

Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mendocino Organizations Raising People's Health (MORPH) Summit held at Public Health

Mendocino County community members attended an all-day Mendocino Organizations Raising People's Health (MORPH) Summit at Public Health in Ukiah on January 27th to focus on new ways to reduce and control risk factors for heart disease in Mendocino County. Attendees came from all over the County to share current and envision new ways to "make healthy choice the easy choice," as put by Summit Organizer Linda Helland, Administrator in the Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency.



Heart disease is the leading cause of death in California, accounting for about 50,000 deaths annually. Heart disease is preventable. Reducing risk factors such as high blood, high cholesterol, diabetes, overweight/obesity, physical inactivity, and smoking can help decrease heart disease risk.

While participating in a “gallery walk,” MORPH Summit attendees were surprised by the fact that Mendocino County’s rate of heart failure deaths is among the highest in the State (32.1 per 100,000 vs. 14.0) and the related facts that 37.1% of Mendocino County’s population has been diagnosed with high blood pressure (compared to 26.1% of the State’s population) and that Mendocino County’s smoking rate is much higher than the State average (26% vs. 14%).



Attendees were motivated to consider how our local communities could become healthier communities. Jed Diamond, PhD, gave a presentation describing the “Heart Healthy Benefits of Walking” and Marvin Trotter, M.D. educated attendees about “The Effects of High Blood Pressure on Cardiovascular Disease.” Jed Diamond encouraged attendees to walk 10,000 steps a day. "It's the single most important way we can

change our mental and physical health," he said. Marvin Trotter emphasized heart health. As he put it, "you are only as healthy as your arteries."



Practicing what they learned, attendees participated in a walk led by Dr. Diamond and networked over a heart-healthy lunch.

The goal of the MORPH Summit was to agree on an overall goal for Mendocino County and to brainstorm solutions to health issues related to heart disease in Mendocino County. Attendees collaborated on and committed to the goal: By January 2015, we will reduce the percent of Mendocino County residents diagnosed with heart disease to 7.5% from the current rate of 8.7%. "While this may sound like a modest goal," Mary Williamson, Project Director of the Mendocino County Tobacco Control Program said, "it represents a reduction of more than a 1000 cases of heart disease in our County, which is very significant savings in terms of healthy lives and health costs."

The MORPH Summit was sponsored by the California Collaborative for Chronic Disease Prevention (CCCDP), an integrated chronic disease project of the California Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program, implemented in collaboration with the

California Smokers' Helpline and other California Programs to enhance local chronic disease prevention and health promotion.

CCCDP is working with the Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) to develop and implement shared strategies in the community, health care systems and work place to improve access to evidence-based community chronic disease self-management, physical activity programs, tobacco cessation resources, and to create environments supportive of individual lifestyle behaviors.

The MORPH Summit was put on by HHS staff from the Prevention and Planning Unit (PAPU) of Community Health Services. The Prevention and Planning Unit uses local data and evidence-based best practices to address individual, social and environmental factors that underlie and contribute to chronic disease in Mendocino County. Armand Brint, PAPU Manager, points out the importance of hosting events such as the Summit. He says, "The MORPH Summit is a great example of Mendocino County's collaborative spirit. Individuals and organizations committed to everything from increased educational programs to policy initiatives in a concerted effort to reduce heart disease."

Mendocino County HHS also collaborates with the CCCDP and with Mendocino County community members to sponsor Healthier Living Workshops. The workshops are held several times a year in Ukiah, Willits, Fort Bragg and Point Arena.

More information about the Workshops can be found at www.cahealthierliving.org.

For more information call Annie Robinson, Project Coordinator, (707) 472-2750.

More information about the HHS Prevention and Planning Unit is at

<http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/hhsa/chs/prevention.htm>.

For more information about the Mendocino County Tobacco Control Program's policy initiatives, call Mary Williamson, Project Director, and (707) 472-2695.

For help quitting smoking, call the California Smokers' Helpline at 1-800-NO-BUTTS (1-800-662-8887).

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