



# Strategies for Health

Metro Health • San Antonio's Public Health Team • Annual Report 2014

## HEALTHY LIVING FIGHTS CHRONIC DISEASES

Metro Health focused intensely in 2013 on the chronic diseases most prevalent in Bexar County in the belief that, in many cases, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and diabetes can be prevented by healthy living and that the serious consequences of chronic disease already acquired can be delayed or avoided entirely by connecting people with effective management.

### OBESITY

Obesity is the most common risk factor that leads to cardiovascular disease and diabetes. San Antonio was ranked as the second most obese city in the US. Fortunately, after decades of increase, local obesity rates have begun to go down. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention surveys in 2010 and 2012, which coincided with heavy investments in a healthier environment, increased physical activity and better nutrition, reported that obesity decreased from 35.1% to 28.5%. This means that there are 87,000 fewer adults in San Antonio are obese.

The greatest improvement was noted among the non-white population, predominately Hispanic, in which obesity declined from 40.5% to 29.6%.

Survey data demonstrates that San Antonio's decline in obesity was largely attributable to women cutting back on daily soda consumption and men adopting exercise routines that included muscle strengthening.

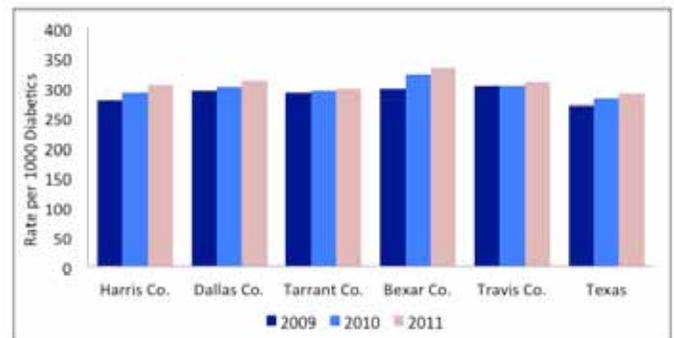
With this data in mind, Metro Health hopes to promote continued reduction in regular soda consumption coupled with increased water consumption, highlighting tasty, inexpensive, healthy drinks made from tap water.



### DIABETES

The rate of diabetes in San Antonio is very high, approximately 14%, compared to 10% in Texas and 9% in the US. San Antonians with diabetes are much more likely to progress to serious complications, including kidney failure, blindness and amputations than elsewhere in Texas and the US.

To tackle these issues, Metro Health teamed up with the YMCA of Greater San Antonio to offer lifestyle-changing courses for people at risk of diabetes. Also Metro Health conducts the Stanford Diabetes Self Management program (DSMP) for adults living with diabetes. Funding through the Medicaid 1115 Waiver makes these opportunities free of charge to the public.



Bexar County Resident, Hospital Discharge principal or other Diagnosis of diabetes Texas Hospital Inpatient Discharge Public Use Data File, Texas Department of State Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, Austin, Texas

### NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH

The best place to promote healthy living is where people live. Metro Health identified ten challenged neighborhoods and assigned to well-trained community health organizers to help neighbors identify their needs and work together to achieve them.

And Metro Health is moving much of its infrastructure into neighborhoods. This includes the relocation of the immunization clinic to the Frank Garrett Center in the Westside, the Sexually Transmitted Disease clinic to the Eastside at 512 E. Highland and the tuberculosis clinic to the grounds of the Texas Center for Infectious Diseases on the Southside near Brooks City Base. The new clinics are easily accessible by bus routes, in close proximity to highways and offer ample free parking for their customers.

Collins Garden on the near South Side is a great example of neighborhood health. Metro Health invested \$222,250 in improvements in and around the central boulevard park to boost pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and safety. These were supplemented by numerous classes and events on healthy cooking, fitness and nutrition, a bicycle rally, safety training, bicycle club, and an agreement to allow access to school's walking trail and basketball court when school is not in session.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH

### Project WORTH

Project WORTH formed and led the San Antonio Teen Pregnancy Prevention Collaborative and conducted 16 community trainings on teen pregnancy prevention curriculum and building youth developmental assets, as well as hosted the 2013 Camp College event with Generation Texas.



### Healthy Start

Nearly 350 individuals came out to walk in support of the first annual Baby Buggy Walk in the Park Infant Mortality Awareness Event organized by Healthy Start and the Healthy Families Network.

### WIC

WIC laid the ground work for opening the first Baby Café in San Antonio to provide breastfeeding moms and pregnant women access to resources, nutritionists, registered dietitians and peer support from other moms in a casual atmosphere. The goal of Baby Café is to increase breastfeeding rates and thus reduce childhood obesity rates. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the longer a woman breastfeeds an infant, the lower the odds are of the child becoming overweight.



### Dental

Approximately \$1.3 million in dental services was provided free-of-charge to more than 100 Head Start Centers and 91 economically disadvantaged elementary schools through the Oral Health Program's community-based outreach efforts.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

### Laboratory

The laboratory deployed a new test platform to detect *Neisseria gonorrhoea* and *Chlamydia trachomatis* DNA in urine specimens, increasing testing capacity by 400 percent.

### Emergency Preparedness

Emergency preparedness staff provided needed services to the May 2013 flood victims. With assistance from our sanitarians, the team visited flooded households to provide flood sanitation guidance and minimize illness. Immunization staff provided 330 doses of Tdap and Hepatitis A vaccinations to 188 residents to protect them from the contaminated flood water.

### Food safety

Our team of sanitarians developed a new Farmers Market Food Vendor permit program. Also, in partnership with the San Antonio Restaurant Association, San Antonio Water Systems and City Public Service, they provided food safety training to small and independent restaurant owners.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

### Immunizations

Metro Health partnered with area vaccinators and Bexar County Elections officials in the first Vote and Vax Campaign in Bexar County to offer flu and Tdap vaccines at four area polling places during early voting. Metro Health partnered with "Café College" to provide free Meningococcal immunizations for college bound students. The vaccine's average cost is \$130, a barrier to college entry for many prospective students.



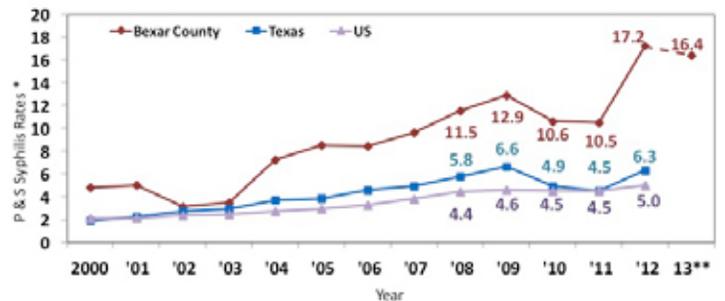
### Tuberculosis (TB)

Medical professionals from Eastern Europe visited the Metro Health TB clinic in as part of a US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention program with Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine to enhance contact investigation and treatment of TB-exposed individuals.

### Syphilis and STDs

Metro Health announced five broad areas of intervention to reduce, by 2015, congenital syphilis by 50 percent. These strategies include a call to all practitioners, birthing hospitals and health care systems to make third trimester testing for syphilis a standard of care, as well as prioritize detection and treatment of syphilis among pregnant women. Additionally, congenital syphilis cases will be immediately investigated and staff will increase staff contracts with community organizations to identify and reach out to high-risk groups, and offer ongoing community education. These strategies helped monitor 114 pregnant women that visited the STD clinic and prevent 33 cases of congenital syphilis in 2013.

### Primary and Secondary Syphilis Rates\*, 2000-2013\*\*

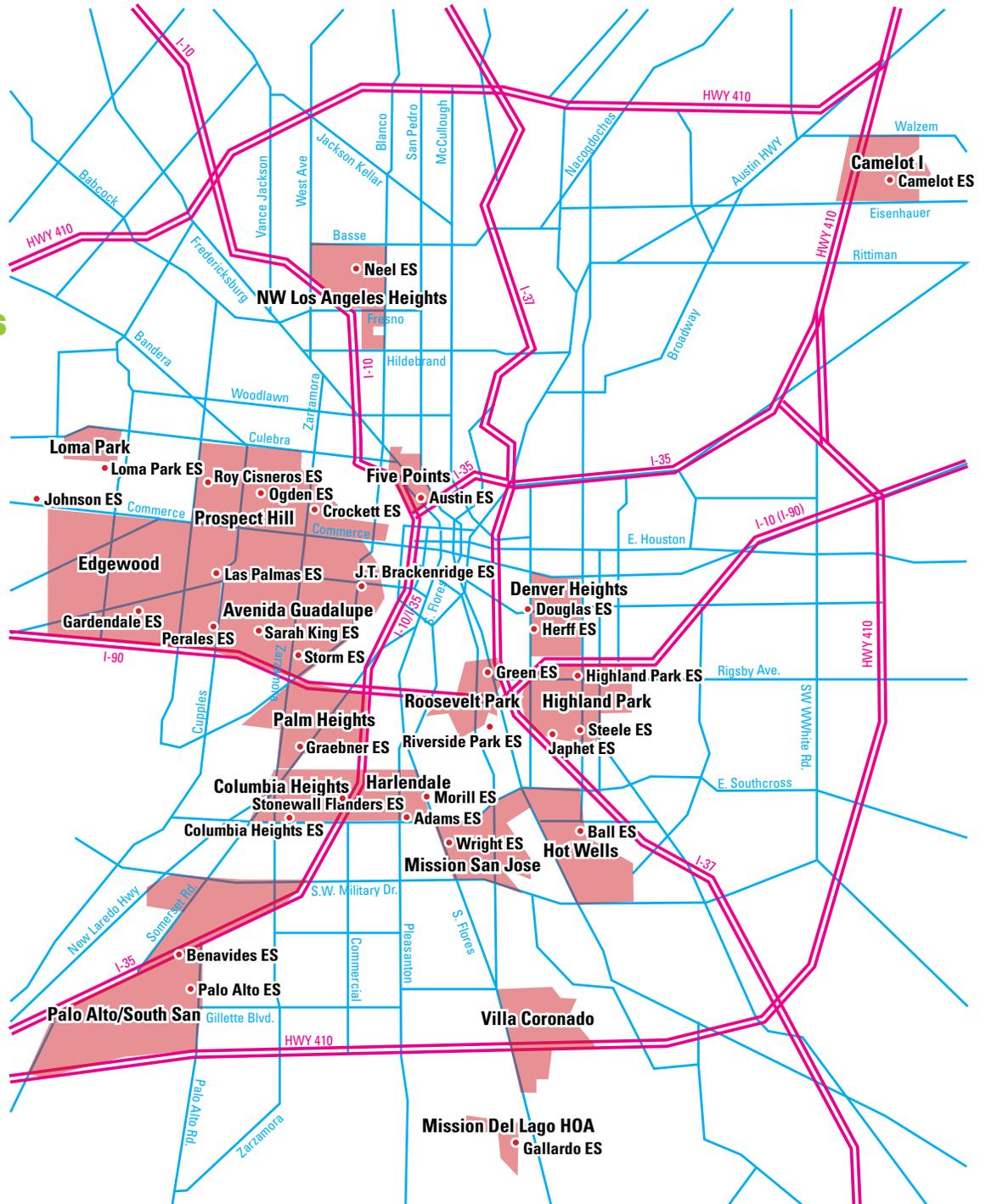


The rate of primary and secondary syphilis in 2012 (17.2) in Bexar County is 2.7 times the Texas rate and 3.4 times the US rate in 2012.

\* Rates represent cases per 100,000 population  
 \*\* 2013 Local Preliminary Data as of 3/14/14, using 2013 ACS population estimate  
 Source: Texas DSHS central STD\*MS (2000-2012)

## Ten neighborhoods targeted by Metro Health

-  = Highways
-  = Roads
-  = Districts
-  = Elementry Schools



## PUBLIC HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS

**1,180** Free meningococcal immunizations for college bound students through partnership with Café College.

**8,760** Hours of continuous air quality monitoring.

**17,600** Children living in poverty who received preventive dental services.

**400** Individuals tested and screened to identify tuberculosis cases and help protect the spread of TB.

**4,270** Teens who received evidence based programs to prevent teen pregnancy.

**148** Families at high risk for infant death that received home visitation services.

**17** Cases of congenital syphilis, a rate five times the national average. Several of these babies were stillborn.

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The biggest health news of the year was surely the Affordable Care Act, both the Medicaid expansion component and the health insurance marketplace component. Following intense debate, Medicaid expansion was rejected by the Texas legislature and governor leaving over 6 million Texans uninsured. The ACA private insurance marketplace, despite a slow start, was finally quite successful, enrolling 76,000 people in Bexar County and over 8 million nationwide. Metro Health began organizing around the ACA early in 2013, by sponsoring two, widely attended conferences, training more than 300 ACA “champions”, and by engaging other elements of city government to take leadership roles.



– Thomas L. Schlenker, MD, MPH –

Another big news event of 2013 was San Antonio’s 19% decline in adult obesity. The decline, after many years of increase, coincided with environmental improvements and programs to promote exercise and improve nutrition initiated by Metro Health. Funded with \$16 million of federal “stimulus” funding, “Communities Putting Prevention to Work” (CPPW) not only stimulated San

Antonio’s local economy, it also made us substantially healthier. The driving forces behind our community-wide weight loss was that many women chose to stop drinking soda on a daily basis and many men adopted aerobic and muscle strengthening exercise routines. Metro Health intends to work to encourage the extension of these happy trends for many years to come.

Also in 2013 births to teenagers continued to decline. This was in large part due to the excellent work of Metro Health Project Worth, Healthy Futures, UT Teen, Girls Inc and others working in local middle schools and high schools educating students, teachers and parents. Going forward, we are greatly expanding work in education and clinical care for teenagers.

Unfortunately, sexually transmitted diseases, especially syphilis, continue to threaten individuals and families. During 2013, 655 new cases of syphilis were identified, an all time high. Seventeen babies were born with congenital syphilis. This is the ninth year of ongoing local epidemic that, since 2005, has

produced 97 infected babies, some who died shortly after birth and some who would now be in grade school, most likely with severe learning and behavioral disabilities. In order to reverse this disastrous trend, hospitals, clinicians and Metro Health need to work together for more effective diagnosis, treatment and outreach to high risk groups. Our relocated and greatly expanded clinic on San Antonio’s East Side on Highland and our expanded field work to reach high risk populations are steps in the right direction.

Metro Health is, by intention, becoming more rooted in the community. Our clinics have removed from downtown to neighborhood locations on the East, West, and South sides, our oral health staff visit over 100 schools, the WIC Baby Café sits nearby the medical center on the North West side and Metro Health community health organizers are now imbedded in ten target neighborhoods scattered throughout the city and shown on the map.

Metro Health’s capacity to respond to the many serious public health problems faced by San Antonio and Bexar County was substantially improved in 2013 by the addition of new leadership, continued implementation of a performance management system with accreditation expected in late 2014, and the addition of \$43 million in new funding, the Medicaid 1115 Waiver, to be spent on health promotion and disease prevention through 2016.

## LEADERSHIP

**Thomas L. Schlenker, MD, MPH**

Director of Public Health  
(210) 207-8731

**Vincent Nathan, PhD, MPH**

Assistant Director  
Environmental Safety  
Division  
(210) 207-8757

**Anil Mangla, MS, PhD, MPH, FRIPH**

Assistant Director  
Communicable Diseases  
(210) 207-8805

**Jennifer Herriott, MPH**

Assistant Director  
Community Health  
(210) 207-3117

**Paul Fenstermacher, MBA, MIS, PMP**

Assistant to the Director  
for Operations  
(210) 207-5538

**Theresa Medina**

Executive Assistant  
(210) 207-2156



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
METROPOLITAN HEALTH DISTRICT