

# Strategies for Health

Metro Health • San Antonio's Public Health Team • Annual Report 2012

## Message from the Director

During 2012, we celebrated that births to teenagers, especially younger teens, plunged to the lowest levels ever. Yet, we know we need to do better. Science-based instruction on sexuality in some middle schools and high schools has produced impressive results. Yet, science-based instruction needs to be offered in every school. Access to more effective methods of contraception has reduced the number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions. Yet, there are forces in Texas trying to reduce access. During this past year, in response to the local syphilis epidemic, Metro Health has reorganized and rejuvenated its sexually transmitted disease program, and local physicians and health care systems have committed to reforming their practices. Yet, syphilis rates among adults were the highest in recent memory and 18 babies were born with congenital syphilis. Clearly, we need to do better here too.

Obesity related conditions like diabetes and cardio-vascular disease are of great concern. It is shocking to note that 14 percent of our local population is diabetic and that Bexar County has

rates of serious diabetic complications, almost four times the U.S. rates (see graph, page 2). Access to physical activity has expanded through the proliferation of shared-use facilities at schools, libraries and other public places where all ages and all abilities are welcome. Programming such as "Fitness in the Parks" and San Antonio Sports "Family Fun Nights" gets

folks out doors and interacting with their neighbors. And the YMCA's "Siclovía," has been a resounding success, with 45,000 people showing up on a cold and windy day in October to ride bikes, skate board, jog and walk from the Alamo to the Witte Museum. The Collins Garden development is demonstrating how working hand-in-hand with neighbors and institutions, can improve quality of life, health and safety. We would like to see similar small scale, grassroots-based, development projects spring up all across town.



Thomas Schlenker, MD, MPH

Also in 2012, it became clear that federal and state changes in law will have a marked impact on local public health. The US Supreme Court reaffirmed the Affordable Care Act (ACA), opening the way for reduction of waste and fraud while providing new funding for cost-effective, preventive and primary care. It outlaws denying health insurance on the

basis of pre-existing conditions and, in most states, will spread Medicaid health insurance coverage to more poor and near-poor families. Also, workers not covered at work, who are not poor enough to qualify for Medicaid but not wealthy enough to afford expensive individual policies, will be able to acquire reasonably priced coverage through on-line "Exchanges." Read on for more details on the state of public health in San Antonio.

Thomas Schlenker, MD, MPH  
Director

## Public Health by the Numbers

**330** – ¡Por Vida! meal options

**15,000** – Children who accessed preventive dental care

**4,000** – Teens who participated in school-based pregnancy and STD prevention activities



**2,994** – Rabies investigations completed.

**1,815** – Breast pumps supplied to WIC participants to promote breastfeeding.

**80** – Speeches to promote tobacco-free workplaces

**8,784** – Hours of continual air monitoring



**1,186** – Participants in community diabetes project

**27** – Outdoor fitness stations in parks and libraries

**17,043** – Clients immunized at Metro Health clinics

**69** – TB cases reported



## COMMUNITY HEALTH



### Immunizations

Metro Health provided, in partnership with “cafécollege,” more than 630 Meningococcal immunizations, a college registration requirement for students less than thirty years old. The average cost of this vaccine is over \$130.00 posing a financial barrier for many low-income college-bound students.

Metro Health also received a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant to provide 10,000 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine to adults who are at increased risk for contracting the virus. The two-year project will be implemented in partnership with the Center for Health Care Services.

### Healthy Eating

The *iPor Vida!* program added several partners this year to expand healthy options when eating out, including UTSA Roadrunner Café, Fruit Fusionz, University Health System Cafeteria, Trinity University cafeteria, and dining facilities at US Global Investors.

Metro Health and The Health Collaborative established Healthy Vending Guidelines to help promote healthier options in workplace vending.

### Active Living

Metro Health partnered with San Antonio Sports to develop a SPARK Park program between parks and schools that upgrades school playgrounds into fitness parks for the community at large. In addition,

the health department implemented shared-use agreements in NEISD, Edgewood ISD and SAISD, which resulted in new walking trails, fitness stations and resurfaced sport courts also open to the public.

Metro Health funded three walking trails at Parman, Johnston and Mission libraries. Eighteen other branches received health machines.

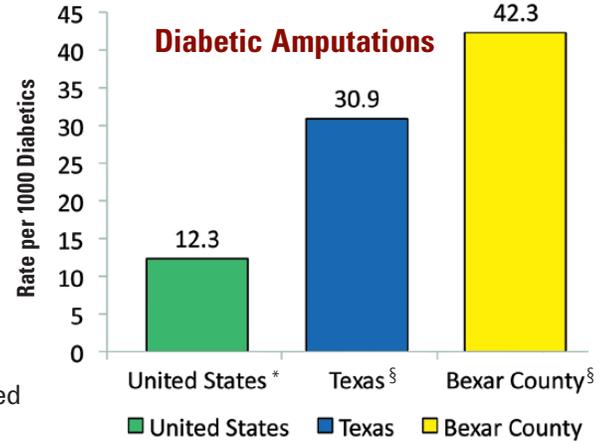
### Diabetes

Metro Health reached hundreds of diabetics and their families through 158 diabetes self-management, nutrition and fitness workshops held at community centers and churches. Diabetes control staff trained 50 group leaders in community health advocacy and diabetes self-management.

### Healthy Families

Healthy Start received a \$200,000 state grant for evidence-based case management services for women who deliver prematurely or with poor-birth outcomes to reduce those risks for future pregnancies.

In addition, women and children who participated in the health department's WIC program received approximately \$36,000,000 worth of WIC food benefits to spend within our local economy.



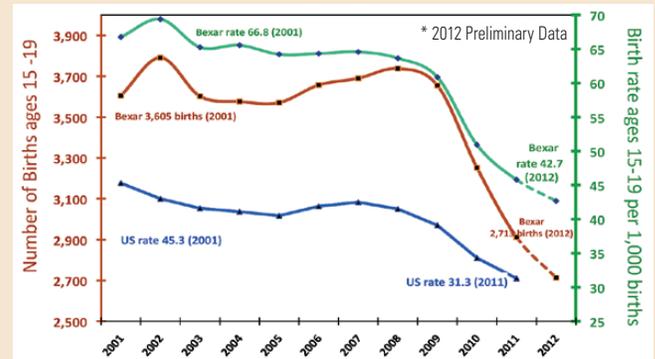
Prepared by Metro Health EPI  
 §Texas Hospital Inpatient Discharge Public Use Data File, Texas Department of State Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, Austin, Texas. 2011  
 \*2009 is the most recent year available for national data.

### Oral Health

Metro Health's community-based oral health programs provided services valued at more than \$1,800,000. The programs use the most current evidence-based strategies to prevent dental disease and reduce oral health disparities.

### Teen Births Rates and Numbers

United States and Bexar County, Texas



### Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Project WORTH's “Me now, baby later” campaign expanded to middle schools throughout SAISD and Edgewood ISD. Last summer Project WORTH and Generation TX hosted the first-ever Camp College in San Antonio to prepare dozens of students from 30 area high schools for college and promote health.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

### Public Health Laboratory

Metro Health's laboratory received a culture isolate from a regional hospital laboratory suspected to be a bacterial bioterrorism agent. Staff tested and reported negative results in 24 hours. The rapid response prevented the laboratory staff and patient from having to undergo antibiotic treatment and DSHS Region 8 was able to rapidly stand down their epidemiology response.



### Food Safety

Metro Health passed an ordinance affecting mobile food courts. In addition, the department developed a new permit specifically for farmers markets, flea markets and trade shows, to ensure food safety.

Metro Health sanitarians worked with the San Antonio Restaurant Association and the San Antonio Water System to provide food safety training to restaurants in all City Council Districts.

### Sexually Transmitted Diseases

The Metro Health HIV/STD team in conjunction with other community agencies carried out four community BLITZs, where staff ventures into areas

highly affected by Syphilis and HIV in Bexar County to provide on-site testing for syphilis, HIV, and Hepatitis C, with referrals for substance abuse treatment centers and counseling.

### Emergency Preparedness

During the West Nile Virus outbreak, Metro Health provided guidance to local hospitals and physicians through the Bexar County Medical Society and surrounding counties through the Alamo Area Council of Governments. This effort potentially helped decrease the number of individuals that could have been affected.

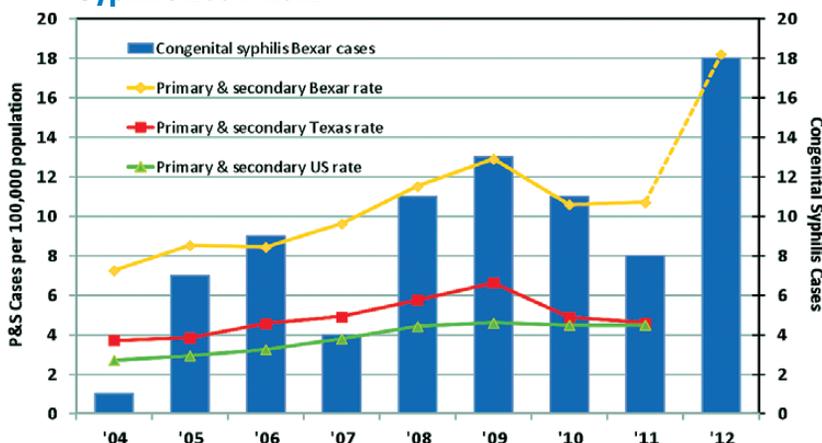
### Tuberculosis

Metro Health carried out two large contact investigations involving 531 individuals at two local high schools. In addition, Metro Health TB staff worked with the South Texas College Health Services Consortium to help standardize student TB services and screening at local universities.

### Tobacco

San Antonio City Council approved an amendment to its non-smoking ordinance to prohibit smoking along Fiesta parade routes. Metro Health's tobacco prevention team also helped the San Antonio Housing Authority implement a non-smoking policy at all 70 of its public sites.

### Syphilis 2004–2012



## OPERATIONS

### Leadership team

Several new members were appointed to Metro Health's leadership team. Christine Rutherford-Stuart serves as the assistant director for community health. She previously served as interim assistant director. Virginia Cobarrubias was named assistant to the director for operations. She previously served as the department fiscal administrator. Dr. Vincent Nathan came to the health department from Texas A&M where he was an associate professor and director of the Program in Public Health and Water Research. Dr. Anil Mangla is chief of epidemiology for Metro Health. He previously served as the acting state epidemiologist for the state of Georgia.

### Accreditation

Metro Health kicked off its campaign towards public health accreditation. Metro Health has a goal of submitting its letter of intent to the Public Health Accreditation Board by fall of 2013, followed by a formal application submission in early 2014.

### Performance improvement

Metro Health is in the process of building a formalized performance management system to include LEAN for Healthcare Principles, a national approach to performance improvement in public health departments.

# Metro Health Strategic Priorities 2012-2015

## 1. Evidence-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention

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

**First-year accomplishments:**

1. For the 2012-2013 school year, Project WORTH and UT Teen Health are working in six area school districts implementing evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs. Project WORTH works with SAISD, with assistance from Healthy Futures of Texas and the Health Collaborative.
2. Project WORTH implemented the "It's Your Game" middle school curriculum at New Frontiers Charter School and also conducted a pilot implementation of the Wyman's Teen Outreach Program.
3. Metro Health initiated an agreement with the UT School of Public Health to provide a teen pregnancy prevention campaign plan.

## 2. Built Environment for Active Living

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

**First-year accomplishments:**

1. Metro Health organized the first-ever conference on public health and the built environment, held in March 2013.
2. The department also initiated its first Healthy Hub pilot project in the Collins Garden neighborhood to include improvements to the park, local schools, neighborhood streets to promote physical activity and a baseline neighborhood assessment to evaluate the impact of the improvements in the future.



## 3. Neighbors Engaged in Health

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

**First-year accomplishments:**

1. Neighbors Engaged in Health began its work in January 2013. Ongoing research since then has surveyed national best practices in both Asset Based Community Development projects focused on health and national strategies for multidisciplinary Place Based interventions at the grassroots level.
2. Metro Health also established partnerships with the Eastside Promise Neighborhood, the San Antonio Housing Authority's Wheatley Choice Neighborhood, and Trinity University Urban Studies Program; all of whom have extensive working knowledge in the practice of employing Asset Based Community Development for resident engagement.

## 4. Blood and Sexually Transmitted Disease

**Goal:** By 2015, reduce congenital syphilis by 50 percent and reverse trends in syphilis incidence

**First-year accomplishments:**

1. Metro Health made several changes to the management of the STD/HIV Clinic, increasing its average daily patient load from 45 to 57.
2. Metro Health also developed a procedure to follow-up with pregnant women and is in the process of hiring additional staff to provide case management for these women.
3. Bexar County hospitals and physicians have been engaged to test for syphilis 100 percent of pregnant women at their first prenatal visit and again in the third trimester.

## Leadership

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