



**JONATHAN E. FIELDING, M.D., M.P.H.**  
*Director and Health Officer*

**CYNTHIA A. HARDING, M.P.H.**  
*Chief Deputy Director*

313 North Figueroa Street, Room 806  
Los Angeles, California 90012  
TEL (213) 240-8117 • FAX (213) 975-1273

[www.publichealth.lacounty.gov](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov)



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**Gloria Molina**  
First District

**Mark Ridley-Thomas**  
Second District

**Zev Varoslavsky**  
Third District

**Don Knabe**  
Fourth District

**Michael D. Antonovich**  
Fifth District

January 17, 2013

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *JE Fielding m*  
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION GRANT – YEAR ONE**

This is in response to the September 18, 2012 Board motion instructing the Department of Public Health (DPH) to report to the Board after the close of each year on the Community Transformation Grant project known as "Choose Health LA", funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Year 1 of the project ended on September 30, 2012. This report provides updates on progress across the project's strategic directions, including milestones and outcomes achieved.

**Public Education/Outreach**

In early October 2012, DPH launched the "Choose Less, Weigh Less" obesity prevention public education campaign, which focuses on encouraging consumers to reduce their portion sizes when they eat out or prepare meals at home. The public education campaign included paid placement of ads on transit, radio, television and other venues throughout Los Angeles County that ran from October to December 2012. Coinciding with this launch, DPH also released new countywide adult obesity data based on the 2011 Los Angeles County Health Survey. The data show that adult obesity is continuing to rise in nearly every demographic group in the region.

Initial assessments of the campaign's reach suggest that a significant number of County residents have been exposed to the campaign ads. Earned media coverage resulted in more than 70 broadcast media mentions including every local TV and radio news broadcast, print and online coverage including the *Los Angeles Times* and *L.A. Daily News*, and stories on digital sites including Yahoo! News. Further plans to track the reach and impacts of this campaign will extend into early 2013.

In partnership with the DPH's Sodium Reduction in Communities Program, Choose Health LA developed and released a series of "Salt Shocker" videos that helped raise public awareness about the high levels of sodium in popular food items and provide tips for choosing foods with less sodium. This public education campaign aired on Transit TV in 2,000 Los Angeles County Metro buses from June to December of 2012.

Choose Health LA also expanded its online and social media presence. The ChooseHealthLA.com website now includes consumer-friendly videos, factsheets, and other useful multimedia tools about tobacco-free living, healthy eating, and active living.

### **Tobacco Free Living**

During the first year, Choose Health LA supported several jurisdiction-wide initiatives to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke and decrease youth access to tobacco products and exposure to tobacco advertising. Four community-based organizations received funding from Choose Health LA to conduct community assessments to gain a better understanding of local communities, their physical and geographic characteristics, and public health needs; provide education/information on the dangers of secondhand smoke; and support the efforts of community residents to develop jurisdiction-wide strategies for reducing exposure to secondhand smoke.

During this reporting period, the City of San Fernando adopted a jurisdiction-wide strategy to reduce exposure to second hand smoke (SHS) in public outdoor areas. The city regulation prohibits smoking in recreational areas, outdoor dining areas, outdoor places of employment, and public events.

A request for proposals (RFP) is currently being developed to fund licensed behavioral health facilities to increase access to tobacco cessation services and support system-level changes in public service agencies that provide mental health and drug treatment services. This RFP is expected to be released during Year 2 of the CTG grant.

### **Clinical Preventive Services**

An important goal of the CTG grant is to improve patient/population access to high quality, clinical preventive services (CPS) such as aspirin prophylaxis, blood pressure and cholesterol screening and control, and smoking cessation services. Under Choose Health LA, DPH is implementing an initiative to promote "team care" infrastructure and approaches to increasing CPS access at various ambulatory clinic networks in Los Angeles County.

From diabetes self-management programs that use community health workers, to federally-qualified health centers that provide prenatal, perinatal, and post-partum care to women, DPH staff are providing technical assistance and training to clinic managers in charge of integrating CPS protocols into daily clinic operations. Specific activities include: training for clinic staff; sharing of clinical decision support tools and protocols; offering of patient education materials; referring patients to community resources; and assisting with data management and program quality improvement efforts.

During Year 1, seven clinic networks that serve low-income patient populations received grant resources to support their efforts to increase access to CPS. For example, Public Health Centers focused on selectively expanding tobacco use screening and referrals for cessation services (including nicotine replacement therapy) in tuberculosis, sexually transmitted disease and immunization clinics. The Department of Health Services Ambulatory Care Network integrated CPS tracking in their patient registry system, allowing the registry to now track blood pressure management, cholesterol control, and tobacco cessation services use and referrals during patient encounters.

In Year 1, DPH also supported the USC Foundation in their design and ongoing effort to launch the "Wellness Center" to be located at the former LAC/USC hospital facility. This venue, when fully operational, will offer patients and community members access to many co-located services, including diabetes self-management, health promotion programs, social services including legal services for the poor, workforce mentorship programs for children, and other community resources for obesity prevention.

In South Los Angeles, Choose Health LA is supporting the Los Angeles LA Best Babies Network, which is collaborating with five clinics in the region to focus on managing perinatal weight gain and supporting postpartum weight loss. DPH is also providing technical assistance to improve CPS delivery in diabetes self-management programs in clinic venues operated by the Pasadena and Long Beach health departments.

To reach Asian/Pacific Islander groups, Choose Health LA formed a partnership with St. Vincent's Medical Center, to initiate outreach and screening for Hepatitis B and other preventable health conditions through a faith-based organization (FBO) network. This year, through community health fairs and FBO-sponsored events, the outreach initiative successfully incorporated blood pressure screening and referrals. Blood pressure screening and control has proven to be a needed area of intervention, with approximately 30-45% of clients screened requiring referrals for care of elevated blood pressure.

Finally, in Year 1, DPH reached agreement with the American Diabetes Association to expand their Diabetes Center of Excellence Recognized Program to include more low-income clinics in Los Angeles County. This effort will start in early 2013.

## **Active Living, Healthy Eating and Safe Physical Environments**

### *Promoting Healthy Food Procurement Practices*

During Year 1, DPH worked with two County departments and the City of Los Angeles to provide recommendations to improve their food service environments through the establishment of food procurement and nutrition standards. DPH provided recommendations on a vending machine RFP administered by the Chief Executive Office (CEO) and the Parks and Recreation Department.

At the request of LA City staff, DPH also provided nutrition technical assistance to the Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC) as it developed its Good Food purchasing guidelines. On October 24, 2012, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa issued an Executive Directive in support of the Good Food Purchasing Pledge and the Los Angeles City Council followed by adopting a resolution in support of the pledge. The pledge calls on City departments and other institutions to increase the purchase of locally grown, sustainable food, while promoting healthy eating habits. In November 2012, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) also adopted a resolution to support the pledge in its food services practices.

Earlier in the year, DPH conducted a qualitative study to assess County food service environments by contacting all 37 departments to determine whether their facilities purchase, distribute, and/or sell food. The assessment identified all departments who purchase, distribute or sell food in the County of Los Angeles government. DPH compiled a list of the types of venues departments manage and collected the amount of meals and snacks each department/program serves each day. Through this process, DPH gained a better understanding of the variety of regulatory requirements impacting food purchasing and menu planning through various County programs and the amount of food service contracts and contracted vendors. Based on this work, DPH has developed an implementation plan for working with the identified County departments as well as crafted education materials, including an issue brief on healthy food procurement, draft implementation guides, and promotional signage.

In addition, in May 2012, DPH hosted its Second Annual Food Policy Forum which was attended by representatives from County departments, local school districts, community-based organizations, hospitals, and other stakeholders to discuss innovative healthy food purchasing strategies. DPH continues to convene its Food Procurement Advisory Committee to guide the Choose Health LA efforts in promoting healthy food procurement practices.

#### *Fresh Preparation of School Meals*

Under Choose Health LA, the California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) has been contracted to spearhead a project to improve the appeal of school meals in school districts serving low-income students and encourage the preparation of meals closer to the point of service. During Year 1, CFPA engaged the LAUSD's food service management team on strategies to improve the appeal of school meals and LAUSD is interested in partnering on this initiative. CFPA has collected best practices to share with other school districts including a culinary curriculum for school cafeteria staff and a report developed by the Urban Environmental Policy Institute (UEPI) commissioned by CFPA to help identify the factors in school meals presentation that influence students' perception of the appeal of school meals and their decision to participate in the school meal program.

#### *Promoting Healthy Communities Through Evidence-based Strategies*

Under Choose Health LA, the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) has been contracted to provide education and technical assistance to cities on evidence-based health initiatives that aim to increase access to healthy food and physical activity.

CCPHA has conducted a baseline assessment of communities with high rates of childhood obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other indicators of health disparities in the county for the selection and implementation of evidence-based nutrition strategies. These strategies could potentially include joint use agreements for shared use of facilities and parks, breastfeeding accommodations for employees, and nutrition standards for vending machines on property within cities which will be identified at a later date.

CCPHA is currently collaborating with two organizations to conduct educational workshops on evidence-based nutrition strategies, including the Social Justice Learning Institute in the City of Inglewood and FAME Corporations in the City of Los Angeles. CCPHA has also conducted educational sessions in communities with high rates of childhood obesity including El Monte, La Puente, Lennox, Carson, Downey, Azusa, Compton, and Baldwin Park to share information on healthy food, beverages, and obesity trends.

#### *Breastfeeding Promotion*

Choose Health LA has contracted with Breastfeed LA to lead an initiative to promote breastfeeding among new mothers in hospitals serving low-income families. The initial goal of the project was to provide technical assistance to ten hospitals to help them achieve Baby-Friendly designation, a certification process administered by Baby-Friendly USA that ensures a hospital has procedures and practices in place to support breastfeeding among new mothers. However, due to high interest in the project among local hospitals, project staff is providing support to a total of 19 hospitals. The three County hospitals that achieved Baby-Friendly designation during a previous DPH grant, RENEW LA County, are among the 19 receiving assistance as they go through re-designation during the Choose Health LA project period.

The hospitals that have completed memoranda of understanding for technical assistance include: Centinela Hospital Medical Center; East Los Angeles Doctors Hospital; Greater El Monte Community Hospital; Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center; Memorial Hospital of Gardena; AHMC Monterey Park Hospital; Northridge Hospital Medical Center; Pacifica Hospital of the Valley; Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center; Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center San Pedro; San Gabriel Valley Medical Center; Providence St. Joseph Medical Center; Torrance Memorial Medical Center; Whittier Hospital Medical Center; and Bellflower Medical Center.

#### *Physical Education in Schools*

In July 2012, DPH, along with the assistance of the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), provided a six-day Train the Teacher Collaborative (TTTC) Physical Education Professional Development to elementary and secondary teachers in July. A total of 30 participants from the following districts attended the training: El Monte Unified School District, Mountain View Unified School District, Pasadena Unified School District, Pomona Unified School District and LAUSD. Participants received educational materials and other resources as guiding tools on quality physical education instruction. LACOE and LAUSD continue to provide these participants with technical assistance.

Examples of implementation of new programs as a result of the TTTC training include the establishment of a school-wide running program at Lopez Elementary in the Pomona Unified School District. In addition, Stoner Elementary (LAUSD) has implemented "Operation Tone Up," a 10-week in-school nutrition and exercise program, and "Marathon kids," a running, walking, nutrition and schoolyard gardening program for K-5th graders. LAUSD's trained teachers have also shared professional development on the new material they learned with other staff members on their campuses.

### *Farmers Markets*

Choose Health LA staff is working to significantly expand the number of CalFresh participants in the county who have access to use CalFresh benefits at farmers' markets. Partners in this effort have included the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), the California Department of Social Services, and the Los Angeles Food Policy Council, as well as other community stakeholders.

During Year 1, Choose Health LA staff did the following: produced a targeted assessment of the availability of CalFresh EBT at farmers' markets in the county; developed user-friendly resources targeted to both market managers and CalFresh participants; provided technical assistance to farmers' market managers; and created strategic partnerships with other agencies and groups.

Assessment activities thus far include the creation of an accurate listing of farmers' markets currently accepting CalFresh benefits, as well as the use of this information and additional data from County and State agencies to generate GIS maps that overlay obesity, poverty, CalFresh eligibility, and availability of farmers' markets. These maps inform the project's targeted outreach to farmers' markets that currently do not accept CalFresh.

Outreach activities have included hosting a meeting for farmers' market managers to provide information on accepting CalFresh, engaging in one-on-one outreach and technical assistance for farmers' market managers, as well as the printing of 500,000 postcards promoting the use of CalFresh at farmers' markets among program participants. The list of markets accepting CalFresh developed by DPH has been posted on the DPSS website. Technical assistance has been provided to more than 10 market managers, and many have indicated their willingness to begin accepting CalFresh. One market in Monterey Park began accepting CalFresh early in Fall 2012.

### *Expanding Access to Physical Activity through the Built Environment*

Under Choose Health LA, DPH has partnered with the City of Los Angeles to support its Department of Planning in developing a Health and Wellness Chapter within the City's General Plan. During Year 1 of the project, extensive land use, transportation, health, and socioeconomic information on the City of Los Angeles has been collected and analyzed, informing the

development of a series of maps and data tables. These showed clusters of health disparities and present information on the physical, economic, and social factors that contribute to these health disparities and will help inform the development of the Health and Wellness Chapter.

On July 9, 2012, DPH released a Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) RFP and subsequently received 37 proposals. All proposals were scored by a panel of experts and the top scoring proposals were selected to proceed to an oral interview. In total, eight organizations are recommended to receive funding for up to four years to work on strategies to expand physical activity and promote nutrition in underserved communities. The Board letter requesting approval to enter into these competitively bid contracts will be on the Board agenda for the Board meeting on February 19, 2013.

### **Quantitative Outcomes and Lessons Learned**

DPH will not have data on health outcomes related to these initiatives until near the end of the five-year grant period. To assess progress towards meeting the project's quarterly milestones, DPH staff participate in monthly calls with our CDC Project Officer to track the project's progress as well as complete semi-annual and annual programmatic and fiscal reports in accordance with the grant guidelines.

During Year 1, there have been several lessons learned. Launching the project has required a significant amount of planning and administrative resources given Choose Health LA's multiple strategic directions and the coordination with funded partners that is necessary to implement all the initiatives. To best serve the project's target populations, DPH contracted with more than 15 community and government organizations in Year 1 which required the development and execution of contracts, memoranda of understanding, and compliance training for partners to ensure the efficient use of funding. The time needed to launch the project in Year 1 left some partners with less time to complete all Year 1 objectives. However, DPH is working with affected partners to modify work plans to ensure that all project deliverables will be met over the course of the grant period.

The importance of ensuring effective implementation of the strategies described above was also an important lesson learned, especially given that many of the initiatives in Choose Health LA built off of successes from both RENEW and TRUST. Implementation monitoring can be challenging given the significant amount of staff time involved. However, because of its importance, DPH has re-purposed some staff to devote more time on monitoring implementation of strategies, such as healthy procurement practices, to ensure that the full effect of the initiative can be realized.

Another lesson learned is the importance of investing sufficient resources to develop public education campaigns that increase awareness of public health issues and motivate target populations to take action. In launching the “Choose Less, Weigh Less” public education campaign, DPH’s media contractor conducted online surveys and in-person focus groups to research various messages and creative material that would be most effective in raising awareness about portion control. We have also learned that ongoing monitoring of education campaigns will be critical for measuring their effectiveness, but also informing decisions about the allocation of media resources during the grant period.

The value of collaboration across County departments has been an important lesson learned and is a strategy that DPH plans to utilize across all of the grant’s strategic areas. For example, through a partnership with the CEO and the County’s Department of Parks and Recreation, Choose Health LA was able to support a successful expansion of the County’s Parks After Dark program.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please let me know.

JEF:ml  
PH:1209:011

- c: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors