



# Strategies for Health

Metro Health • San Antonio's Public Health Team • Annual Report 2011

## Message from the Director

San Antonio and Bexar County are blessed with a diverse and youthful population; unique weather and environment; vibrant arts and music; and a growing economic base. It is a great place to live.

Despite these benefits, we're not as healthy as we should be. The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health), in collaboration with many community partners, intends to change that. During this past year, we began a major departmental reorganization and reorientation that we consider to be the first steps in a multi-year strategy to make San Antonio and Bexar County a fit and healthy community for everyone.

This annual report serves as a brief, public health review of 2011. It is also a vehicle to highlight some of our most urgent concerns and to introduce four new "Strategies for Health" that we will champion during the next three to five years.

In San Antonio and Bexar County one

third of us are obese because of poor nutrition and lack of exercise. Obesity-related diseases like diabetes afflict thousands, especially Hispanics and blacks, who also disproportionately suffer serious complications. Amputations, kidney failure and blindness are life-destroying and often preventable.

In recent years, we also have recorded disproportionate levels of sexually-transmitted diseases. It should be unacceptable to all segments of our community that babies are born in San Antonio with congenital syphilis. And, as is well known, far too many teenagers become pregnant, putting themselves and their babies at risk for life-long poor health, unemployment and poverty.

But there are signs of hope. Metro Health has combined realistic, yet hopeful innovations, proven programming and talented and committed people into four "Strategies



for Health" that address some of our serious challenges. After you peruse the public health accomplishments of the past year on pages 2 and 3, turn to page four to learn where we intend to go in the future.

**Thomas Schlenker, MD, MPH**  
**Director**

## Public Health by the Numbers

**15,000** – Individuals who participated in inaugural *Síclovia*



**1** – Smoke-free city ordinance implemented

**16,328** – Individuals immunized

**2,534** – Animals tested for rabies

**1,216** – Bicycles supplied to Parks and

Recreation and San Antonio Housing Authority Ride to Own participants

**4,977** – Doses of influenza vaccine provided

**8,760** – Hours of continual air monitoring performed

**365** – Schools that received physical



activity equipment impacting more than 395,000 students

**260** – Free Fitness in the Park classes held in 20 parks

**5,058** – visits to the Tuberculosis clinic

**71,826** – Infants and children served by WIC



## COMMUNITY HEALTH

### Smoke Free San Antonio

The introduction of a new city ordinance banning smoking in all indoor public places, including restaurants, bars, the zoo, sports arenas, and playgrounds, won San Antonio the designation of "smoke free city."

### Immunizations

More than 87,450 children were immunized through the Metro Health managed "Vaccine for Children" program as we began the final stage of constructing an interactive, electronic immunization database called "e-SAIRS," which already contains over 1.2 million records and is used by more than 200 local health care providers.

### Nutrition

"Por Vida" healthy menu items were rolled out in 14 new restaurants and cafeterias.

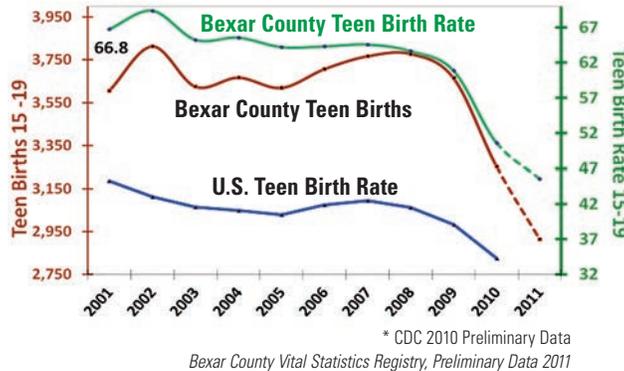
Salad bars now are available at 108 schools and a farmers' markets opened in southern downtown.



### Family Support

Metro Health WIC clinics provided nutritious food, developmental assessment and breast feeding support to more than 70,000 women, infants and children. Metro Health "Healthy Start" program provided case management to nearly 1,800 high-risk pregnant women.

### Bexar County and U.S. Teen Births and Rates Ages 15–19 years old From 2001 to 2011



### Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Although progress still needs to be made, Bexar County's teen pregnancy rate dropped to its lowest level in recent history. Metro Health's "Project WORTH" reached 3,837 teens and 1,525 parents. Project WORTH's evidence-based curriculum for middle school proved to be dramatically effective in two pilot schools complementing school-based programs by Healthy Futures and UT Teen Health.

### Diabetes

More than 3,000 diabetics learned how to self-manage symptoms through group settings in their neighborhoods under the guidance of Metro Health master trainers. Our master trainers also trained 19 community leaders who can themselves teach the Stanford diabetes self-management curriculum.

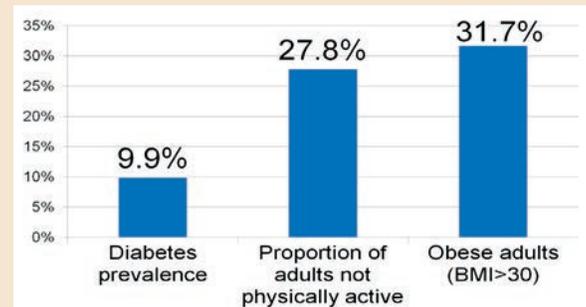
### Healthy Community Design

The City Council inaugurated a "complete streets" policy to provide safe walking, jogging and biking in San Antonio. The concepts of "healthy hubs" (neighborhood destinations for healthy food, social and physical activity) and SPARKS (neighborhoods and schools working together to create shared-used playgrounds and green spaces) were introduced.

### Oral Health

Metro Health brought dental services to over 10,000 children in 58 schools employing over \$420,000 in donated preventive dental services.

### Prevalence of Diabetes, Physical Inactivity and Obesity in Bexar County for 2010



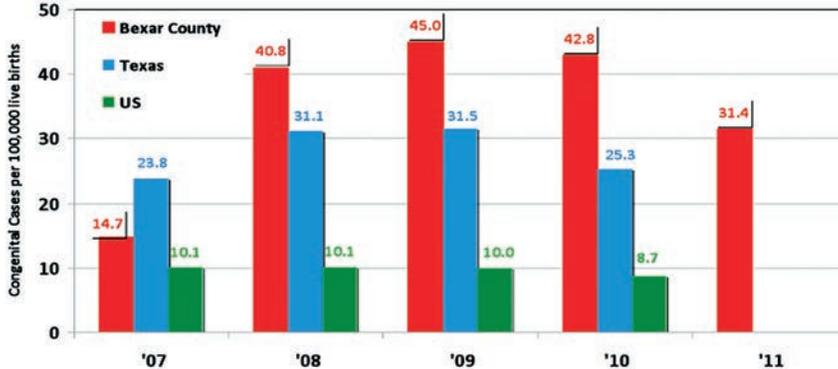
Source: 2010 Bexar Co SMART BRFSS

### Obesity Prevention/Fitness

From neighborhood walking groups and fitness in the park classes, to 15,000 people from all corners of the county participating in the first-ever "Siclovía," Metro Health constantly promotes active living. This year, Metro Health also funded walking tracks for city libraries, fitness equipment for schools and provided 1,200 bicycles to cyclists also trained on the rules of the road through "San Antonio Ride to Own."

## ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

### Congenital Syphilis Rates, 2007-2011



\* 2011 data is preliminary and uses 2010 live birth data. Data extracted from DSHS central STD-MIS, Texas and CDC reports

The 2010 congenital syphilis rate (42.8) is 5 times higher than the 2010 national average (8.7) and 1.7 times higher than the 2010 state of Texas (25.3) rates. The preliminary 2011 congenital syphilis rate is 31.4, a 27% decrease from 2010.

#### Public Health Laboratory

Metro Health's laboratory increased its web-based capacity to transmit disease outbreak data to the Texas Department of State Health Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "T-Spot TB," a new, rapid and more accurate screening test for tuberculosis became operational and is instrumental in investigating TB clusters and contacts. T-Spot TB are available to all local health care systems.

#### Food Safety

Metro Health sanitarians completed nearly 30,000 inspections of restaurants, mobile vendors, convenience stores, swimming pools, day care centers and grocery stores. In partnership with the San Antonio Restaurant Association, special training was provided to local Chinese Restaurants.

#### Emergency Preparedness

Metro Health, in collaboration with the US Geological Survey, completed and published a report on chemical contamination in eight Bexar County

watersheds. Metro Health also led the broad response to protect our population during the 2011 summer heat wave.

#### Vector Control

Metro Health carried out routine activities to prevent West Nile and dengue fever, rabies, and encephalitis while responding to hundreds of requests for service for bees, bats, mosquitoes and fleas.

#### Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Metro Health began reorganization of its STD clinic in an effort to better serve growing community needs and continuing to provide quality service. As syphilis rates continue to rise, new strategies for prevention are being considered.

#### Tuberculosis

Metro Health TB program logged more than 5,000 patient visits in its TB Clinic and more than 9,000 patient visits in the field during 2011. Of the 97 new cases of active tuberculosis detected during the year, 12% were HIV co-infected and 12% were drug resistant.

## OPERATIONS

### New Director

Dr. Thomas Schlenker, who joined Metro Health in June, reorganized Metro Health into three divisions, added a



position for a doctoral-level epidemiologist and began the process of department-wide strategic planning. Dr. Schlenker received his doctor of medicine degree from Northwestern University and a master in public health from Harvard University. Schlenker previously served as health officer in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Salt Lake City, Utah and Madison, Wisconsin. He has considerable international experience including a stint as senior Fulbright Fellow at the National Institute of Public Health in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

### New Site

New sites for the Metro Health headquarters, currently at 332 W. Commerce are being considered. Preference is for a more neighborhood-based location.

### Accreditation

Metro Health is moving toward accreditation by instituting continuous quality improvement for all programs and a department-wide performance management system.

# Metro Health Strategic Priorities 2012-2015



## Selection Criteria:

- ▶ Address public health issues important to the community
- ▶ Require concentrated, long-term attention
- ▶ Have potential to do great good
- ▶ No one else can do it, or do it as well
- ▶ Are doable (alone or in partnership)
- ▶ Fill gaps in core local public health service

## 1. Evidence-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention

a. **Goal:** By 2015, reduce Bexar County teen birth rate (15-19) by 15%.

### i. First-year objectives:

1. Enlist 8 ISD middle schools using evidence-based curricula
2. Enlist 3 charter middle schools using evidence-based curricula
3. Evaluate and adjust social media campaign

## 2. Built Environment for Active Living

a. **Goal:** By 2015, reduce Bexar County physical inactivity by 10%

### i. First-year objectives:

1. Increase "active transportation" trips for work and recreation
2. Begin work on pedestrian master plan
3. Host Built Environment conference
4. Inaugurate two neighborhood "Healthy Hubs"

## 3. Neighbors Engaged in Health

a. **Goal:** By 2015, community asset mapping, action plans and active engagement in 10 neighborhoods

### i. First-year objectives:

1. Establish partnerships with those already involved in asset-based community development
2. Survey national best practices to educate and train Metro Health staff accordingly
3. Pilot community asset mapping in one neighborhood

## 4. Blood and Sexually Transmitted Disease

a. **Goal:** By 2015, reduce congenital syphilis (CS) by 50% and reverse trends in syphilis incidence

### i. First-year objectives

1. Engage all birthing hospitals/health systems in historical CS case review
2. Begin real-time SAMHD in-depth investigation of all CS cases
3. Improve efficiency/effectiveness of SAMHD STD Clinic services
4. Begin research-oriented outreach to special populations, especially teenagers

## Leadership

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## Strategies for Health

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