



Community Services Division
Update from Director, Marti Fischbach
November 29, 2022

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health Submits for Health Equity Grant

Dakota County Public Health recently submitted for a \$150,000 Minnesota Department of Health grant. The grant invited funding proposals from community organizations and health departments to connect, strengthen, and amplify health equity efforts. Dakota County focused its application on continuing and expanding the county's Community Connections initiative that began in 2020 – an effort to partner and distribute county resources to local Dakota County organizations that have close/trusted ties to communities of color. If received, the funds will be used to extend the initiative into 2023, including connecting with new partners, strengthening existing relationships, and amplifying the work across the county – while also sharing community insights across internal divisions. Public Health expects to hear back within the coming weeks and will be back to CSCW to accept the funds and ratify the grant.

Update on Targeted Outreach for Home Visiting Pilot

Background

Family home visiting is a voluntary, strength-based program that is offered to families prenatally through the early years of a child's life. Home visiting is grounded in evidence-based practice that has shown to successfully mitigate adverse childhood experiences and change the life trajectory of a child and his/her family. The overall goal is to ensure that families get a healthy beginning and an opportunity to succeed. Home visiting is a prevention strategy that has proven outcomes. In 2020 in Dakota County, 1,310 families with at least one risk factor received home visits from a public health nurse, and of those, 100% were satisfied with their public health nurse and 92.9% of mothers had babies born at a healthy weight.

Providing family home visits to the community has been a priority for decades. Staff continually work with partners to educate them on family home visiting services and routinely strategize on innovative outreach ideas. Referrals come from several sources including Fairview Ridges Hospital, various community partners, WIC, E&EA, Social Services, schools, and clinics. With a more targeted approach we hope to increase our referrals by using Community Health Workers who are working in the community and can promote this service to families. Many of our home visiting staff are supported by the Strong Foundations Grant and services will remain completely voluntary for families. Referral and caseload data are tracked to determine if outreach efforts are successful.

ARPA Funds Discussion

At the September 14, 2021 CSCW meeting there was discussion on the possibility of utilizing ARPA funds for a Universal Home Visiting Pilot specifically focusing on the two census tract areas, West St. Paul, and Burnsville. The Board did not approve using ARPA funds for this purpose.

Follow-up at CSCW

Staff re-evaluated this approach and presented an update during the April CSCW meeting. Staff shared that Dakota County was 1 of 5 counties in MN that served 5% or less of families that were eligible for home visiting. Staff also

shared that the plan was to use existing resources to do more outreach to close the gap and reach more families who were eligible for a home visit but were not being referred. To accomplish this, a targeted outreach and family home visiting communication plan was developed which will be piloted in 2023.

Clarification on the Outreach Effort

Following the September 2021 CSCW, the term Universal Home Visiting should have been re-titled to “Targeted Outreach for Home Visiting pilot” both during the April CSCW meeting and especially in the recent budget documents.

2022 Barbara O’Grady Excellence in Public Health Nursing Leadership Award

It is with great pleasure that I share that **Gina Adasiewicz** was nominated by her peers and selected as the recipient of the **2022 Barbara O’Grady Excellence in Public Health Nursing Leadership Award!**

The Barbara O’Grady Award was established in 1991 to recognize and honor Minnesota public health nurses working in management or education settings for their outstanding leadership and contributions to public health. Recipients of this award have shown expertise and leadership in public health nursing by making significant contributions to advancing public health nursing and improving the health of their community. They have also developed innovative public health nursing programs and demonstrated strong collaborations with health, education, social services, or other decision-makers and service providers. Nomination for this award requires multiple letters of recommendation, and the selection process is vigorous and competitive.

In the award letter, the selection committee was particularly impressed by the breadth of accomplishments throughout Gina’s career, including leadership at a county level and in the Local Public Health Association (LPHA). Gina’s advocacy for health-focused policy, breadth of nursing experience, ability to build partnerships, response to various public health emergencies, and strong public health outcomes accomplished through her leadership provided key examples of why the committee selected her for this prestigious award.

Gina received the award in front of her family and peers at the Local Public Health Association Fall Conference in Alexandria, MN on November 14th, 2022. Being true to the person Gina is, her acceptance speech focused on her passion for the people and community, the department, and most importantly, the staff of Dakota County Public Health.

Please join me in congratulating Gina on this well-deserved award.

Coral Ripplinger, Public Health Deputy Director



SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Update on Workforce/Provider Shortage Work Group

Social Services staff presented information about staffing challenges in disability services at the August Community Services Community of the Whole meeting. The Board asked staff to form a time-limited work group made up of people with disabilities, family members, service providers, faith community representatives and other stakeholders to make recommendations for potential solutions to the County Board.

Given widespread community interest in this topic, staff developed an application and selection process to identify work group members. The below table lists selected members.

Member Category	Name	Organizational Affiliation (if any)
County Commissioners (2)	Commissioner Laurie Halverson (Chair)	Dakota County Board of Commissioners
	Commissioner Mary Liz Holberg (Co-Chair)	Dakota County Board of Commissioners
Self-Advocates (4)	Katrin Bachmeier	N/A
	Nina Clark	N/A
	Valentina Barnes	N/A
	Macdonald Metzger	Institute on Community Integration (U of M)
Family members and/or guardians (3)	Deanne Curran	N/A
	Debbi Simmons Harris	N/A
	Kamaria Toulon	N/A
Service provider representatives (5)	Kari Schuster	Thomas Allen
	Chelsie Gibbs	Great Work MN
	Matt Daniels	SafeInHome
	Vicki Gerrits	MN First Community Solutions
	Andrea Zuber	The Arc MN
Faith community representative (2)	Tim Pace	Trinity Church
	Bilan Arab	Dar-Us-Salam (referred by)
Community organization representatives (2)	Heather Tidd	Dakota Child and Family Clinic
	Erin Ortiz-Murphy	Dakota County Community Development Agency
State agency representatives (3)	Natasha Merz	Department of Human Services (DHS)
	Jodi Yanda	Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED)
	Stephanie Waters	Ombudsman for Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities
Education representatives (2)	Andrea Engstrom	School District 196
	Jenne O'Neill-Mager	School District 196
County staff and leaders (7)	Various, project support	Dakota County

The work group held its first meeting on November 22nd. The meeting agenda focused on orienting the group to current challenges and the history of disability policy in Minnesota, and the group also spent time brainstorming potential solutions to explore further in future meetings. The work group plans to meet regularly until June 2023 to develop recommendations for the Board. The group's next meeting in December will concentrate on potential legislative solutions.

Update on Crisis and Recovery Center Project

Below are several updates on the Crisis and Recovery Center project.

Media References:

[Proposed Mental Health Crisis and Recovery Center Draws Pushback From Neighbors – West St. Paul Reader \(weststpaulreader.com\)](http://weststpaulreader.com)

Communications:

- The [project website](#) has been updated to include: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), recording and PowerPoint from the November 10th community meeting, and information about the upcoming December 1st community meeting.
- Follow-up emails are being sent to those who attended previous community meetings and those who submitted questions or comments online, directing them to the project webpage for updates.
- Notices for the December 1st meeting will be distributed to a wider radius of neighbors and will be posted on the County's social media sites.
- Staff are preparing a panel presentation for the December 1st meeting to provide additional perspectives on why this resource is needed and how it will benefit the community.

Upcoming Meetings:

11-29-22

Physical Development Committee Meeting – Capital Projects Management will be providing a project update and share the preliminary schematic design.

Location: Western Service Center CR L139, Apple Valley

Start time: 9:00 am

12-01-22

Community Engagement Event – Dakota County, Guild, and others will provide information about the project and answer questions.

Location: Northern Service Center CR 110 A/B, West St. Paul

Start time: 6:30 pm

12-12-22

West St. Paul City Council Meeting – City Council will review our (4) applications related to rezoning. Like the Planning Commission Meeting, this will be an open meeting with time for public comment.

Location: WSP City Hall, Council Chambers

Start time: presume 6:30 pm, but we will confirm this as it gets closer.

01-10-23

Physical Development Committee Meeting – CPM will be presenting the schematic design and requesting approval to continue with project development.

Location: Western Service Center CR L139, Apple Valley

Start time: 9:00 am

Potential for Additional State Funding

Community Services staff are in discussion with the State about potential to secure an additional \$1.0 to \$1.3 million in state bonding funds for the project from the amount previously authorized by the legislature. The State is confirming the available amount and requirements but have communicated that funds would need to be encumbered prior to December 31, 2022.