



The Collaborative

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

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A joint community effort sponsored by:

Baptist Health System

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Friends of the Health Collaborative

Kronkosky Charitable Foundation

United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County

8610 North New Braunfels, Suite 105
San Antonio, TX 78217
Tel: (210) 822-8521
Fax: (210) 820-3888
healthcollaborative.net

Collaborative Named "Health Care Hero"

The San Antonio Business Journal named the Bexar County Community Health Collaborative one of its first "Health Care Heroes," an honor bestowed upon 12 people or organizations that are helping San Antonio residents live longer, better and healthier lives. A profile of the Health Collaborative, and the 11 other honorees, appeared in the business publication's April 26 issue.

"We're honored to be recognized for our achievements," said Alex Garcia, the Health Collaborative's president, who represents Southwest General Hospital. "We're proud of the impact our organization has made in the community in just four short years, and we



appreciate the Business Journal increasing the public's awareness of our work."

The winners were nominated by people in the community and were selected by a panel of 12 judges made up of business leaders. The winners were honored at a reception in June at the McNay Art Museum.

The Health Collaborative was honored for expanding wellness promotion through the Fit City/Fit Schools program, and for implementing a cutting-edge, public-private model for solving community health issues.

Health assessment holds focus groups

Work continues on a comprehensive community health assessment supported by the Bexar County Community Health Collaborative to determine the general health of Bexar County residents. Results will be published in late summer.

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

The survey will paint a picture of community awareness of health issues, levels of disease and lifestyle behaviors that could affect longevity and well being. Topics include everything from how often respondents wear seatbelts to how many times a week that they exercise. For the first time, the report is a joint effort with the annual Health

Profiles study issued by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District. Special questions were also included this year on youth depression.

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.

To date, the researchers have completed 1,000 telephone surveys, key informant interviews, and 210 door-to-door household surveys. Currently, 15 focus groups are under way.

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

Friends of the Health Collaborative lend support

The members of the Bexar County Community Health Collaborative welcome the Kronkosky Charitable Foundation and the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County as the first members of the newly formed Friends of the Health Collaborative.

"We welcome the United Way and the Kronkosky Foundation and appreciate their support," said Alex Garcia, the organization's president, representing Southwest General Hospital. "It takes a lot of commitment and effort to create awareness about critical health issues in our community, and we're glad to see organizations outside of healthcare wanting to be part of the solution."

The Friends of the Health Collaborative new category of membership is open to any business or organization that wishes to make a financial commitment to the goals and objectives.

The Kronkosky Foundation and the United Way contributed funding, along with members of the Health Collaborative, for the comprehensive community health assessment, which will be published in late summer.

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, Baptist Health System, Methodist Healthcare Ministries and Community First Health Plans.

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

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San Antonio showcased on CDC/UNC webcast

San Antonio was in the national spotlight in June when Public Health Grand Rounds, co-sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the University of North Carolina, focused on the issue of obesity. The city was highlighted because of its commitment to encourage residents to get fit and stay fit. Public Health Grand Rounds is a live satellite broadcast and webcast on various public health topics for healthcare professionals and community leaders across the country.

The broadcast featured two Health Collaborative board members — Charles Kight from Community First, and Alex Garcia from Southwest General — as well as Executive Director Joan Miller. Metro

Health Director Fernando Guerra, M.D. was also featured. The CDC and UNC held San Antonio as a shining example of how a community can make a difference in cutting obesity rates.

The Health Collaborative is a driving force in implementing the Fit City/Fit Schools campaign to increase exercise and improve eating habits of adults and children in Bexar County. The decision to focus on fitness and diet was made after Health Collaborative members saw results from a 1998 health assessment that verified data finding San Antonio among one of the fattest cities in the country.

The Health Collaborative hosted a forum to view the webcast live at the University of Texas Health Science Center. Afterwards, key people interviewed in the web cast held a panel discussion.

“San Antonio really is a leader among cities taking the lead to increase awareness of obesity and its damaging

effects,” said board member Terri De la Haya, representing University Health System. “We hope that through our efforts that other communities around the country will help battle this problem that devastates families and spends a huge portion of the healthcare dollar. We are already encouraged by hearing about Lean Seguin and Fit New Braunfels.”

The broadcast was developed to increase awareness among healthcare professionals and community leaders of risk factors and environmental influences that contribute to obesity, to promote public health partnerships, and to strengthen public health systems. The country’s leading experts discussed the definition of obesity, its alarming increase over the past 15 years, risk factors, contributing environmental factors and strategies to reduce the incidence of obesity.

To view the one-hour webcast, go to www.publichealthgrandrounds.unc.edu.

Health Collaborative backs Fit City/Fit Schools

The Bexar County Community Health Collaborative continues to take a leadership role in the Fit City/Fit Schools campaign, which encourages area residents to exercise and make healthier food choices.

The Health Collaborative is the facilitator of three of the Fit City/Fit Schools components:

- Walk San Antonio, an ongoing program started at University Health System to encourage exercise.
- The Healthy Vending Initiative, a program to encourage health systems, government, schools, businesses and other organizations to put healthy food choices in snack and beverage machines.

- Fit City Forums, a program starting this fall in conjunction with the San Antonio Dietetic Association to inform the community of programs available to encourage exercise and more nutritious eating habits.



Other parts of the Fit City/Fit Schools campaign include:

- The Mayor’s Council on Physical Fitness, facilitated by Mayor Ed Garza’s office, through which community leaders make presentations to schools and civic groups about healthy behaviors.

- The Body Mass Index initiative, starting this fall by the Bexar County Medical Society, to encourage physicians to discuss obesity with their patients.
- Fit Schools Initiative, facilitated by the San Antonio Independent School District, which starts this summer to work collectively among all districts to teach students the importance of fitness and encourage exercise and more nutritious food choices.

For information about the Fit City/Fit School initiative, contact Joan Miller, the Health Collaborative’s executive director, at (210) 822-8521, or jmmiller@txdirect.net.

**BEXAR COUNTY
COMMUNITY HEALTH
COLLABORATIVE**



8610 N. New Braunfels • Suite 105
San Antonio, Texas • 78217