

March 13, 2000

NON-CIRCULATING

Grant Money Available for Public Health Innovations in Texas

In 1999, the 76th Texas Legislature (HB1976) created the Texas Department of Health Innovation Grants from a significant portion of funds received by the State of Texas from the recent tobacco legislation. These funds are designated to bring about measurable public health improvements at the community level, using innovations that can be replicated throughout Texas.

Approximately \$8,400,000 is expected to be available for three equally funded goals (referred to as "Parts"):

Part I. Grants to Develop and Demonstrate Cost-effective Prevention and Intervention Strategies for Improving Public Health Outcomes:

Research on the Epidemiology and Causes of Childhood Obesity. Up to \$450,000 is available for this effort. Among children 6 to 11 years of age, 11% are overweight. The prevalence of overweight children in the years 1988 through 1994 was double that of the previous decade. Serious complications such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer can occur if obesity persists into adulthood.

Funded projects addressing childhood obesity should include the following:

- A quantitative assessment of the burden of obesity in Texas children, done according to scientific standards, using accepted epidemiologic methods
- An assessment of the prevalence of obesity in Texas in various geographic and demographic groups
- A model for an ongoing surveillance system on childhood obesity and recommendations for the frequency with which data should be collected on heights and weights of school-aged children
- A detailed description of the risk factors for obesity in Texas
- An investigation of the underlying causes of childhood obesity
- A definition of the role of nutrition and daily habits on the incidence of childhood obesity in Texas

Dramatization of Public Health Problems and Community Action. A total of \$90,000 is available for projects that educate community leaders and others about the importance of their participation in public health activities. Only a tiny proportion of the Texas population understands the nature of public health and its role in their lives. Projects should include the following:

- Audio, visual, or written media dramatizing the day-to-day importance and positive impact of public health activities in Texas
- A focus on public health problems and activities at the local or community level
- A description of the applicant's ability to research and understand the nature of public health problems and actions in communities, details of the nature of materials created, and manner in which materials will be used

Comprehensive Descriptive Analysis of Morbidity and Mortality. Up to \$375,000 is available for intensive studies of morbidity and mortality in Texas. These studies should

- Analyze in detail the causes of morbidity and mortality in Texas for a period of not less than 30 years by geography, age, race, ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics
- Identify overall trends in and specific causes for Texas morbidity and mortality over the study period, with an emphasis on minority populations
- Specify the sources of the data to be used in the analyses, the scope of the analyses, the approach and methods to be used, and the expertise and experience of the analysts

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Also in this issue:

April 3-9 is Public Health Week

Approximately \$1,885,000 is available for other Part I Innovation grants.

Part II. Grants to Local Communities to Address Health Disparities in Minority Populations: Minority populations are African Americans, American Indians, Asians, and Hispanics. Applicants may address subgroups within these classifications (eg, Korean-Americans), as appropriate.

Prevention in the Minority Youth Population. A total of \$550,000 is available for projects that investigate and articulate the underlying causes of risky health behaviors among minority youths, including (but not limited to) early sexual activity, substance abuse, violence, and behaviors that lead to diseases that disproportionately affect minority populations.

The inquiry should include epidemiologic and demographic analyses that elucidate the underlying causes of risky behaviors in individuals. Projects may involve as large an area as the entire state, or as small

as a single city, but should be conducted in areas of Texas that contain a significant proportion of minority population.

Approximately \$2,250,000 is available for other Part II grants.

Part III. Grants to Local Communities for Essential Public Health Services. *Approximately \$2,800,000 is available for Part III grants.*



Information on the funding and application process is available on the TDH Web site: www.tdh.state.tx.us/innovation. The deadline for applications is April 18, 2000.

For more information contact Gyl Kovalik, TDH Office of Policy and Planning, by email: gyl.kovalik@tdh.state.tx.us.

For information about disease prevention and public health, visit the TDH Web site at <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us>.

April 3-9 is Public Health Week

Over the past 170 years, the efforts of public health workers have added 25 years to the life expectancy of the average Texan. Public health efforts have eradicated diseases such as smallpox worldwide and eliminated polio from the Western Hemisphere. The work of public health professionals protects all Texans by assuring safe food and clean water, providing immunizations, regulating health professionals and facilities, preventing and controlling diseases in humans and animals, and educating the public about healthy behaviors that result in a longer, happier, healthier life.

Events are planned throughout Texas to celebrate Public Health Week, April 3-9. Here is a list of some of the activities local and regional health departments had planned by the time this issue was published.

Austin

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) has been working with Seton hospital and with health professionals from other organizations on a program that will provide selected health services to students in the district. The Austin Department of Health and Human Services (ADHHS) will help AISD kick off this district-wide school health program during Public Health Week. The event will be an entertaining health assembly to inform children and their parents about public health issues. Information on the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Shots Across Texas, and other public health programs will be available at all AISD schools.

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The Texas Public Health Association (TPHA) will hold its annual conference in Austin during Public Health Week. Conference activities include a reception for Texas legislators. TPHA, the Texas Department of Health (TDH), and ADHHS will host a public health forum to be aired on KLRU-TV on March 31 and April 2. TDH Commissioner William "Reyn" Archer III, MD, and pediatrician Beth Nauert, MD, are among the guest panelists, who will discuss nutrition, obesity, and fitness issues as they pertain to children.

Dallas

A presentation on the state of public health and a proclamation are planned for a Dallas City Council meeting. Immunization drives, health fairs, and CHIP enrollment events will take place throughout April. The city health department also is working with the public library system to distribute health information on the bookmobiles as well.

El Paso

The TDH Regional Office in El Paso will host public health awareness activities in May instead of April because they will be moving during public health week. Conferences will be held May 8 through 12 in schools in Brady, Sonora, and Presidio. Topics addressed by student programs will include teen pregnancy, obesity, oral health, diabetes, and prevention of cancer and tobacco use. Evening workshops for parents will cover these topics, as well as parenting skills. Grant writing seminars will be held to assist local groups in attaining funding.

Ft. Worth

The Ft. Worth Health Department will kick off a "Walk for the Health of It" program that emphasizes fitness, nutrition, and safety.

Irving

Several activities are planned for Public Health Week: a public health display in City Hall, an April 15 outreach to sign eligible children up for CHIP, and a Latino wellness fair on April 19.

Laredo

During Spring Break, March 13-17, health officials in Laredo will host Teen Week, which will include one-day presentations in different locations throughout the city. Topics of discussion include abstinence, alcohol and drug abuse, and suicide prevention. During Public Health Week, winners of a poster contest will be announced, a proclamation will be read at a City Council meeting, a quilt made during Teen Week will be displayed in the mall, a walk-a-thon will take place, and a health fair will be held in the mall. Musical groups and disk jockeys will provide entertainment for the fair, which will feature presentations on nutrition, fad diets, and tobacco prevention and cessation.

Lubbock

Texas Tech University is planning to do a series of newspaper and television announcements on public health issues. The City of Lubbock will host clinics and health fairs emphasizing immunizations, as well as water and food safety. Health tips and a "Food for Thought" feature will air on a local television studio that publicizes health inspection ratings.

Tarrant County

The Tarrant County Public Health Department (TCPHD) has plans for activities that will continue throughout April. A feature on public health issues will appear in the *Tarrant County Physician*. On April 4, "Breaking Through Languages" is the health topic to be offered at the Public Health Center in Fort Worth.

TPHA will hold its annual conference in Austin during Public Health Week.

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The public is invited to tour the TCPHD North Texas Regional Laboratory April 6, 7 or 14. Throughout April this laboratory will offer the public free "total solids" testing (a measure of types of metals and minerals present in drinking water).

An estimated 20 teen finalists will have their videos screened at the Teen Video Fest 2000 gala, to be held on April 6 at the Will Rogers Auditorium in Fort Worth. The Video Fest will address the six at-risk behaviors identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

On April 8, the Susan G. Komer Race for the Cure marathon in support of breast cancer research will take place in downtown Fort Worth. The City of Arlington will host its health fair on April 26.

Public health services offered to celebrate Public Health Week include Shots for Tots immunization clinics scheduled for April 15 at the Fort Worth Stockyards Station to commemorate Infant Immunization Week.

Activities planned for specific audiences include the following. On April 7 at the University of Texas Health Science Center (UTHSC), the TCPHD director will hold a press conference for students and government officials that will address the state of the county's health. On April 27 TCPHD will host "Corporate Champions of Health," a forum highlighting local corporations with successful employee wellness programs.

For further information about these and other Public Health Week activities statewide, contact Andrea Morrow of the TDH Communications and Special Health Initiatives Program at (512) 458-7111 x6585, email: andrea.morrow@tdh.state.tx.us.

