



# Milwaukee Brighter Futures

Meeting Summary ... June 15, 2010

## State of men's health called a 'concern,' affecting whole community including families

Shocking statistics tell a grim story of the health of men of color in the Milwaukee community and the Milwaukee Health Department is instituting programs to address the issue. That was the theme of the presentation at the June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of Milwaukee Brighter Futures.

The health of men is critical to what happens to the families and the children in the community,



according to **Darryl Davidson**, who heads the Men's Health Program of the Department.

Speaking at the June Brighter Futures meeting at Aurora Family Services, Davidson reminded the audience that

June is both Fathers Make a Difference Month and also Men's Health Month.

"If we don't address this, we are doomed," he said.

Throughout the nation, statistics show that men will die six years earlier than women, and the rate of death among African-American men for heart disease, homicides, mental illness, and sexually transmitted diseases is many times higher than that of men of other ethnic backgrounds, he said.

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**The early deaths of men** have a profound effect upon their families, Davidson continued. For instance, he said that after a man dies his widow often falls into poverty, adding, "More than half of the widows in poverty were not poor before their husband's death." A man's early illness also affects his ability to work and support his family, dropping the family into poverty and opening the children to various problems created in poverty.

Milwaukee's record is bad, he said, noting that the overall death rate for Milwaukee males is 1.5 times

that of the nation. Davidson added that Milwaukee has many of the factors of poor life expectancy such as obesity, poor diet, lack of exercise, high incidences of sexually transmitted diseases and other factors, and "much of this is influenced by poverty."

Teenage boys die at twice the rate of girls, due to homicides, car accidents, and drownings; as they age, men die sooner than women due to their occupations, since men tend to take the most dangerous jobs, such as those in commercial fisherman, construction and mining.

The Milwaukee Health Department is one of the first in the nation to develop programs aimed at men's health. Beginning in 2008, the department set up the Men's Health Center. There are only 25 other cities that have Men's Health Centers of some type or other, he said.

Milwaukee's top causes of death among men, such as heart disease, cancer, injury, stroke and homicide, rank it among the worst in the nation.

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**In smoking-related deaths**, Milwaukee ranks 11<sup>th</sup> worst in nation for males and 22<sup>nd</sup> for females. And, Davidson added, in communities of color the rate of smoking is worse, with 33% of the African-American men smoking in such neighborhoods compared to 18% for other men in other neighborhoods.

Smoking as a habit is particularly intrusive in some of Milwaukee's poorest neighborhoods, where nearly half of all adults are addicted to cigarettes. Davidson noted that this helps to contribute to family poverty since people earning an average of less than \$15,000 a year often plunk down as much as \$9 a pack. Many of these smokers are in low-income jobs and have no health insurance, adding

to the health care risk, he said. Yet, the Department has found that 38% have never tried before to quit, many unaware of steps they could take to quit smoking.

“It’s a health equity issue,” he said.

The Department has recommended that clinicians that serve the community should be educated about cessation strategies, and also about urging with treatment referrals.

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**Davidson** discussed other conditions that affect African-American males adversely:

**Heart disease** is the leading cause of death, and it is worse among African-American males, he said. The VA Hospital in Milwaukee has learned that African-American males are 50% more likely to die from heart disease than white males.

Much of this is due to lack of health insurance among African-American males, a reluctance to trust the health care providers and other access issues, Davidson said. When an individual has a heart attack it’s usually imperative that he get medical care promptly, and this is often difficult for persons in the African-American community.

**Drinking.** In 2007, Milwaukee was named by Forbes as number one among the list of ‘US Drunkest Cities.’”

**Homicide** is the major cause of death in Milwaukee among young African-American males and Latinos and is on the rise in the Asian community. While rates are dropping in Milwaukee, they are dropping everywhere, he said, while both Chicago and New York have lower rates of homicide than Milwaukee.

Most shooting victims are taken to Froedtert Hospital, which is emergency room most expert at treating gunshot wounds. When questioned as to whether it might be better to set up such a treatment program in the central city, Davidson said that it’s best to get such victims to a hospital that specializes in such wounds to get effective treatment. Froedtert’s claim to fame is that the majority of wounds they treat are saved. Milwaukee, he said, is fortunate to have a burn center, a hospital for births and a trauma center. “We need fewer shootings,” he concluded.

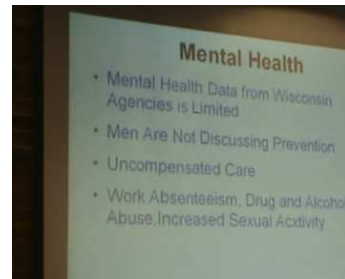
**Sexually transmitted diseases.** Milwaukee still is in the top ten in the nation in the rate of STDs and has five times more incidents of Chlamydia than the

national average. Milwaukee African-American males experience gonorrhea at a rate 36 times over that of Caucasian males.

Various indicators of susceptibility for STDs include stress, mental health issues, behavioral risks and poverty, Davidson said. He noted that 58% of African-Americans are in poverty, while having 37% of population.

Julie Bock of the Milwaukee LGBT Center said men in the ages 15 to 30 are experiencing a major increase in HIV; many do not identify their sexual orientation and may not be aware of the risks of their behavior.

**Mental health issues** continue to plague males in the community, he said. While males may attempt suicide at a lesser rate than females, they are more likely to succeed since they usually choose more violent and traumatic methods, such as using guns.



Davidson continued that the growing lack of jobs has likely caused a 250% increase in the numbers of males attempting suicide. In addition, he said, many of the police “justifiable shootings” may have been a result of males putting themselves into situations that they know will result in their own deaths, thus constituting a suicide instead of a homicide.

Screenings are important for African-American men and one of the strategies of the MHD is to create men’s health centers at the Northwest and Keenan Health Centers.

At Keenan, the MHD has developed enhanced services for men, including a men’s health owner’s manual, education, and a Google events calendar. Since 2009, the department has started dealing with components that lead to health disparities, he said, including referrals to health insurance coverage, job search, AODA and mental health. Keenan is open two days a week. Persons may come to the clinic without appointments or referral. MHD is planning eventually to provide the same services at the Southside Health Center.

Davidson welcomed agencies to join the Milwaukee Health Workgroup as a means to refer persons to MHD services. The Workgroup meets every

second Monday of month. Right now the Initiative is “operating on ‘fumes,” he said, since most of the participants are operating without funding and as volunteers.

He said education of clients is critical, and suggested several factors that are needed for the successful teaching of men, such as using co-facilitators to keep their conversations moving and crisp, to move with consensus, to guarantee absolute confidentiality and to use personal stories to make a point.

The family planning waiver, a Medicaid program, became available on May 1 to men ages 15 to 44 who are income-eligible. Enrollment may be made at the Keenan Health Center.

## **Milwaukee Child Abuse Prevention Services Coalition (MCAPS) Report:**

**Jan Buchler** of the Parenting Network said the MCAPS Public Policy Committee has been discussing subsidized transitional jobs currently being considered by the Legislature. It is expected there will be some programs funded, with the hope that some nonprofit organizations may be involved in the program.

The committee is also discussing the proposed new Youngstar program which is expected to improve the quality of child care centers in the state. She said the DCF website has full information on the program, which is currently being discussed by the State Legislature.

Buchler said that the Steering Committee of MCAPS is currently considering a strategic planning group report that was prepared by Quinton Cotton of the Planning Council. The report summarizes recommendations made by a small planning group concerning the future of the MCAPS mission, goals and strategies.

**Family Resource Connection.** The “Welcome Baby” program for new and expectant mothers is currently operating at seven family resource centers in the community and is expecting to expand to nine in the fall, Buchler said.

The Connection’s next meeting will be in August, with a provider fair tentatively scheduled for October 13, according to Trudy Ranallo. The fair will be an opportunity for agencies to set up exhibits and to do networking.

## **Teen Pregnancy Prevention Network report**

**Anthony McHenry** reported on the coming activities of the “Celebrating Milwaukee Families” initiative, including the “kick-off” rally on June 24<sup>th</sup> at the Washington Park bandshell and the Oct. 14 Family Unity Night program at the Italian Community Center.



**Khalil Coleman of Neu-Life Neighborhood Center outlined some of the activities of Youth Ambassadors which are working on the TPPN programs.**

**Khalil Coleman**, of the Neu-Life Neighborhood Center, explained the role of the Youth Ambassadors, a group of high school and young adults, who have been working among youth to promote the reduction of unplanned pregnancies among teens. He said the group does many activities, including distributing fliers, planning youth summits for various middle and high schools, assisting in the Family Unity Night. He offered that the Youth Ambassadors would be willing to bring their message to youth among other agencies.

McHenry said the Youth Ambassadors are effective since they “talk the language” of other young people.

McHenry also reported that **Jo Zamarripa** has resigned as co-chair of the Network due to plans to run for political office this year.

## Brighter Futures Attendance, June 15, 2010

First Name	Last Name	Agency
Jason	Hargis	ACLU of Wisconsin
Kasandra	Tarkington	AGAPE Community Center
Laura	Watt	Alma Center
Priscilla	Neal	Aurora Family Service
Cyndie	Ody-Weis	Bethany
Christina	Treiber	Big Brothers Big Sisters
Denise	Crumble	City of Milwaukee
Racquel	Bell	Community Advocates
Aricka	Evans	Community Advocates
Kenneth	Germanson	Community Advocates
Joe	Volk	Community Advocates
Al	Holmes	CVF
Wendy	Mc Carty	Dept. of Children and Families
Wendy	Weckler	Hope House
Clarence	Rice	Innerworks
Alanna	Brown	Jump at the Sun Consultants
Juanita	Valcarcel	Latino Community Center
Sandy	Dotson	Managed Health Services
Carole	Poth	Marquette Univ. Center for Peacemaking
Jeffery K.	Roman	MDG
Deborah	Bryant	Milwaukee Adolescent Health
Lenora	Shaw	Milwaukee Adolescent Health Program
Emilio	Lopez	Milwaukee Christian Center
Darryl	Davidson	Milwaukee Health Dept.
Julie	Bock	Milwaukee LGBT
Annette	Frink	Miss Annette's Tutoring Services, Inc
Odell	Chalmers	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
Tracy	Hrajnoha	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
Jody	Rhodes	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
Anita	Spencer	New Concept Self Development
Patrice	Knox	Parents Plus, Inc.
Trudy	Ranallo	Parents Plus, Inc.
Sherri	Daniels	Pathfinders
Joseph	Stanley	Pathfinders Youth Shelter
Gerry	Howze	Pearls for Teen Girls, Inc.
Joanna	Love	Penfield Childrens Center
Marge	Kreuser	Perez-Pena, LTD
Lonna	Kruse	Planning Council
Catie	Uggen	Planning Council
Thelma	Newby	SET Ministries
Anthony	Mc Henry	Silver Spring Neighborhood Center
Tuwanna	Watson	Sojourner Family Peace Center
Mike	Winters	St. Aemilian Lakeside
Jane	Ottow	St. Amelian Lakeside
Donald	Burris	St. Charles Youth & Family Svcs.
Brenda	Bell-White	State of Wis MPSIO
Khalil	Coleman	Teen Pregnancy Prevention Network
Jan	Buchler	The Parenting Network
Daphne	Jackson	United Healthcare
Nina	Cunningham	Vincent Family Center
Marissa	Lopez	Walker's Point Youth and Family Ctr.
Sam	Zajac	WI Foundation for Independent Colleges