

JANUARY 2010

WHAT'S INSIDE

Transportation
and Its Relation
to Health

Washington
County SHIP

Eating Disorders

National Nutrition
Month®

Teen Brain
Presentation

SHIP Interest
Form

H1N1 Clinic
Information

Transportation and Its Relation to Health

The design of transportation systems within the built environment has a tremendous impact on population health. While the growth of extensive roads and highways in past decades has provided an efficient mode for getting from one place to another, it has also negatively impacted health for people of all ages. Below are some of the key health issues impacted by land use and transportation decisions.

[Access to health care](#) In a recent survey by the Transportation Networking Group in Washington County, over 25% of respondents missed a medical appointment due to lack of transportation.¹ Despite the availability of some specialized transportation services within the county, accessing health care typically requires owning and operating a vehicle. For those without transportation or those who have limited transportation options, regular access to health care services is a problem. This includes dental services and the ability to pick up medication from a pharmacy, as needed.

[Physical Activity](#) Design of suburban communities in the past has typically been geared to automobile traffic. City and township features have been characterized by: no sidewalks; large busy intersections with multiple car lanes; schools located on busy roads without access to sidewalks or trails; and lack of public transit stops which are accessible by walking or biking routes. Communities are spread out with limited connectivity to other communities and services.²

With childhood obesity rates on the rise and with approximately 62% of the adults in the county being overweight and obese, the need for increased opportunities for physical activity within the built environment is critical to improving overall health.

[Mental Health](#) An individual's mental health can also be affected by the level of mobility he or she has. If access to transportation is limited, independence is reduced and isolation can occur. A recent county transportation survey revealed that 34% of respondents felt isolated or depressed because they did not have transportation in the past year.¹



Transportation and Its Relation to Health - (cont'd)

As the population ages within the county, more seniors—particularly those over 85—will lose their ability to drive. The result is often limited regular access to services, loss of social independence, reduced mobility, and isolation. A formerly independent person is now dependent on others for community access which oftentimes affects mental health.

Safety Traffic safety is also a serious Public Health problem. Injuries and fatalities involving motor vehicles, pedestrians and biking accidents relate in part to the design of transportation systems. Roads and highways are designed for fast and easy travel with multiple lanes, no sidewalks and distant and minimal crosswalks. Safety is of particular concern to pedestrians and bicyclists in sprawling neighborhoods where there are insufficient safe routes to walk and bike.³ County residents expressed safety concerns about crossing intersections and walking along busy roads in the 2008 Washington County Community Health Assessment.⁴



Air Quality Several health problems, including asthma and respiratory illness, heart disease and cancer, are linked in part to air pollution. Air pollutants, including carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter (which is found primarily in diesel exhaust) are found along high traffic roads.⁵ In the Washington County 2008 Residential Survey, 42% of respondents had a moderate or major concern about outdoor air quality.⁶

Positive Trends Despite the negative health effects of poor transportation design and limited access to transportation for many individuals, there are positive trends occurring nationwide and locally to improve community health. A few include:

- Movement toward using health impact assessments in community design
- Enhanced training of city, county and metro area planners on integrating health policies and practices into comprehensive planning
- Focus on designing safer and more livable communities for all ages which includes transportation design
- Increased number of agencies and resources focusing on transportation planning for an aging population



Transportation and Its Relation to Health - (cont'd)

Limited transportation emerged as a key public health problem in the 2008 Washington County Community Health Assessment⁴ conducted by the Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment. The Department has been involved with reviewing city and township comprehensive plans for integration of planning for community health and is currently working to promote existing transportation services within the county.

Resources for More Information

- American Public Health Association: <http://www.apha.org>
- T4 America: <http://t4america.org>
- Health Impact Assessments: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm>
- Vital Aging Network (VAN): See Resources for Vital Living, Transportation. <http://www.vital-aging-network.org>
- Complete Streets: <http://www.completestreets.org>
- Walking School Bus: <http://www.walkingschoolbus.org>

Sources:

1. Washington County Transportation Survey, Transportation Networking Group & Community Thread, June 2008. Available at: http://www.communitythreadmn.org/uploads/pdfs/2008_Transportation_Study_Report.pdf
2. Ewing R, Pendall R, Chen D. Measuring Sprawl and Its Impact, Washington D.C., Smart Growth America, 2002.
3. Surface Transportation Policy Project, Main Streets, Pedestrian Safety, Health and Federal transportation Spending, Washington D.C., Surface Transportation Policy Project, 2002.
4. Washington County 2008 Community Health Assessment, Washington county Department of Public Health and Environment. http://www.co.washington.mn.us/info_for_residents/public_health_and_environment/community_health_assessment/
5. Kim JJ, Huen K, Adams S, et al. 2008. Residential Traffic and Children's Respiratory Health. Environmental Health Perspective. 2008. 116.1274-1279.
6. 2008 Washington County Residential Survey, Washington County. http://www.co.washington.mn.us/client_files/documents/adm/ResidentSurvey/2008-WashCoResidSurveyfinal.pdf

Washington County Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP)

Vision: Washington County: A community committed to active, healthy lifestyles.

Mission: To inspire and support residents to live longer, healthier lives through policies, systems and environmental changes that increase opportunities for physical activity, healthier food options and decreased tobacco use and exposure.

The state of Minnesota is committed to the health and wellness of its residents and has created the Statewide Health Improvement Program, also known as SHIP. This program provides funding over the next two years for counties to work through community initiatives to address two of Minnesota's major health issues, tobacco and obesity. A Community Leadership Team has selected several areas to focus on such as: school nutrition, worksite wellness, healthcare resources and referral, breastfeeding support, community physical activity, nutrition access and nutrition in childcare settings. The Community Leadership Team is looking for community members and organizations for partnership on SHIP efforts. See the attached interest form for more information and to register.

For general information about SHIP in Minnesota go to the Minnesota Department of Health's website at: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/healthreform/ship/index.html>.

Eating Disorders : There's help. There's hope.



The Emily Program

In the United States, as many as 10 million females and 1 million males are fighting a life and death battle with an eating disorder such as anorexia or bulimia, while millions more are struggling with a binge eating disorder.

One local resource for these disorders is The Emily Program which has an office in Stillwater and throughout the metro area. The Emily Program provides care and treatment for individuals struggling with eating disorders. According to Jillian Croll, Director of Education, Research and Program Development, "Three to five percent of women and girls struggle with an eating disorder. If you apply this to the general population in the Twin Cities, that is at least 75,000 people. We currently treat around 2,000 clients and another 1,000 are treated at another facility. That leaves around 72,000 people out there who are struggling with food."

Since 1993, The Emily Program has provided a personalized, multidisciplinary team approach to those that are struggling with anorexia, bulimia, compulsive overeating and binge eating disorders. Current clients at the Emily Program range in age from age 8-78. "This dispels the myth that it's just young girls who have eating disorders," noted Croll. "Eating disorders cut across all races, genders and incomes. We work with a lot of people who are in their 30's and 40's and struggling with food. It's not just a teen issue."

Workshops and community education seminars to assist parents, schools, and communities in understanding the signs, symptoms and effects of eating disorders and how to address the interface between obesity and eating disorders are available through The Emily Program Foundation at www.emilyprogramfoundation.org. For more information call the Emily Program at 651-645-5323 or go to www.emilyprogram.com.

For more information on eating disorders, go to:

Eating Disorders Anonymous
<http://eatingdisordersanonymous.org/>

Mayo Clinic
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/eating-disorders/DS00294/DSECTION=symptoms>

National Eating Disorders Association
<http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org>

National Mental Health Information Center
<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/ken98-0047/default.asp>

March is National Nutrition Month®

Nutrition from the Ground Up

Nutrition is in the spotlight often these days for good reason. Research has clearly shown that a healthy diet helps prevent many chronic diseases. The American Dietetic Association's nutrition month 2010 campaign talks about the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. Their slogan "From the Ground Up" means many things:

- nutrition as the basis for good health
- nutrition basics such as eating more fruits and vegetables
- nutrition as a building block for child growth when paired with physical activity

From a public health perspective, good eating habits and nutrition education begins at birth, and the healthy habits learned in childhood can last forever. Healthy habits promote eating nutrient-dense foods, combined with balance, variety and enjoyment. Unhealthy habits can encourage overeating or poor food choices. If food choices are limited, such as access to healthy foods or one-size-fits-all menu portions, it becomes more difficult to eat for health and enjoyment. Over time these types of unhealthy habits have been contributors to the current obesity epidemic.



That's where the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) comes in. Nutrition month messages fit nicely with the emphasis on nutrition and physical activity to prevent obesity in our schools and community through SHIP. There are three SHIP interventions in Washington County which focus on nutrition for healthier children and adults: nutrition in child care, nutrition in the schools, and better access to healthy foods, especially fruits and vegetables, for all community members. These might translate to farm to school programs for school food service, a new way to teach children about nutrition for childcare providers, or a community garden in the neighborhood. One goal of SHIP is to make policy, systems, and environmental changes that support everyone eating better to decrease obesity and other chronic diseases. These changes can help individuals build good nutrition "from the ground up".

For more information on National Nutrition Month®, go to www.eatright.org/nnm. For additional information on SHIP go to the Minnesota Department of Health's website at: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/healthreform/ship/index.html>.

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**NOTE FROM THE
EDITOR:**

You are receiving
Washington County's
HealthWave Newsletter by
request.

If you have any questions
regarding your subscription
or want to receive e-mail
reminders when a new issue
is released, please e-mail:

PHE@co.washington.mn.us

Include "Healthwave" in the
subject line.

Equal Employment Opportunity
/Affirmative Action

A Work in Progress: New Insights into the Teen Brain

New research shows that the human brain is still rapidly developing and changing during adolescence and young adulthood. This means that teens process emotions, control impulses and make judgments about tricky situations differently than their parents.

Learn how the teen brain is different from the adult brain. Join Dr. Ken Winters, Ph.D., as he provides an entertaining and informative presentation for parents, teens and young adults.

Presenter: Dr. Ken Winters, Ph.D.

**Date: Thursday, February 18, 2010
6:30—8:00 PM**

**Location: Mahtomedi High School
Chautauqua Fine Arts Center
8000 75th St. N.
Mahtomedi, MN 55115**

SPACE IS LIMITED



Training is free, but registration is required. To register, [click here](#).

For registration questions: call 651-407-2014 and refer to class #1057

Dr. Winters is Director of the Center of Adolescent Substance Abuse Research, professor at the University of Minnesota, and Senior Scientist with the Treatment Research Institute, located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Certificates of Attendance will be available.



Together we can

Sponsored the Chemical Health Action Collaborative (CHAC) in Washington County, and Mahtomedi Area Community Education. Funding made possible by the Andersen Corporation and Fred C. and Katherine B. Andersen Foundations and the Drug Free Communities Support Program (fiscal agent Human Services, Inc.) from the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Local Interest Form for the Washington County State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

SHIP funding will require community partnerships to help guide the implementation process for strategies to address obesity and tobacco use. Please indicate below your interest in being involved. **Thank You!**

___ I am interested in being on a local team to implement SHIP prevention strategies in Washington Co.

___ I am not sure if I am able to help out at this time, please keep me informed of local activities through email notices.

___ My organization, (*name*) _____ is interested in being involved and I will be the contact person for receiving SHIP information.

Please provide contact information below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

1. Please indicate if you or your organization would like to be involved in:

___ local efforts ___ county wide efforts ___ both local and countywide

2. Please list the specific community and/or school district where you or your organization would be interested in participating in SHIP activities.

3. Which of the following SHIP topics would you or your organization be most interested in working on to implement in your community? Check all that apply:

___ Improving School Nutrition Policies ___ Worksite Wellness Programs

___ Increasing physical activity opportunities in the community

___ Improving access to nutritious foods such as fruits and vegetables in the community

___ Supporting healthy eating practices in licensed child care and pre-school settings

___ Supporting breastfeeding practices within health care settings, worksites or the community

___ Developing a comprehensive health resource referral system

Please send or email to: Jean Streetar, Washington County Dept of Public Health and Environment, 14949 62nd St North, Room 450, Stillwater MN 55082, jean.streetar@co.washington.mn.us
Phone: 651-430-6786, Fax: 651-430-6730



H1N1 Flu Vaccination Clinics

Open to all children and adults

Reserve your vaccination by calling the Flu Message Center at 651-430-6820. There is no charge for the vaccination.

The following scheduled clinics will run from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

- Washington County Government Center
14949 62nd Street North, Stillwater
Wednesday, January 20th
Tuesday, January 26th
- Headwaters Forest Lake Service Center
19955 Forest Road North, Forest Lake
Monday, January 25th
- Cottage Grove Service Center
13000 Ravine Parkway South, Cottage Grove
Thursday, January 21st
Wednesday, January 27th



Vaccine will be offered in both the nasal spray (Flu Mist) and injected shot forms.

Clinics are free to everyone, proof of insurance is not necessary. Residents that have health care insurance may consider vaccination through their primary care provider.

A parent or legal guardian must accompany and sign a consent form for any child younger than 18 years of age.

Does your child need a second dose?

Children 9 years of age and younger need two doses approximately 4 weeks apart.

If your child had their first dose in late November or early December, this is a great opportunity to receive their second dose.



Questions? Visit www.co.washington.mn.us/flu or call 651-430-6655