

## April 2015 Minority Health Month Exclamation Points



Dear Partners:

As we observe [National Minority Health Month](#), we wish to reflect on the past year in the Wisconsin Minority Health Program and announce exciting initiatives for 2015:

- Our annual [Community Grant](#) program cycle continued through 2014 and into 2015 with the second year of funding for four projects focusing on Social and Economic Determinants of Health. The Community Grant projects received targeted support from an expert evaluation team to help them better document their interventions, develop critical indicators to measure intangible outcomes, and prepare them for replication or adaptation in similar communities.
  - ✓ **CORE/EI Centro**, based in Milwaukee, is implementing a project to increase collaboration among community health workers (CHWs). CHWs from different ethnic groups are working together to identify the most prominent social determinants of health (SDH) and disseminate findings to inform community grass roots efforts, public health projects and health policies.
  - ✓ **Racine-Kenosha Community Action Agency**, is implementing a peer breastfeeding project to increase knowledge of the value of breast milk and breastfeeding benefits among African American families in Racine (pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, fathers, family members and related community individuals). The project also works to increase breastfeeding initiation rates among African American families.
  - ✓ **Urban League of Greater Madison** is assisting unemployed and underemployed individuals in overcoming employment barriers by helping them to learn new skills and to demonstrate the behaviors necessary for successfully achieving and retaining employment. Unemployed and underemployed individuals will increase their economic self-sufficiency by obtaining new or better employment.
  - ✓ **Hmong American Center (formerly the Wausau Area Hmong Mutual Association)** is implementing a project to improve the health literacy of Hmong living in North Central Wisconsin via bilingual workshops and courses. This project is also developing the Wausau Area Hmong Health Coalition and a formal structure for the Hmong Health Education Network.
- July brought a new face to the Program. Hester Simons is part of the 2014-2016 Cohort of the [UW Population Health Fellows](#). Hester is co-located with Centro Hispano in Madison. The placement of a Fellow represents a significant increase in capacity for the Program. Hester has international public health experience in Latin America, and has already led the completion of several Program deliverables. We are thrilled to have Hester's expertise and the resources she brings.
- The [Wisconsin Minority Health Leadership Council](#) continues to be a voice for the health needs of racial and ethnic minority populations in Wisconsin, and continues to advocate for the elimination of health disparities. The council met four times during 2014 and provided feedback and guidance to the Minority Health Program, the Division of Public Health, and DHS on a number of relevant health issues. A new strategic plan was created and implemented in 2014. The Council continues to expand its reach, and is sought out by public health partners statewide:
  - ✓ In June, three council members joined a community team through the Healthy Wisconsin Leadership Institute, focusing on mental health and AODA.

- ✓ Also in June, the council hosted a community conversation with the Hmong community in Wausau.
  - ✓ In September, the council provided a letter of support for a major cross-divisional grant beginning in early 2015. The Council plans to remain a partner and provide input as requested for this initiative.
- We continue with the adoption and implementation of the Standards for **Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (CLAS Standards)**. We have maintained our internal partnerships with the Chronic Disease Prevention Unit and Primary Care Office and have expanded our internal partnerships within the Division of Public Health:
    - ✓ The Division of Public Health pledged to adopt the CLAS Standards.
    - ✓ The Minority Health Program is leading the Division in the development of a five-year plan to implement the CLAS Standards.
- We are currently reaching out to external partners:
- ✓ The Minority Health Program created a [CLAS webpage](#).
  - ✓ We secured several grantee and partner pledges.
  - ✓ In July we hosted four trainings on the CLAS Standards led by a national expert. These trainings are available on [Wisconsin TRAIN](#).
  - ✓ Health Literacy modules have been scheduled for 2015.
  - ✓ Evelyn Cruz, the Wisconsin Minority Health Officer, gave presentations at several regional meetings of the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB) around the CLAS Standards.
  - ✓ The Minority Health Program implements CLAS and addresses the social determinants of health through the support and promotion of Community Health Workers (CHWs). CHWs go by many different names: Community Health Promoters, Health Navigators, etc. Our partnership allows the Division of Public Health to strengthen its relationship with many communities. CHWs are crucial to improving the health of these communities. The [National Partnership for Action \(NPA\)](#) has included CHWs as a work priority for 2015 for all Region V Health Equity Councils.
- The Minority Health Program plays a major role in the mid-course review of Wisconsin's State Health Plan, [Healthiest Wisconsin 2020](#), through the design of the focus group methods, partnership and funding for community-lead focus groups. The goal of these focus groups, conducted by impacted communities, is to collect community feedback centered on progress in certain areas of concern taken from the [HW2020 Baseline and Health Disparities Report](#).
  - The Public Health Information Campaign (PHIC), an annual grant mandated by Wis. Stats. § 250.20, supports health education work encompassing all four of the minority communities targeted by the law (African American, American Indian, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian). In 2014, the PHIC funded the HW2020 mid-course review and Freedom, Inc.'s Youth Health Summit.
  - Throughout 2014, the Health Equity Community of Practice (CoP) Core Team worked toward operationalizing the coordination of health equity efforts across the Division of Public Health. This planning team comprises representatives from throughout the division. The team conducted an environmental scan, worked on a division-wide health equity survey, and created a division-wide training calendar for 2015.
  - The Minority Health Program continued its commitment to partners like you with various forms of communication, including our regularly updated [website](#).

We are excited to continue our health equity work in 2015, and we will keep you updated.

The Minority Health Program counts on your continued support for the success of these exciting activities.. We could not have done it without you.

Thank you and Happy Minority Health Month!

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<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/minority-health/index.htm>