HEALTHY HARTFORD NEWS

HARTFORD DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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WORKING FOR A HEALTHY HARTFORD

PUTTING ON "AIRS"

(Asthma Indoor Risk Strategies)

Putting on AIRS is a program designed to reduce the environmental asthma triggers in the home. A Health Educator visits the home to assess the environmental triggers of asthma. The following services are provided during the home visit:

- ★ The health educator reviews the physician's asthma plan and medications with the client.
- ★ Additional asthma education is provided to help the person with asthma understand how to better manage it.
- ★ A walk through the home is performed to help identify causes of asthma.
- ★ Instruction on how to minimize the asthma triggers in the home is provided.
- ★ A confidential report is developed and it becomes part of medical record.

This program is made possible with funding from the State of CT Department of Public Health.

Services are provided on a first-come-first-served basis. For additional information, or to sign up for these free services, please contact **Hillary Norcia at 860-665-8571.**

Rita Kornblum, Health Educator, talks about the importance of asthma education during World Asthma Day

HEALTHY HARTFORD NEWS

HARTFORD DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Eddie A. Perez
Mayor

Carlos A. Rivera
Director

What YOU Should Know About the Flu Season

H1N1 influenza, previously known as Swine Flu, is a respiratory infection caused by a virus and it can be spread from people who have it to other people through coughs and sneezes just like the seasonal flu.

The **Seasonal Flu** usually occurs in the winter months and can cause severe illness. In our region, the influenza activity generally occurs from December to March, but it can start as early as October and go as late as May in some years. The 2009 H1N1 virus, however, ran through 2 cycles in 2009; one in the Spring, the second in the Fall. A third wave of 2009 H1N1 may occur in 2010.

H1N1 and Seasonal Flu may lead to hospitalization or even death.

These 2 different flu viruses affect different groups of people and require 2 separate vaccines.

VACCINATION

Our Best Line of Defense Against 2009 H1N1

The Department of Health and Human Services is urging the public to get vaccinated against the H1N1 influenza virus to protect against pandemic H1N1 and prevent another outbreak of the disease. Children under 10 need two doses to get the best protection.

We are still in the midst of a flu season and expect to see additional cases of H1N1 flu over the next few weeks. Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against H1N1 influenza. Now is a good time to get vaccinated because the H1N1 vaccine is widely available. If you have not received your H1N1 vaccination, you should get it as soon as possible. The more people who are vaccinated, the less likely disease will spread in the coming months.

In order to better protect Hartford residents, the Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the Hartford Schools, has already conducted 21 school clinics and also completed all vaccination efforts for the Hartford Fire Department, the Hartford Police Department, homeless shelters and senior centers. Additionally, 3 citywide public clinics helped us reach residents in all corners of the city.

The Department of Health and Human Services continues to offer free H1N1 flu vaccination to anyone who wishes it.

For appointment and clinic location, please call (860) 543-8859.

HHS Director Carlos Rivera discusses H1N1 clinic procedures with Beth Mertz, Public Health Nurse

Winter 2009-2010

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HEALTH EQUITY ALLIANCE

Health Equity is a Social Justice Issue

The Health Equity Alliance is a process to build a better understanding of the social and economic conditions that affect the health of Connecticut residents. Public Health professionals created a way to learn about community conditions that affect health so that we can better focus on preventing illness. This led to the creation of the Health Equity Index, a way to measure these conditions that will provide powerful local information. This information will show how community conditions can be at the root cause of poor health.

The mission of the Health Equity Alliance is to *"enhance the capacity of local health departments, in partnership with community partners and leaders, to achieve health equity through a focus on the social, political, economic, and environmental conditions that impact health."*

The City of Hartford Department of Health and Human Services is proud to have been selected as a pilot site for this process. The information from the Index will be used to look at the wellbeing of our residents in relation to conditions like number of jobs lost/gained, air quality in schools, crime rates and other conditions that impact health.

As one of the efforts of this project, every member of the HHS staff will receive training to help them view their work as a way to eliminate the inequality that exists in health. The valuable services that the department provides will have an even more lasting impact.

> "As public health professionals in Hartford, we are aware of how socio-economic inequalities affect the health of our communities. Our strongest commitments lie in prioritizing existing resources and building a 'Healthy Hartford' through the engagement of our residents in shaping our future health and wellness policies"
>
> **Carlos Rivera**
> **Director**

The ultimate success of this process, however, can only happen if the community we serve is engaged and fully participates in this effort. The Health Equity Index will be used to inform the community and encourage residents to use this information to take action in order to address these differences in health.

A kick-off event, hosted by **Mayor Eddie A. Perez**, will be held on February 22, 2010 at 10:30 am at CHS, 500 Albany Ave. Everyone is invited; come and learn more about it, invite a family member, friend, neighbor, invite all! Any questions can be directed to Rita Kornblum at **(860) 547-1426 ext: 7188** or rkornblum@hartford.gov .

Health Equity Alliance
Working together for healthier communities
An initiative of CADH

Healthy Hartford

A FOCUS ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

HARTFORD DIAL-A-RIDE

Serving Hartford Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities

The Hartford Dial-A-Ride (DAR) program is a city-wide transportation service funded by the City of Harford and grant funds from the North Central Area on Aging (NCAAA), State Department of Transportation and Greater Hartford Transit District (GHTD).

Hartford residents 60 years-old or older and individuals with a permanent disability ages 18 and older are eligible for these services. Services are provided seven days a week between the hours of 8:15am and 2:45pm. Transportation is offered for medical appointments, senior center/nutrition sites and grocery stores. The weekend services are limited to Saturday grocery shopping by reservation and Sunday religious services to Hartford based churches.

With an average of 50,000 trips a year, Dial-A-Ride helps countless Hartford residents stay healthy and remain independent.

If you have questions or would like to apply for the program, please contact the DAR Customer Services Representative at **(860)722-8473** or James Johnson, Jr., Project Manager at **(860)722-8483**.

RENTER'S REBATE PROGRAM A SUCCESS

Tax Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities

The Department of Health & Human Services serves as the Municipal Agent for the State of Connecticut's Elderly/Disabled Renters Tax Relief Program. In 2009, our staff processed a record number of over 5,300 applications, giving back more than 2.8 Million dollars to the local community. This program, established by state law, provides a reimbursement to Connecticut renters who are elderly or totally disabled and whose income does not exceed certain limits.

The application period runs from May 15 thru September 15 every year and persons renting an apartment or room, or living in cooperative housing or a mobile home are eligible to apply. The amount received is based on a graduated income scale and the total amount paid in rent and utilities (excluding telephone) in the calendar year prior to the application.

The HHS Department anticipates a significant increase in the Renters' Rebate Program during the 2010 application period and will be looking to engage community based organizations, senior centers and/or senior housing representatives as community partners.

If you or your organization are interested in being a partner or would like more information about the Hartford Renters' Rebate Program please contact the Department of Health and Human Services at **(860) 543-8860**.