

APRIL 2011

WHAT'S INSIDE

May is Mental
Health Month

Men's Health

Online Health
Resource

Parks Day

Fresh Green
Buck\$

Farmers' Markets

National Public
Health Week

May is Mental Health Month

Mental health, like physical health, is important at every stage of life. Mental health can be defined as a "state of successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and to cope with adversity; from early childhood until late life" (Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General, 1999).

Mental illness is a term that refers collectively to all mental health disorders. Mental health disorders are real health conditions that can have an immense impact on individuals and families. These disorders include depression, schizophrenia, anxiety, eating disorders, conduct disorders, attention deficit, hyperactivity, autism, and Alzheimer's disease, and can be found just as commonly as diseases such as asthma, heart disease, and diabetes. The good news is that mental health disorders are very treatable and finding the right treatments saves on health care costs and, most importantly, saves lives.

According to the 2008 Community Health Assessment in Washington County, undiagnosed and untreated mental health problems in children and adults due to stigma and inaccessible resources was the second leading health problem in Washington County. The results of this assessment also show that many people in Washington County care about the mental health of its residents.

Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment (PHE) actively collaborates with many community partners around mental health, particularly youth mental health. Since 2001, PHE has supported Teen Health Fund (THF) through the Local Public Health Grant from the Minnesota Department of Health. The goal of the THF is to help communities focus on adolescent depression, awareness, suicide prevention, and healthy youth development. THF community groups, located in five Washington County communities, are comprised of a volunteer coordinator and several local community members. Examples of THF activities include: community and school education on depression awareness and suicide prevention, youth peer helper programs such as the Yellow Ribbon Lifelines and Girl Talk, depression screenings in schools, and maintaining a website for teens. Since June 2010, new partners have emerged to assist in this important community work and include The Suicide Prevention



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

May is Mental Health Month - (cont'd)

Collaborative of the greater Woodbury area. The collaborative recently held a community event called "Together It Gets Better: Youth Depression and Suicide - A Community Conversation" which gathered 220 local residents and students to hear from a youth panel, a speaker from Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE), and to share resources.

Community members in Washington County are working together to support mental health through partnerships and action. Enhanced mental health, like physical health, is good for everyone.

For more information about mental health and Washington County groups active for mental health, go to:

- Live Your Life Well - www.liveyourlifewell.org
- Mental Health America - www.nmha.org
- Suicide Awareness Voices of Education - www.save.org
- Teen Health Fund / Mental Wellness Initiative in Washington County - http://www.co.washington.mn.us/info_for_residents/public_health/teen_health/
- Washington County Youth –live healthy live happy - www.wacy.org
- Suicide Prevention Collaborative in greater Woodbury area: contact Dr. Renee Penticoff, Penticoff Community Counseling, Inc., at rpenticoff@comcast.net

Men's Health Screenings

Men have just as high a risk for certain illnesses as women and sometimes they are at greater risk. Yet men are generally more reluctant to see a physician if problems arise. Understanding health risks is the first step, and the second step is to take action to reduce the health risks by following a diet filled with whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, staying physically active, quitting smoking, and getting regular checkups. There are also simple screening tests men can have to greatly decrease their chances of a serious chronic disease, since most men's health threats are largely preventable.

The typical age for these tests is between 30-50 years, but some of them should be done sooner depending on health risk and family history.

- Prostate cancer is the most common cancer after skin cancer. It is generally slow growing but there are also faster growing prostate cancers. Screening tests can find this disease early, and may involve a digital rectal exam and a prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test.
- Testicular cancer is less common than prostate cancer and usually develops in men ages 20-54. The American Cancer Society recommends that all men have a testicular exam during their routine physical, and some doctors recommend regular self-exams.
- Colorectal cancer is the second most common cause of death from cancer, and men are at slightly higher risk for developing the disease than women. Screenings for the average man begin at 50 and involve a colonoscopy, sigmoidoscopy or virtual colonoscopy (CT scan) to detect polyps, which can be removed during the screening before they turn into cancer.



Men's Health Screenings (cont'd)

- Skin cancer, the most dangerous being melanoma, is a common cancer and risk increases with age and exposure to the sun and tanning beds. Men are more likely than women to develop melanoma, basal cell, and squamous cell skin cancer. The American Cancer Society and the American Academy of Dermatology recommend regular skin self-exams to check for changes in marks on the skin including shape, color and size. Skin exams by a health professional are also recommended as part of a routine cancer check up.
- Hypertension, or high blood pressure risk increases with age. If left untreated, hypertension can lead to serious consequences such as stroke. A normal reading is below 120 over 80. Blood pressure is checked routinely at medical office visits, and follow-up may be necessary. Several pharmacies also have blood pressure machines for a quick check.
- Starting at 35, men need regular cholesterol screenings to monitor LDLs (bad cholesterol), HDLs (good cholesterol), and triglycerides. The results of that screening can tell a physician what needs to be done to decrease the risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.
- One third of Americans with diabetes don't know they have it. Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, blindness, nerve damage, and impotence. When found early, diabetes can be controlled and complications avoided. A fasting glucose test is most often used, but some doctors are turning to the A1C test, which tells how your body has controlled blood sugar over time. Screening should be done every three years starting at age 45.
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that causes AIDS and can be symptomless for many years. If there is a possibility of exposure, ask a doctor about the blood tests. Abstinence or always using a latex barrier is necessary to avoid getting any kind of sexually transmitted disease, including HIV.
- Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that can damage the optic nerve and cause blindness. A simple screening for abnormally high pressure in the eye can be done during a routine eye exam. Tests for glaucoma are based on age and personal risk: ages 40-54, every 1-3 years; ages 55-64, every 1-2 years; ages 65 and older, every 6-12 months.
- Osteoporosis: All men ages 50-70 with risk factors for osteoporosis should discuss screening with their doctor. Risk factors include:
 - Drinking a large amount of alcohol
 - Family history of osteoporosis
 - History of hormone treatment for prostate cancer
 - Low body weight
 - Smoking
 - Too little calcium in the diet

For more information on health screenings, contact your health care provider.

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institutes of Health (NIH), WebMD

Announcing a New Online Health Resource!



A new health resource website has been launched with information on local efforts to address chronic disease through improved nutrition and physical activity opportunities, and tobacco cessation programs. The Living

Healthy in Washington County initiative, part of the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), is designed to address health care costs, as well as support and inspire residents to lead longer, healthier lives.

Learn more about each of the following focus areas in Washington County:

- Active Living
- Healthy Foods Closer to Home
- Healthy Foods in Child Care and Preschool Settings
- Breastfeeding: Healthy from the Start
- Healthy Foods in Schools
- Resource and Referral
- Worksite Wellness
- Links to additional resources, a calendar of events and more!



To access the Living Healthy in Washington County website, go to www.livinghealthywc.org.



The Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), an integral part of Minnesota's nation-leading 2008 health reform law, strives to help Minnesotans lead longer, healthier lives by preventing the chronic disease risk factors of tobacco use and exposure, poor nutrition and physical inactivity. For more information, visit <http://www.health.state.mn.us/healthreform/ship>.

Washington County Explore Your Parks Day



Get outdoors and explore Washington County Parks on Saturday, June 4, 2011! Entrance to all Washington County Parks is free throughout the day! Combine physical activity, health, fun, and the great outdoors by attending one of the many activities being offered.

Join the community at Lake Elmo Park Reserve for the 1K/5K fun walk/run, rock wall, archery, canoe, and kayak demonstrations and much more! Watch the Washington County Parks website for more details:

http://www.co.washington.mn.us/info_for_residents/parks_division/programs_and_events/

Fresh Green Buck\$ Coming to a Store Near You!

Fresh Green Buck\$ is a unique pilot program that will help food shelves provide fresh produce to the hungry year round. Festival Foods in Hugo will conduct a pilot test of Fresh Green Buck\$ in April with the Hosanna Food Shelf. Festival will display Fresh Green Buck\$ in their store for shoppers to pick up \$5, \$10, or \$20 Buck\$ coupons that are taken to the checkout counter where they are added to the shoppers bill. One hundred percent of the dollar amount of the Buck\$ donated are then given to the food shelf to buy fresh fruits and vegetables from the grocer for food shelf clients.



Ann DeLaVergne, Food System Organizer from the Land Stewardship Project, noted that, "Fresh produce is rarely available in food shelves, especially after the growing season ends. With Fresh Green Buck\$, food shelves will be able to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, which will provide healthy food choices for the hungry year round." Evidence shows that a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables reduces obesity and obesity related diseases.

This project is a direct result of the Statewide Health Improvement Program's Community Nutrition Action Committees (CNAC) working throughout Washington County. Other CNAC initiatives include establishing community gardens in Forest Lake and Hugo, the creation of recipes for food shelves, and taping of cooking demonstrations to show how to use fresh fruits and vegetables.

To learn more about CNAC, Fresh Green Buck\$, community gardens and community kitchens in your area, contact Ann DeLaVergne at 651-329-0125 or at annd@landstewardshipproject.org.

Farmers' Markets in Washington County



There are many farmers' markets throughout Washington County that provide fresh fruits, vegetables, and other products that are locally grown. Farmers' markets allow consumers access to produce that has been picked at the peak of flavor, preserving its nutritional content.

To find farmers' markets in Washington County, go to: Living Healthy in Washington County – <http://www.livinghealthywc.org/Links.html>

For more information on farmers' markets in Minnesota, as well as information on local foods, farms and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) opportunities, go to: Minnesota Grown - www.minnesotagrown.com and Land Stewardship Project - www.landstewardshipproject.org



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Equal Employment
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National Public Health Week Spotlights Importance of Safety



**Safety is NO Accident:
Live Injury-Free**

National Public Health Week
April 4-10, 2011 • www.nphw.org

Every year, nearly 150,000 people die from injuries, and almost 30 million people are injured seriously enough to go to the emergency room.¹ Chances are good that you or someone you know are among these statistics—a friend who suffered a fatal

injury from a car crash, an elderly family member who broke a bone from a fall, or a coworker harmed on the job.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 30% of potential years of life are lost because of injuries that could have been prevented. What's more, traffic injuries alone result in more than \$200 billion in annual U.S. health expenditures. Overall, injuries account for 12% of medical care spending, totaling as much as \$69 billion per year.

The American Public Health Association (APHA) is encouraging all Americans to work together to make our nation safer and injury-free. From April 4-10, APHA recognizes National Public Health Week and the theme "Safety is NO Accident: Live Injury Free", as an opportunity to empower our family, friends, neighbors, and perhaps most importantly, ourselves to live safer lives.

"National Public Health Week helps educate Americans about ways to live healthier lives," said Georges C. Benjamin, MD, FACP, FACEP (E), executive director of the American Public Health Association. "Our ultimate goal is to make America the healthiest nation in one generation. Taking simple steps within our families and our communities will help prevent injuries and therefore create safer places to live."

Increasing awareness on how to live safer and injury-free lives is the first step in helping to create a healthier nation. For more information about National Public Health Week, and for tips on how to be safe at work, at home, at play, and in the community, visit www.nphw.org.

¹ American Public Health Association