



MENDOCINO COUNTY
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY AND
MENDOCINO COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

NEWS RELEASE

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MENDOCINO COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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***PUBLIC HEALTH CREATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES
BOARD APPROVES RECEIPT OF FUNDING TO REDUCE HEALTHCARE COSTS AND
PREVALENCE OF CHRONIC DISEASE***

Tuesday, March 27, 2012 the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to accept a grant from the Public Health Institute to implement programs under the California Community Transformation Initiative. The grant awarded to Public Health's Prevention and Planning Unit of the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) will address system, policy and environmental changes that will reduce risk factors for chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, etc. Reducing these risk factors will promote health, reduce health disparities and lower health care costs for Mendocino County residents, especially those who experience the greatest burden of chronic disease.

In her presentation to the Supervisors, HHS Director, Stacey Cryer, explained that The Community Transformation Initiative is part of a nation-wide strategy to promote healthier lifestyles and communities. As part of Health Care Reform, the focus of the initiative is to decrease health care costs through effective prevention activities targeted at healthier communities and lifestyles, and less prevalence of chronic diseases. Funded by the federal Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, known as the "CDC", the grant will be administered at the state level by the Public Health Institute in partnership with the California Department of Public Health. Mendocino County, too small to apply for the funding directly, is one of 42 California counties included in the Public Health Institute proposal. Mendocino County will receive \$237,000 in the first year and \$1.2 million over five years. Supervisor McCowen commented that "originally this item was going to come to us on consent but I thought it was worth highlighting that even in these bleak economic times, we can move forward with some positive initiatives."

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OF CHRONIC DISEASE - CONTINUED

In Mendocino County, the four focus areas will be consistent with the statewide initiative yet tailored to the needs of county residents. Smoke Free Living will be promoted through community workshops, meetings and social media about the need for protecting tenants of multi-unit housing units from the drift of secondhand smoke. The goal will be to assist housing complexes to develop smoke-free policies and designated smoking areas. The goal of Healthy Eating and Active Living is to reduce access to sugary drinks by promoting healthy beverage standards in community facilities and organizations through a Rethink Your Drink Campaign. Clinical and Community Preventive Services will increase the pool of Community Health Workers and promoters through training and linking them to health care organizations. Lastly, the Healthy and Safe Physical Environment component will focus on Safe Routes To Schools projects, working with schools in the county that are high risk for collisions and accidents. The additional benefits of creating safe routes to schools is the increase in physical activity by having safe walking and biking paths in neighborhoods and communities surrounding schools.

The core belief behind this initiative is that communities have the power to shape their own health and well-being. All four focus areas will include and engage multiple cities, county agencies, community organizations, schools, residents, parents, and youth as well as various socio-economic groups, ethnic minorities and other disparate groups. According to HHSA Director Cryer, "this grant will position Mendocino County for the future as health care reform is around the corner and it is all about prevention." This is an opportunity for Mendocino County to change the health environment, promote healthy lifestyles and create health equity for all residents. "Promoting healthy lifestyles is a cost effective way to reduce future healthcare costs and improve community health," concluded Cryer.

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