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# CITY OF HARTFORD

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## Healthy Hartford Campaign

In 2008, Mayor Eddie A. Perez convened a Health Insurance Task Force to study the needs of uninsured residents in the city of Hartford. With 29,000 uninsured residents, the Mayor set out to bring together health care providers, insurers, medical experts and community leaders to explore ways for the city to partner with the private sector in order to improve health outcomes. Carlos Rivera, Director of the Department of Health and Human Services chaired this group and presented its findings in July of 2008.

Included in the Task Force's findings:

- Chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes are the leading causes of death and disability in the U.S.
  - These diseases represent 70% of all deaths and 75% of all health care expenses
- Rates of chronic diseases are higher in Hartford residents than in the whole of Connecticut
  - Smoking: 22%
  - Obesity: 38%
  - Asthma: 20%
- Childhood Obesity is a leading cause of negative health outcomes for Hartford's children.
  - Overweight kids are at risk for asthma, diabetes, heart disease and other chronic conditions
  - Although precise obesity prevalence is difficult to obtain, one recent estimate indicates that approximately 50% of Hartford's 11 year old children are "at risk", "obese", or "extremely obese". 30% of Hartford's 2 year old children are in the same categories.
  - Fortunately, this problem can be reversed or prevented by helping children and adolescents stay active and develop healthy eating habits.

As part of the Task Force's major recommendations, it was determined that the government of the City of Hartford has the power to influence the health outcomes of its residents by encouraging healthy activity and healthy choices.

The Mayor's office, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services has begun to design and launch the "Healthy Hartford" wellness campaign. The goal of this campaign is to increase the availability of health related information designed to influence the choices that Hartford families, both adults and children, make in their every day lives. The themes of particular priority in this campaign will include physical activity for the entire family and disease prevention and management resources. The central theme of this campaign will be "Healthy Choices". In physical activity, nutrition and disease management, the decisions we make every day have a crucial impact on our health outcomes.

The Healthy Hartford campaign will strive to meet the goal of improving health and wellness for all by:

- Using health and wellness messaging in a variety of mediums, including but not limited to:
  - Health messages in city vehicles
  - Public service announcements through media outlets (with priority given to local outlets that reach residents most directly)
  - Use of health and wellness themed banners throughout the city. The themes that we have identified to work best in this medium will include physical activity and disease management through awareness of our own health status.
- Hosting targeted educational forums specific to chronic disease management
- Collaborating with area health providers and organizations to promote healthy choices and solutions to health problems. One example of this is the participation and support of The Department of Health and Human Services in a newly formed Hartford Childhood Obesity Coalition, which draws on the combined leadership and expertise of community groups to address this critical issue in Hartford.
- Hosting city-wide health fairs and exercising leadership and a strong presence at neighborhood-based health events.
- Increasing the number of health related activities available throughout the city such as "A Walk in the Park" - highlighting the beauty of our city parks through physical activity

The Healthy Hartford campaign strives to reach the largest possible number of residents by designing activities that target specific demographic groups. The Department of Health and Human Services has launched a set of creative teams that will design high-impact activities and approaches targeting the following groups:

1. Healthy women and children
2. Healthy youth
3. Healthy men
4. Healthy seniors
5. Healthy employees
6. Healthy communities

Each team is charged with using existing partnerships and establishing new ones in order to reach the broadest number of residents possible. All teams report to the Director of the Hartford Department of Health and Human Services along with a steering committee comprised of the department's senior management team.

The Healthy Hartford team is working diligently to secure the support and operational partnership of organizations that cover the private, public and non-profit sectors. Established partnerships and future partnerships include:

- University of Connecticut (Including the University of Connecticut Health Center, the Center for Public Health and Health Policy and the Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy.)
- Hospitals (Hartford, St. Francis, CT Children's Medical Center)
- CT Department of Public Health
- Community Clinics (Charter Oak Health Center, Community Health Services, Burgdorf Clinic)
- City of Hartford – Office of Youth Services
- City of Hartford – Mayor's Office for Young Children
- Connecticut Area Health Education Center
- Central AHEC
- YMCA
- CT Department of Social Services
- CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Alcohol & Drug Recovery Centers
- Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
- CT Health Foundation
- Universal Health Foundation
- Aetna
- Anthem BC/BS

A key element of the Healthy Hartford campaign will be to reach a broad base of constituents simply by providing health education information that will be intertwined with existing programs that already have a high number of participants. For example, the Recreation division of the Hartford Health & Human Services Department will change the focus of all our programs to using highly interactive models that include frequent exposure to health and wellness information. Along the same lines, our Maternal & Child Health Division will provide targeted health & wellness information in all of our contacts with clients.

The sustainability of the Healthy Hartford campaign is dependent on the strength of our partnerships. The Hartford Department of Health and Human Services is highly regarded among health professionals and many leaders for our ability to deliver services that are focused on best practices and that reach a high percentage of Hartford's residents. Almost all of the partnerships that will be organized around this campaign are with organizations and leaders that have had a long standing relationship with our department and our services.

With the Healthy Hartford campaign, our city is well on the way to building model programs that will improve the health outcomes of all of our residents.