

# Multnomah County Health Department's Community Health Council

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The Community Health Council serves as the community advisory board to the Multnomah County Health Department. The Council serves as a link with the community and gives guidance on health services and policies affecting Multnomah County residents. A majority of members are County residents who use clinical services at the Health Department. The remainder of the Council is comprised of representatives from health care and social service organizations, and community members who have an interest in public health.

A central responsibility of the Council is to oversee the programs, services, and policies within the scope of the Health Department's Primary Care Grant. This grant comes from the Federal Bureau of Primary Health Care and provides funding to serve people without health insurance at the County's community health centers. Examples of the Council's federally-mandated responsibilities include participation in the selection, evaluation and dismissal of the Department Director, the budget review and approval process, the adoption of health care policies regarding scope and availability of services, and the approval or disapproval of any second or subsequent grant applications to the Bureau of Primary Health Care. The Council also provides oversight of the programs and services that are within the scope of the Health Department's Title X Family Planning Grant.

## **Some highlights of the Council's 2007 activities include:**

- Approved the Health Department's annual grant application to the federal Bureau of Primary Health Care, including funding for the Health Department's six primary care sites, twelve school-based health centers, mobile medical van and three community partner sites.
- Developed outcome measures to evaluate Council activities
- Participated in the Fall Primary Care Conference in Denver, Colorado.
- Participated in three major local health care conferences: Oregon Health Forum Summit, ORPCA/CHAO Conference and Grassroots Healthcare Reform
- Hosted a successful legislative event during National Health Center Week where several key policymakers, including Congressman Earl Blumenauer and Chair Ted Wheeler, attended in support of the health centers.
- Participated in consumer interviews for the Building Better Care project.
- Served as the official Public Health Hero review committee to select winners
- Provided input on menu labeling

- Recruited three new Council Members – two consumers from North Portland Health Center and Mid-County Health Center and one community member.
- Participated in the National Association of Community Health Centers Policy & Issues Conference in Washington DC
- Actively participated in the Health Department's budget development process. Two Council Members participated in a two day budget retreat to help develop recommendations.
- Submitted budget recommendations to the County Chair at CBAC meeting.
- Testified at public budget hearings in support of Health Department's FY 07/08 budget.

Research indicates that government programs best meet the needs of the community they serve when people who are affected by those programs are fully involved in program planning and oversight. The Health Department and the Community Health Council work in partnership to facilitate dialogue from the community and to encourage and support citizen involvement in our public health system.