



MINNESOTA

The **Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant** provides funding to address health problems in Minnesota ranging from cancer to foodborne infections. In 2005 the PHHS Block Grant dollars funded 11 different programs in Minnesota. These funds allowed us to protect the health of Minnesotans by using dollars **where** we needed them, and **when** we needed them. Following is a sample of some of the important Minnesota programs supported by the PHHS Block Grant:



Environmental Epidemiology

PHHS Block Grant funds allow Minnesota to collect life-saving public health data, which is used to inform policymakers at all levels of government. In 2005, funds were used to help assess the community health impact and cancer rates associated with a federal superfund site located on the Leech Lake Ojibwe Reservation. Funds were also used to prepare medical screenings and enumerate cancers among thousands of residents of northeast Minneapolis who had been exposed to locally-processed, asbestos-contaminated vermiculite over a period of several decades.



Food Security and Foodborne Illness Prevention

PHHS Block Grant funds are used to help ensure that Minnesotans can expect good communication and a quick response from local food production and protection officials in the event of a food emergency (whether unintentional or terrorism). Funds were used to identify gaps in the local food emergency response plans; to test a system for the rapid dissemination of information to food service establishments; and to train key food protection staff on emergency response efforts. Funds were also used to enhance the investigation of 683 foodborne illness complaints; to streamline communication between investigators; and to provide continuing education and training to ensure that Minnesota's outbreak investigation staff and methods remain state-of-the-art.



Community Health

In 2005, PHHS Block Grant funds were used in the development of the "Essential Local Activities," a set of activities that all local health departments in Minnesota are expected to be able to perform. Additionally, funds were used to develop a set of local performance measures to help determine how well local health departments are performing and to what extent the Essential Local Activities are being met. Data from the performance measures will help improve the accountability of Minnesota's public health system and will provide detailed and objective information to assist decision makers at all levels of government.



Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention

PHHS Block Grant funds are used to prevent obesity by promoting environments that support healthy lifestyle behaviors, such as increased physical activity. Experts from the National Center for Bicycling and Walking (NCBW) were brought to Minnesota to conduct eleven Walkable Community Workshops and to help communities develop "walkability" action plans based on their specific local needs. PHHS Block Grant funds were also used to convene a state Childhood Obesity Task Force whose charge is to make policy and intervention recommendations for government, education, industry, media, community, health care organizations, and families to address the obesity epidemic in Minnesota children.

Minnesota Department of Health

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More Walkable Communities Lead to More Healthy People in Minnesota

Issue:

Despite the benefits of physical activity, the majority of people in Minnesota are sedentary.

- 51% of Minnesota adults report not meeting the recommendation for moderate physical activity of 30 minutes/day
- 16% of Minnesota adults report no leisure time physical activity

The health care costs for a sedentary population are significant.

- An estimated \$495 million were spent in 2000 in health care costs that would have been avoided if all Minnesota adults met the physical activity recommendation

A large number of Minnesota communities are not walkable, making it difficult for people who choose to walk for transportation or recreation. Even in communities with sidewalks, walkways are sometimes in such disrepair that it makes it difficult to walk and impossible to navigate with a wheelchair or baby stroller.

Intervention:

Communities in Minnesota are in search of effective strategies to increase physical activity for their residents and workers. In 2004, experts from the National Center for Bicycling and Walking (NCBW) were brought to Minnesota to conduct 11 workshops. Eight were held in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area, and three were held in Isanti County. Results of Walkable Community Workshops include a community walkability assessment and action plan.



With assistance from NCBW, the Minnesota Department of Health, supported by Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant funds, developed a protocol to train in-state experts on how to conduct Walkable Community Workshops. The training protocol was pilot-tested in two Minnesota communities in October 2005. The workshops successfully engaged community members to develop walkable community action plans. The training protocol is being finalized and statewide trainings will begin in summer 2006.

Impact:

- By training in-state staff to conduct Walkable Community Workshops, the cost savings for each community will be \$2,500 per workshop.
- Nearly 100,000 people living in the two communities where the workshop training protocol was pilot-tested will benefit from a more walkable community.
- The long-range plan is to conduct Walkable Community Workshops in many Minnesota communities so that people all across the state may benefit from more walkable communities.

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