

The Collaborative

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



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Survey to reveal how San Antonians live day to day

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Solution created for San Antonians

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The Collaborative introduces the 2002 officers

Survey Paints Picture of Health

How much exercise do San Antonians get? Is it more or less than four years ago? How often do we binge drink? Do we wear seatbelts? The answers to these and many other questions will be answered this summer.

The Bexar County Community Health Collaborative is embarking on its second comprehensive health assessment. The 2002 Health Assessment and Progress Report will paint a picture of the health status of Bexar County residents, and compare its findings with the 1998 data, as well as the state and national rates and goals.

"This research is key to guiding not only the efforts of the Health Collaborative, but many other groups that are working on local health problems," said Alex Garcia, president of the Health Collaborative, representing Southwest General Hospital.

The research comprises the following components, in English and Spanish:

- Telephone calls to 1,000 households
- Interviews of 100 key informants
- 15 focus groups of community representatives
- Door-to-door surveys of 210 households

In addition, for the first time, the findings will be published in conjunction with the annual Health Profiles compendium of secondary data compiled by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District.

"This partnership with Metro Health not only enables us to present a comprehensive view, but it reduces duplication and saves the community money," said Garcia.

The Health Collaborative is contracting with the following consortium of local academics to conduct the research: Bill Spears from the University of Texas Health Science Center (UTHSC) School of Public Health; Margaret Brackley from the UTHSC School of Nursing; as well as Steve Blanchard and Annette Prosterman from Our Lady of the Lake University.

In addition to Health Collaborative funding, the project received a \$75,000 grant from the Kronkosky Charitable Foundation.



The Health Collaborative's 1998 research was the impetus to targeting its three priority issues:

- Fitness and nutrition
- Youth depression
- Fluoride

The Health Collaborative's Youth Depression Advisory Council is providing expert advice to the researchers on additional questions to include in the 2002 research to help address that vital issue.

The surveys will begin in February 2002, followed by the focus groups and interviews later this spring. The final research findings will be presented to the community in the late summer.

Youth Depression Group Tackles Issue

How pervasive is youth depression in the community, and how can it be addressed? This is the key focus of the Bexar County Community Health Collaborative's Youth Depression Advisory Council, a new community-wide group, which is delving into the issue and developing preventive strategies.

"We in the mental health field often have as many questions as we do answers regarding youth depression," said Joe Thornton, M.D., chair of the advisory council from University of Texas Health Science Center and University Hospital. "This group is the first broad-based coalition that is trying to get a handle on the

issue so we can help parents, teachers, counselors — and the kids themselves."

Members of the advisory council provided input to the researchers conducting the Health Collaborative's 2002 Health Assessment and Progress report, which will include questions that probe how youth depression manifests itself in local households.

The advisory council welcomes new members. Call the Health Collaborative at (210) 822-8521 for information.

Youth Depression Advisory Council Mission Statement

"To study and define the issues related to youth depression and collaborate to develop a coordinated community-wide response."

A joint community effort sponsored by:

Baptist Health System

Bexar County Medical Society

CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health Care

Methodist Healthcare

San Antonio Metropolitan Health District

Southwest General Hospital

University Health System

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2002

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Fit City, Here We Come!

Fat and lazy. Regrettably, studies done by the Bexar County Community Health Collaborative and other national publications indicate that San Antonians do not exercise enough, are overweight and eat poorly. The research further indicates that local residents have high rates of diabetes, heart disease and other conditions that could be prevented by practicing healthful lifestyles.

Toward that end, the Health Collaborative is taking the lead in forming a partnership with a variety of public and private organizations on a Fit City/Fit Schools campaign to increase exercise and improve eating habits.

“Since the inception of the Health Collaborative, we have been implementing programs to address fitness and nutrition,” said Geoffrey W. Crabtree, past president of the organization representing Methodist Healthcare. “Now it’s time to take our efforts to the next level.”

The Health Collaborative is working to expand the Walk San Antonio program that was started by University Health System through a state grant. The program, which includes community walking groups and an array of incentives, encourages people to walk 30 minutes per day.

The expansion effort, which will re-launch this spring, is chaired by Carolyn Ross-Toren, a wellness columnist, personal trainer and principal of Judson Alternative School. “It is important that people include moderate exercise in their daily routines,” said Ross-Toren. “Walk San Antonio will help people do that.” To sign up for the program, call (210) 358-7278.

Fit City also includes an initiative to improve healthful options in vending machines. Frederick Kirksey, owner of Forever Fit, chair of the committee, was successful in getting all the major health systems and hospitals to be the first industry in the city to improve vending machine choices.



Walk San Antonio
(210) 358-7278

New Officers Elected

Two of San Antonio’s prominent healthcare leaders were elected to the Bexar County Community Health Collaborative Board of Directors for 2002:

- Alex Garcia is the director of business development at Southwest General Hospital and has been named president.
- Sister Michele O’Brien is the director of adult advocacy at CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health Care, and has been named secretary/treasurer.

The duo joins a team of six healthcare leaders, including Frank T. Blalock, San Antonio Metropolitan Health District; Geoffrey W. Crabtree, Methodist Healthcare; Terri De La Haya, RN, University Health System; and Nancy Molter, Baptist Health System.

“We have an ambitious year ahead, including conducting our health assessment, addressing youth depression and partnering with others to lead the effort on a Fit City/Fit Schools city-wide campaign,” said Garcia. “I look forward to working with an array of community members on these important issues.”

Health Collaborative’s Target Issues

- Nutrition and fitness, as they relate to diabetes and other chronic conditions
- Fluoride in the drinking water
- Youth depression

Mission: To improve the health status of the community through collaborative means. The result of this collaboration is a more robust approach to solving critical community health needs, and at the same time realizing efficiencies in the use of resources. The focus is to maximize synergies created by working together instead of duplicating efforts.

**BEXAR COUNTY
COMMUNITY HEALTH
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