



The Collaborative

Working Together to Improve the Health Status of the Community
The Bexar County Community Health Collaborative

INSIDE

Youth Depression Web Site

Online resources for healthcare providers and parents

Health Assessments

Study continues to reveal the health status of Bexar County residents

Fit City Shines

San Antonio is the focus of the CDC's television show

Community First, Methodist Healthcare Ministries join Collaborative

The Bexar County Community Health Collaborative welcomes Community First and Methodist Healthcare Ministries as its newest members.

"Both of these organizations provide vital health services to the community, and we're glad they will be partnering with us to strengthen the Health Collaborative," said Alex Garcia, the organization's president, representing Southwest General Hospital.

Community First is South Texas' only locally owned and managed not-for-profit health maintenance organization. Created by University Health System in 1995, the HMO provides group health coverage in nine South Texas counties and also provides health coverage through Star Medicaid

and the Children's Health Insurance Program. Charles Kight, chief executive officer, will join the Health Collaborative board.

Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc., is San Antonio's largest non-public funding source for community healthcare. Its mission is to provide long-term physical, mental and spiritual resources to promote healing and wellness for the least served in San Antonio and South Texas. Methodist Healthcare Ministries is the not-for-profit local owner of the Methodist Healthcare System. MHM operates primary care clinics and contributes grant funds to partnering institutions providing healthcare services to the under-served population. Pilar Oates,



COMMUNITY FIRST
HEALTH PLANS



director of programs and support services, will serve on the Health Collaborative board.

Other members of the Health Collaborative are Southwest General Hospital, CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health Care, Bexar County Medical Society, San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, Methodist Healthcare, University Health System and Baptist Health System.

For more information about joining the Health Collaborative, contact Joan M. Miller, executive director, at (210) 822-8521.

CDC to Shine National Spotlight on San Antonio

San Antonio has been selected as the focus for the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Public Health Grand Rounds on Obesity, a live satellite broadcast and webcast on various public health topics. The CDC chose San Antonio as the focus for this program based on efforts to encourage the community to change its lifestyle choices.

The Health Collaborative has implemented a Fit City/Fit Schools campaign to increase exercise and improve eating habits of local residents.

The broadcast is designed to increase awareness of risk factors and influences that contribute to obesity, promote public health partnerships, and strengthen public health systems. The CDC broadcast will feature interviews with San Antonio leaders and faculty from several health disciplines. Continuing education credit is available. The broadcast will air live at 1 p.m., Friday, June 7. To register, visit www.PublicHealthGrandRounds.unc.edu.



Fit City Forums Highlight Healthy Options

The Health Collaborative plans to invite local residents to become involved further in better fitness and eating habits by hosting quarterly Fit City Forums across the city starting this spring. The forums are designed to spotlight local programs available to help people adopt a healthier lifestyle.

"Community involvement is the key to success of the Fit City program," said Nancy Molter, Health Collaborative member representing Baptist Health System. "Not only will the Forums publicize events and programs that will encourage the community to exercise and make healthy diet choices, but they will help us get a better idea of what sort of resources are needed for people to live healthier lives."

Currently the Health Collaborative is looking for venues and potential speakers for the Forums.

For more information, contact Joan Miller, the Health Collaborative's executive director, at (210) 822-8521, or jmiller@txdirect.net.

A joint community effort sponsored by:

Baptist Health System

Bexar County Medical Society

CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health Care

Community First Health Plans

Methodist Healthcare

Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas

San Antonio Metropolitan Health District

Southwest General Hospital

University Health System

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Health Assessment Moves Into Neighborhoods

The first phase of a comprehensive community health assessment supported by the Bexar County Community Health Collaborative has been completed, and work continues to determine the health status of Bexar County residents.

This year's results will be compared with the 1998 community health study, as well as state and national statistics and goals. The results of the initial research were what lead the Health Collaborative to pursue nutrition and fitness, fluoride and youth depression as priority issues.

The study is expected to be complete this summer. To date, the researchers have completed 1,000 telephone surveys, in English and

Spanish. This spring, they will interview 100 key informants and conduct 210 door-to-door surveys.

The survey will provide a snapshot of community awareness of health issues and practice of lifestyle choices that could affect longevity and well being. Topics include everything from binge drinking to seatbelts. In addition, special questions were included this year on youth depression. This report is a joint effort with the annual Health Profiles study, issued by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District.

"In many ways, this research is a public-private partnership that will provide invaluable information in guiding us to make our community

healthier," said Frank Blalock, Health Collaborative board member representing Metro Health.

A consortium of local academics is conducting the research. Its members include Bill Spears, University of Texas Health Science Center (UTHSC) School of Public Health; Margaret Brackley, UTHSC School of Nursing; and Steve Blanchard and Annette Prosterman, Our Lady of the Lake University.

In addition to the Health Collaborative, the project is made possible through funding and grants from United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, Methodist Healthcare Ministries, and a grant from the Kronkosky Charitable Foundation.

Web Site Offers Information About Resources to Treat Youth Depression

A new web site developed by the Youth Depression Advisory Council offers information about community resources available to treat depressed children and teens. The web site, accessible through a link at www.healthcollaborative.net, provides information about inpatient, outpatient and emergency services available in San Antonio for youth battling depression.

"Our goal is to make this web site useful to local healthcare providers, as well as to parents, teachers and others in the community," said Joe Thornton, MD,

chair of the advisory council. "The site provides useful information about depression and local services," said Thornton.

The Youth Depression Advisory Council comprises a multi-disciplinary group of community members that work to identify unmet needs and develop interventions to lessen the impact of youth depression. Youth depression is one of Bexar County Community Health Collaborative's three target issues. The board of

directors selected the issue after considering the effects of youth depression on teen pregnancy, substance abuse, violent and abusive behavior, and fitness and nutrition behaviors, as well as more severe mental health issues.

New members are always welcome. Currently, the advisory council comprises representatives from social services agencies, health systems, counseling centers, the health science center, Metro Health and the Bexar County Medical Society, among others. For more information, contact Joan M. Miller, the Health Collaborative's executive director, at (210) 822-8521.



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