



The Center for Community Health Development, Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health

BVHP and CCHD Gear Up for 2010 Health Status Assessment

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The Brazos Valley Health Partnership and the Center for Community Health Development are preparing to conduct the third Brazos Valley Health Status Assessment in 2010.

Plans are to launch the assessment in early February and continue through May with findings being released at a regional health summit in September. This assessment will be similar to the 2002 and 2006 assessments and will cover Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Robertson and Washington counties.

What is a health status assessment?

A health status assessment is designed to measure the health of residents in a community and identify the factors that contribute to their health and well-being.

The Brazos Valley assessment consists of three components: a **household survey**, **community discussion groups**, and readily available, reliable **secondary data**.

Random Sample Household Survey:

The household survey was designed by CCHD faculty in conjunction with a community data committee representing regional and local health care providers, social services, and various community sectors. Survey administrators will randomly select and phone residents throughout the region, asking residents to participate in a survey regarding health-related

topics including access to care and community health issues. If a resident agrees to take the health survey, a copy of the survey is mailed to the individual. Surveys are returned in a prepaid postage envelope included in the survey packet.

Community Discussion Groups:

Several community discussion groups, similar to "focus groups," will be held in each county to capture information difficult to obtain in a survey format. Discussion group participants will be encouraged to discuss their personal views and concerns as they relate to health and health care within the Brazos Valley. Information gathered from the discussion groups will be incorporated into the final assessment report to provide additional perspective to the survey responses.

Discussions will be held with various audiences including health and human service providers, community leaders, and consumers or the "general public". Consumer groups will be organized to include a variety of age groups, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and rural populations.

Analysis of Secondary Data:

The Texas Department of State Health Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Census Bureau are among the sources of existing data that will be tapped for inclusion in the overall assessment. This "secondary data" is useful in providing a broader context and basis for comparisons such as "How does the Brazos Valley health compare to Texas overall, or the nation?"

How is the assessment useful to my community?

Findings from the health status assessments will be utilized for several purposes such as developing and/or improving community health resources, supporting organizational strategic planning, and implementing pilot projects to test the potential value of the implementation of certain health practices, policies, and programs. In previous years, the many Brazos Valley organizations - such as local hospitals, health resource commissions, and several health and social services groups - have used the findings from the Brazos Valley Health Status Assessment to support their strategic planning and grant writing efforts. Since the first health

status assessment was conducted in 2002, CCHD has utilized the data to assist organizations and communities in securing funding, (over \$3 million), for various health related projects. The most significant grant provided funding to develop five rural health resource centers and a corresponding volunteer transportation program. From 2004 through 2008, these centers have served 5,611 residents who have accessed the centers in over 21,000 visits and provided over 10,000 rides to health related destinations.

Look for more information on the assessment in the February 2010 edition of "Communitas". Until then, please contact the Center for Community Health Development at (979) 458-0937 for further details.

Community Spotlight

Making a Difference through Partnership

Since its opening in 2003, the Madison Health Resource Center (MHRC) has been a place where residents can turn to when they are in need of assistance. The center's impact on the community is becoming more and more evident as the community increases its support.

Recently, Madison County Commissioner, Phillip Grisham, has taken a particular interest in the MHRC and strongly encouraged increased local financial support of the center. He saw a perfect opportunity for the county to partner with the MHRC to better serve their residents. Due to a recent change in

the Senior Meals Program, Madison County was seeking an organization to operate the program in Madison County. Commissioner Grisham along with Mr. Earl Parker, a Madison County Health Resource Commission member, immediately thought of the MHRC. He approached the MHRC Service Coordinator, Camilla Viator. Ms. Viator graciously accepted the opportunity, noting that "this is the perfect way to increase our presence in the community, reach more residents, and build upon a great partnership with the county."

More than forty Madison County residents are now receiving meals

that previously would have gone without. Both Ms. Viator and Commissioner Grisham are pushing to increase the enrollment in the program. "I know there are more out there that need the help. People in need should not have to do without and they should not have to just get by, especially during the holiday season" said Commissioner Grisham. He acknowledged that the partnership opened his eyes, "I did not realize all that the MHRC did for our community. It is a much needed service and Camilla has done a tremendous job; you just cannot find a better person for the job."

Prevention Research Centers Directors' Meeting

Each year, prior to the American Public Health Association annual meeting, the CDC hosts a meeting for the directors of all the prevention research centers (PRCs). This year in Philadelphia, directors, staff, and some community representatives of the 35 funded PRCs—including some new developmental centers—

got together to talk about where we're headed. Dr. Monica Wendel and Dr. Ken McLeroy attended on behalf of CCHD. The day-long meeting also allowed time for the PRC personnel to network with each other, which uncovered some common interests, issues, opportunities, and resources. The PRC Program staff reported

on changes to our evaluation and reporting, funding prospects, and outcomes of interest for the CDC under the new leadership of Dr. Tom Frieden. The next five years promises to be active and full of opportunities for CCHD, its community partners, and affiliated faculty.

Christmas in the *Colonias* Gift Drive

During October through December 2009, SRPH faculty, staff, and students collected gift items for families and children living in San Carlos *colonias* in South Texas. Dr. Joseph Sharkey and the Program for Research in Nutrition and Health Disparities partnered with the Social and Behavioral Student Organization, Center for Community Health Development, and the Rural

Public Health Student Association in recruiting volunteers to "adopt" a family and purchase gift items for the children. Dr. Sharkey also partnered with Julie St. John from CCHD South Texas and the *Colonias* Program with the Center for Housing and Urban Development (TAMU), in hosting the event at the San Carlos Community Center. Volunteers donated 163

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New Affiliated Faculty



Dr. Jamila Blake is an Assistant Professor in the School Psychology program in the Department of Educational Psychology at Texas A&M University. Dr. Blake is the Director of the Peer Relations and Adjustment Lab and Principal Investigator of the "Peer Relations as Moderators of Success" study and the "Study of Adolescent Resiliency (S.O.A.R.)." Dr. Blake earned her doctoral degree at the University of Georgia in School Psychology. She is a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) and is certified in School Crisis Response. Her research interests focus on children's peer relations. Specifically, she is interested in peer-directed aggression in ethnic minority populations and females, and the relation between peer-directed aggression and children's psychological/ social adjustment and academic achievement. In addition to exploring aggression in youth, Dr. Blake's research interests also include familial risk and protective factors that either promote or discourage children's engagement in aggression.

Colonias Gift Drive *continued from page 2*

children's gifts including five bicycles and tricycles, remote control cars, clothing, games, books and other items. Additionally, volunteers gave over 80 gifts for *colonia* mothers, and eight families received HEB gift cards. Dr. and Mrs. Brian Smith—DSHS Region 11 Director—played “Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus”—passing out the gifts, candy canes, and having their pictures taken with each family. Forty-two families (155 people), eight SRPH staff, and ten CHUD staff attended the event. Julie St. John and three *promotoras* (Maria Davila, Aracely Garibay, and Olga Castilleja) coordinated all activities at the event. Festivities included snacks (fresh fruit, cheese, and Christmas cookies), passing out gifts, and pictures with Santa Claus—which will be delivered December 21st and 22nd to each family. The generosity and love shown by the SRPH family touched several participants who commented that the gifts received will be their “Christmas” this year. One mother



commented that she never expected such wonderful gifts. Organizers look forward to next year and want to thank each person who participated for making Christmas a little brighter for these *colonia* families.



Food Drive

The Center for Community Health Development's core project focuses on the access to and availability of healthy food options in the Brazos Valley and South Texas. In an effort to give back to our community, as well as support our core research project, CCHD partnered with the SRPH Social and Behavioral Student Organization (SBSO) to

collect healthy food items. We asked faculty, staff and students to donate



non-perishable food items that were low in sodium, low in fat/calories, low in sugar, and high in fiber.

Together, we collected approximately 281 pounds of food from faculty, staff, and students at SRPH. This included 60 cans of vegetables without sauce; 38 cans of fruit in its own juice or light syrup; 80 bags/boxes of rice, beans, or pasta; 52

cans of soup; 33 canned meat items; 13 breakfast cereal items; and 52 other items such as baby cereal, whole grain crackers, and low sugar jam. Paper towels and toilet paper were also donated.

On December 9, 2009, CCHD and SBSO representatives gathered the items and donated them to the local KBTX TV-3 Food for Families Food Drive. All of the items and monetary donations collected during this one-day, region-wide event were given to the Brazos Valley Food Bank and will be distributed to food pantries located throughout the seven counties of the Brazos Valley.

Thank you to everyone who donated and made this event a huge success! We look forward to the new CCHD-SBSO Annual Food Drive and hopefully we can donate an even greater amount of healthy foods next year!



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Moving Forward

The Center for Community Health Development would like to congratulate Kenzie McPherson on her upcoming graduation from Texas A&M University and her recent engagement to Mr. Grant Stucki. Kenzie has earned a B.B.A. in Marketing and has accepted a position as the Community Relations Director of Autumn Leaves of Flower Mound, northwest of Dallas. We have been fortunate to have Kenzie on staff during the past three years and wish her the best in the future. Thank you for all of your hard work Kenzie and good luck in your next adventure!



Services

The Center for Community Health Development can be contracted to provide services, training or technical assistance in the following areas:

- Strategic Planning
- Operational Planning
- Leadership Development
- Research Design
- Survey Construction
- Coalition Development
- Assessment
- Evaluation

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