



**Request for City Council Committee Action
From the Department of Health & Family Support**

Date: September 15, 2008
To: HEALTH, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Subject: PRESENTATION ON THE MULTICULTURAL HEALTH
STORYTELLING PROJECT

Recommendation: Receive presentation.

Previous Directives: None

Prepared or Submitted by: Becky McIntosh, Director of Planning & Administration
Phone: x2884

Approved by: _____
Gretchen Musicant, Commissioner of Health

Permanent Review Committee (PRC): Approval _____ Not Applicable X
Policy Review Group (PRG) Approval _____ Date of Approval _____ Not Applicable X

Presenters in Committee: Gretchen Musicant, Commissioner of Health

Staff and community advisory committee members available to answer questions:
Emily Wang, Family Support Specialist III
Elaine Salinas, Executive Director, Migizi Communications
Victoria Amaris, Manager-Cultural Dynamics Coordinator, Greater Twin Cities United Way
Hoa Pham, Executive Director, Center for Asian and Pacific Islander (CAPI)
Dao Ngo, Vietnamese Health Storytelling Facilitator, CAPI
Robinson Cook, Vietnamese Health Storytelling Event Planner, CAPI

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

X No financial impact (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information).

Background/Supporting Information Attached

In the summer 2006, the Department formed a community advisory committee reflective of some of the major racial/ethnic groups residing within the City. The Committee was charged with designing a *community engagement process* for the well-being of City residents that would inform the policy and programmatic work of the Department. Department staff and community advisors on the committee embarked upon an equal partnership to pilot a *multicultural health storytelling project* in December 2006.

Ten intergenerational health storytelling events were held and videotaped with members of the: African American, American Indian, Caucasian, Hmong, Latino, Somali, and Vietnamese communities. Gender-specific events were held in the African American and Somali communities. The focus of the events was to “tell us about a time when your family/community was healthy.” In summer 2008, a short DVD of these events was completed that highlights six of the dominant health themes:

- Extended kinship networks and social interaction promotes health.
- People can be extremely resilient despite great hardships.
- Health is viewed holistically, with physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects.
- Access to and engagement in physical activities is important to health.
- Racial/cultural pride and maintaining cultural traditions and ties to a cultural community are important to health.
- Culturally-competent and language-specific services are essential.

The results of this pilot project support the overarching need to shift traditional health paradigms focused on the needs of individuals towards *families and cultural assets* in order to eliminate health disparities.

MDHFS is committed to using these findings in its policy and programmatic actions, and sharing findings with community members, policy makers, health decision makers, and funders.