

SAN ANTONIO METROPOLITAN HEALTH DISTRICT



332 WEST COMMERCE
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78205-2489
PHONE (210) 207-8790 FAX (210) 207-8999

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Dear Partners in Health:

One of the issues dominating concerns in our society from individuals all the way to the highest level of government continues to be this country's health care system. While not one and the same, public health and health care are inevitably connected. Strategies may differ as to solutions for the obvious perils our health care system faces, yet virtually everyone involved in the debate agrees on the importance of prevention to control and change the course of a system that is in serious disarray.

Thus, it is imperative that as local, state, and national conversations move forward on the topic of health care, the root causes of public health issues continue to be examined and extracted to make relevant and significant improvements on both of these fronts. That is the goal and purpose of this annual report. Health Profiles is a compilation of data and its analysis that is a valuable tool for assessing this community's health status.

As you review the demographics and statistics of this report, take note of trends consistent with previous years as well as the correlation of data such as maternal and infant health disparities, educational attainment, and poverty. There are some conclusions that are undeniable and, thus, are in need of multi-prong approaches that extend beyond the traditional boundaries of public health.

Hence, we are encouraged by and applaud recent efforts in the community to address issues such as illiteracy, high school dropouts, economic disparities, child abuse and neglect, premature births, fitness and others. However, it is critical for these efforts to include Metro Health when strategies are developed in order to bring in a public health perspective to these issues.

In the year since the Health Profiles 2006 report, your public health team continued its prevention mission by:

- Completing the transfer of clinical preventive health services to the University Health System and increasing the potential for comprehensive care
- Creating a Hemoglobin A1C (Diabetes) Registry to monitor the prevalence of diabetes in our community
- Obtaining a grant to form the San Antonio Tobacco Prevention & Control Coalition to focus on cessation and prevention

- Initiating a community conversation on chronic health conditions such as diabetes and obesity through a two-hour, live broadcast with public broadcast partner KLRN-TV

These enterprises in combination with sustained efforts to respond to emergency situations like hurricanes Gustav and Ike translate into not only prevention but a continual focus on serving underinsured and uninsured populations. Prevention is the key for both of these groups as well as those fortunate enough to have health care insurance. Yet, prevention for many of the analyzed categories in this report involves much more than a preemptive strike in any individual area. It requires a range of social, economic and community changes.

We value your interest in community health. Your review of this year's Health Profiles is greatly appreciated and I hope that it provides a good summary of the public health challenges impacting our community. Please share this information with others and continue to partner with us in our search for solutions to the issues we are facing.

Fernando A. Guerra, M.D., M.P.H.
Director of Health

Note: this report is available online at www.sanantonio.gov/health.