhood momentum.

For more information on Neighborhood Watch Groups and resident mobilization, please contact Tracy Degges, Weed & Seed City Liaison, Manchester Health Department at (603) 624-6466 Ext. 339 or Officer Mark Ampuja, Weed & Seed Police Officer, Manchester Police Department at (603) 628-6132 Ext. 437.

## Community Activities

**Healthy Manchester Leadership Council:** The Healthy Manchester Leadership Council hosted a "Community Forum on Increasing Access to Care" on September 28<sup>th</sup> at the Manchester Health Department to highlight the work to date and vision of the Manchester Sustainable Access Project (MSAP). Nearly 70 community and statewide representatives participated in the event. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on October 26<sup>th</sup> at the Manchester Health Department.

**Tobacco Prevention and Control:** Representatives with the NH National Guard Counter Drug Task Force, in collaboration with the Kickin' Butts in Manchester (KBIM) Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalition, visited 26 randomly-selected area restaurants this month to conduct surveillance checks on indoor smoking act compliance. No violations were observed. The Coalition conducted two Smokeless Wednesday court diversion sessions this month and transferred the program to the YMCA for coordination. Smoking cessation materials and environmental tobacco smoke information were distributed by KBIM members at the Weed & Seed Neighborhood Block Party on September 22<sup>nd</sup> and the Day for Kids on September 15<sup>th</sup> at the Radisson Hotel. Finally, the Coalition is currently conducting a Youth Tobacco Survey, as part of a statewide sample, among nine middle schools in the greater Manchester area.

**Competency Development and Quality Improvement:** The National Association of County and City Health Officials released an RFP to Local Health Departments for the opportunity to become a Demonstration Site for an Accreditation Preparation and Quality Improvement Project. MHD was selected as one of only ten Local Health Departments across the country to participate in this project. Under this initiative, selected Local Health Departments will begin assessing their achievement of local public health standards that are in-line with the national movement to initiate a Public Health Accreditation Program over the next few years. This opportunity will provide MHD with an advantage in the national accreditation process by enabling the Department to begin self-assessing organizational performance, identifying priority areas in organizational capacity and service delivery, and designing quality improvement processes to enhance performance in the identified priority areas. With technical assistance from the National Association of County and City Health Officials, MHD will begin this project in October 2007.

**Oral Health:** Over 1,200 Sealant Permission Forms were sent home to parents of second and third grade students at the 8 Title 1 Schools. As of the end of September, 504 or 42% of the forms had been returned, a significant increase over the 28% return rate in school year 2005/2006. More than 350 children are now being screened for sealant placement. Ten (10) community dentists responded to the letter requesting assistance with the oral health program.

**Food Protection Program:** The new NH Indoor Smoking Act went into effect on September 17, 2007. Smoking is now prohibited indoors in food service establishments (including bars) that are open to the public. Environmental Health Specialists are acting in an educational capacity only, as we do not have any enforcement authority at this time. Enforcement action may be taken through DHHS or local law enforcement. DHHS reports that they are interested in education over enforcement at this time, especially given that the administrative rules to support the Statute have not been adopted as of this time.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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