

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

A REVIEW OF ITS HISTORY

July, 2002

The Greater Flint Health Coalition is a multi-faced institutional, agency partnership of health providers, insurers, government, business, labor and the community whose mission is to improve the health status of its citizens and the quality and cost effectiveness of the health care system in Genesee County.

Coalition members include the following:

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan/Blue Care Network
- Delphi Automotive Systems
- Faith Access to Community Economic Development (F.A.C.E.D.)
- General Motors Corporation
- Genesee County Health Department
- Genesee County Medical Society
- Genesee County Osteopathic Association
- Genesee Intermediate School District
- Genesys Health System
- HealthPlus of Michigan
- Hurley Medical Center
- Mott Children's Health Center

- McLaren Regional Medical Center
- United Auto Workers
- United Teachers of Flint
- University of Michigan-Flint
- Wellness Plan

When examining the history of the Health Improvement Committee, it is important to understand why healthy lifestyles became a focal point for the Greater Flint Health Coalition and the work of the Health Improvement Committee since 1997.

On May 16, 1996 "The Lewin Report" – Community Assessment Factbook (Genesee County, MI) was released and its purpose was to provide analytical support to the broad coalition of community stakeholders (i.e. GFHC) seeking to fulfill the vision of an improved health care system. The community assessment served as a catalyst by providing the Coalition with the information needed to reach consensus on an agenda for the Coalition and health system change. As part of the "Lewin Process" each Coalition Board member was asked to identify four problems as identified by Lewin that they felt were a priority for the Coalition. As a result the following **ten priorities** were developed, they were:

- High quality, easily accessible, coordinated primary and preventative care is not consistently available.
- Low income families face compromised access to health care services
- Health outcomes for cardiovascular disease are poor and service utilization is high
- Health outcomes for cancer are poor and service utilization is high
- Maternal and child health outcomes are poor and specialized service utilization is high
- Health outcomes and quality are not measured, monitored, or disseminated
- Health outcomes for diabetes are poor
- African-Americans are particularly vulnerable to compromised access
- Health resource capacity/investments must meet changing needs
- Available medical technologies are not always used properly.

In October 1996, following the prioritizing process that lead to the ten priorities, Kevin Seitz, a Coalition board member, was asked to facilitate a discussion of these priorities. The "Seitz Process" highlighted that the ten priorities could be placed into four major focus areas. Those areas are:

- **Health Status**
- Access
- Quality of Care

➤ Allocation of Resources/Capacity

As a result of the "Seitz Process" the Coalition developed four ad hoc groups to further clarify how these issues should be addressed by the Coalition.

In April, 1997 a group met under the auspices of the Coalition to discuss the creation of a new task force combining the newly reorganized Greater Flint Health Coalition and the Lifesteps Steering Committee. This newly created Health Improvement Task Force was co-chaired by Trissa Torres, M.D., Director of Health Promotion & Disease Prevention, Genesys Health System and Tim McDonald, Manager of Corporate Health Promotion, GM Health Care Initiatives.

The original vision and mission statement of the Health Improvement Task Force was:

VISION: To promote new attitudes towards health & well-being which influence behavior and result in a healthier community.

MISSION STATEMENT: Improve the health status through health risk reduction by health education, health promotion and disease prevention strategies.

Group considered numerous health risks (including smoking, sedentary lifestyles, nutrition, blood pressure, cholesterol and safety/violence) before deciding to focus on sedentary lifestyles for health improvement.

At the same time the Health Improvement Task Force was in the process of forming and developing a vision, the board was going through a process of its own in which it was questioning the overall structure of the organization and activities (September '97 board retreat). The board was seeking from all committees/task forces a more focused approach for each group with measurable outcomes. As a result the "Call to Action" was presented to the Board in November 1997 and the business plan was developed. The "Call to Action" proposed the development of four standing committees (to work on the four focus areas listed above). Each of the four committees were to be chaired by a board member. The Health Improvement Task Force was elevated to Committee status and Henry Gaines, Regional Coordinator, GM UAW Health Care Initiatives became chair.

The "Call to Action" offered **three possible outcome options** for the Health Improvement Committee:

- Reduce the proportion of residents who do not exercise in Genesee County from 28% (Lewin 1989 – 1993) to 15% (Healthy People 2000 objectives).
- Develop and implement a "Flint Exercise Award". First presentations in 3/99.
- Develop a major, coordinated health education program for the community.

It was concluded that the Committee would agree upon a outcome option within two months of the "Call to Action" presentation. On February 16, 1998, the Board of Directors approved the following outcome option of the Committee:

ONE YEAR GOAL: A 10% reduction in sedentary lifestyles in specifically targeted populations within the Greater Flint Health Coalition.

THREE YEAR GOAL: To reduce the proportion of residents in Genesee County who are sedentary by 10%. The Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Survey indicates 55% of Genesee County residents are sedentary. The targeted 10% reduction in residents who are sedentary would reduce the rate to 49.5%.

Recognizing that behavior changes are difficult and everyone has a role to play to help decrease sedentary lifestyles, the Committee spent much of its early meetings developing a document entitled "Intervention Options to Promote Physical Activity" (known as the attached "eight-page document"). The purpose of this document was to assist the various coalition "sectors" in implementing different intervention options that would complement the Committee's work in reducing sedentary lifestyles. The Interventions Options document is a menu of choices of involvement for promoting physical activity among participating member organizations and their constituents. This approach to "sector" interventions was very pivotal to the work of the Committee and also in influencing the future work of the Coalition.

Every individual is influenced directly or indirectly by each sector represented in the Coalition: as an employee, a subscriber or member of an insurance plan, as a patient, a community member, a church or organization member, a voter, possibly a parent of a school-aged child. Thus, each sector can use its influence to help reinforce the message and support the behavior that physical activities are an essential part of health and daily functioning. The Committee focused on the five interventions:

1. reinforce the message
2. support behavior change
3. integrate with other efforts
4. monitor and report
5. role model

The principle purpose of the Committee activity is to ascertain an approximate level of sedentary lifestyles in Genesee County, initially beginning with the member organizations of the Greater Flint Health Coalition, which at that time included Genesys Health System, Hurley Medical Center, McLaren Regional Medical Center, City of Flint, Blue Care Network, Genesee County Health Department, General Motors Corporation, United Auto Workers (through Lifesteps), United Teachers of Flint, Genesee Intermediate School District, and Faith Access to Community Economic Development. A baseline survey utilizing a single question regarding level of physical activity was conducted with the participating member organizations during the first quarter of 1998. The question was:

In the average week, how many times do you engage in physical activity (exercise or work which is hard enough to make you breathe more heavily and to make your heart beat faster) that is done for at least 20 minutes?

Examples include brisk walking, running and heavy labor, e.g., chopping, lifting, digging, etc.

- Less than 1 time per week
- 1 or 2 times per week
- 3 times per week
- 4 or more times a week

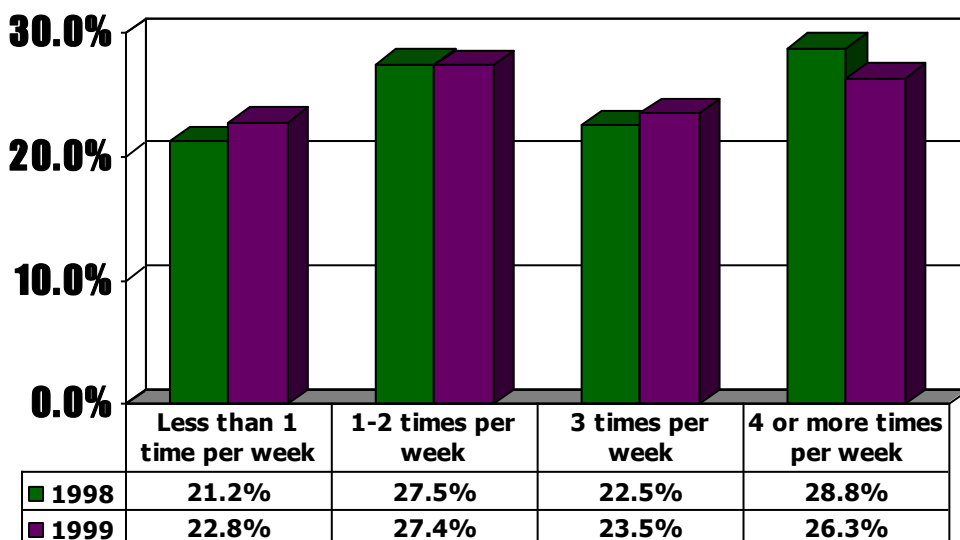
Coalition member organizations that already assess physical activity of their employees and/or target populations collected the baseline information via a Health Risk Assessment (HRA). Member organizations that did not measure sedentary lifestyles for their employees and/or target population utilized the one-question survey above.

With the baseline information, the Committee set a goal to reduce the rate of sedentary lifestyles of the Coalition's member organizations by 10% in 1999 and of the entire county by 10% in 2001.

In order to improve upon the 1998 sedentary lifestyles study baseline results and meeting its one year outcome goal, the Committee designated “point persons” to interact and collaborate with member organizations to stimulate physical activity within those organizations.

During the last quarter of 1998, member organizations that participated in the 1998 baseline survey on sedentary lifestyles were asked to resurvey their constituents via organization Health Risk Assessments or the one-question survey sometime during the first quarter of 1999 with a tentative completion date of March 12, 1999. The purpose is to obtain follow up information from member organizations to again determine the level of sedentary lifestyles within member organizations and assess improvement in physical activity and measure against first year goal of a 10% reduction in sedentary lifestyles. The data collection process was not completed until May 1999 due to individual organizations’ committed timelines for HRAs, health screenings, etc.

Results of the two years are as follows:



In 1998, 104,446 were surveyed with 45,113 responding. In 1999, 104,988 were surveyed with 45,113 responding. Participating organizations were: Bendle Public Schools, Blue Care Network, City of Flint, F.A.C.E.D., Genesee County Health Department, Genesys Health System, Genesee Intermediate School District, GM UAW Lifesteps, Hurley Medical Center and McLaren Regional Medical Center.

The resurvey in 1999 indicates that people reporting leading sedentary lifestyles defined as exercising 1-2 times a week or less increased from 48.7% in 1998 to 50.2% in 1999. However, people reporting exercising 1 or less time a week was 21.2% in 1998 and increased to 22.8% in 1999. The number of people exercising 3 or more times per week increased over the two years.

In conjunction with the "Interventions Options" document, the committee spent a great amount of time developing its very successful "Just a Bit Gets You Fit" media campaign. Throughout 1998 the Committee discussed how to disseminate the message of promoting exercise out into the community. A Communication Plan Strategy was developed to outline the strategies the Committee would take in promoting physical activity in the community.

In early 1999, Karl Olmsted (Karl Olmsted Associates, Inc.) and Todd Haight (Todd Haight Communications) were invited to the Committee to give a proposal for the Communication Plan, which was to include budgets for the campaign, goals, strategies, target audience, and a campaign overview. The Committee agreed to use Karl Olmsted Associates and Todd Haight Communications for this campaign.

The next few months were spent developing campaign materials, all focused on the Surgeon General's recommendation of accumulating 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week. Posters, payroll/bill stuffers and the "101 Easy Ways to Better Health" brochure were developed, along with print ads and articles.

At the September 13, 1999 Board of Directors meeting, the Board of the Coalition agreed to contribute \$50,000 to the media campaign, with the plan to leverage an additional \$50,000 in donated media time to have a \$100,000 campaign budget.

In November 1999, the Health Improvement Committee hosted a media summit in which all the major media outlets were invited. The invitation to this media summit was signed by Coalition board members of those health care organizations in the community with major media budgets. This media summit served as the official kickoff event for the one year (November 1999 – November 2000) “Just a Bit Gets You Fit” campaign. The summit was very successful in leveraging media time, with commitments being made for outdoor billboards, newspaper ads and articles, and radio/tv spots. It is estimated that the Coalition leveraged between \$75,000 and \$100,000 in donated media.

Distribution of the “Just a Bit Gets You Fit” campaign materials included:

- 800 area physicians
- All Coalition members
- 200 community organizations
- 3000 area small businesses in Genesee County through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

Highlights of other campaign activities included:

- Mayor of City of Flint declared June 27, 2000 “Just a Bit Gets You Fit” (JBGF) Day in the City of Flint
- U.S. Senator Carl Levin produces JBGF Public service announcement
- Flint Generals (an UHL hockey team) held a JBGF Night on March 22, 2000

- Campaign was awarded the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports Getting Michigan Communities Moving Award Nomination Educational Materials of the Year Award in 2000
- Sponsored a Crim (an international racing event held annually in Flint) Festival of Races One Mile Fun Walk.
- Participated in the Kids Crim Classic
- Partnered in hosting a "Community Health Promotion" conference with University of Michigan-Flint and the Chamber of Commerce. Purpose of conference was to improve awareness and use of wellness resources in the greater Flint area.

In response to a number of national studies regarding adolescent obesity, the original "Just a Bit Gets You Fit" campaign was extended in 2001 to focus on adolescents by funds totaling \$49,500 contributed by Mott Children's Health Center (whose mission is to improve the lives of Genesee County children and adolescents who are at great risk for not reaching their full potential by providing for their comprehensive health care needs through direct services, indirect services and advocacy within the context of family and community, and by joining others to promote the well being of all children in the county).

The extended campaign was tailored to adolescents and took on the name "Just a Bit Gets YouTH Fit". New campaign materials were developed, including payroll/bill stuffers and posters, to use in addition with the original campaign materials.

Distribution of the “Just a Bit Gets YouTH Fit” campaign materials included:

- All Coalition members
- 200 community organizations
- 3000 area small businesses in Genesee County through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

The YOUth campaign was extended by funds totaling \$74,500 contributed by Mott Children’s Health Center in 2002. This third phase of the “Just a Bit” campaign was tailored towards providing nutrition information to adolescents; it was entitled “Just a Bit Gets YouTH Fit—Eat Good. Feel Good. Look Good”. Michigan State University Extension also partnered in this campaign.

Additional campaign materials were developed, including posters, brochures, wallet cards and water bottles. Distribution channels included:

- Coalition members
- 200 community organizations
- Genesee Intermediate School District and Flint Community Schools (both played major parts in distributing information to students)

Media for this phase of the campaign included:

- Busboards and billboards

- Public service announcements on radio and television
- Advertisements placed in local newspapers and organization newsletters

The Health Improvement Committee once again participated in the Kids Crim Classic in 2002. The Committee also supported the Boy Scouts Annual Hike-A-Thon event in April 2002.

At the February 2001 Board of Directors retreat, the Board placed smoking on its list of top priorities and felt that the Health Improvement Committee would be the most appropriate committee within the Coalition to examine the issue of smoking and its impact on healthy lifestyles. With this decision, the Committee invited the Smoke-Free Multi-Agency Resource Team (SMART) Coalition to give a presentation on the area's anti-smoking activities and also to make recommendations to the Committee as to which area would be most appropriate for the Coalition to work in.

25.1% of the Michigan's population smokes, ranking it 39th nationally. There are 15,786 annual deaths from smoking, with 14.1 years of potential life lost. Medical costs related to smoking in 19993 were \$1.9 billion (\$532 million in Medicaid expenditures alone).

Michigan will receive \$301 million in tobacco settlement money in 2001 and \$604 million in cigarette tax revenues. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that for an effective tobacco control program, Michigan should spend

between \$55 - \$155 million annually. The total state tobacco control funding for 2001 is \$6.6 million (ranking 40th nationally).

CDC's best practices for tobacco control programs include: community programs, chronic disease programs, school programs, enforcement, statewide programs, countermarketing, cessation programs, surveillance and evaluation, and administration and management.

Of the CDC's 9 best practices, Michigan and Genesee County's weakest piece is countermarketing. Michigan has had poor tobacco media campaigns because of successful tobacco industry lobbying in the State. In Genesee County, the SMART Coalition funding cannot be used for paid advertising.

Massachusetts, California, Arizona and Florida all have lower smoking rates than Michigan, which they credit, in part, to their quality advertising programs. The CDC recommends that a state the size of Michigan should be spending between \$9-\$30 million annually on media, yet the entire tobacco control program for Michigan is only \$6.6 million.

The SMART Coalition made the following recommendations to the Committee:

- The #1 gap to fill and the biggest need at this time in Genesee County is a comprehensive media campaign. The program could include: paid television,

radio, print and billboards, focused message on environmental tobacco smoke, use of previously created successful spots from other states and the addition of a local flavor.

- The next three areas in need of work in order of priority recommendation are:
 - 24 Hour Smoke Free Campuses
 - Smoke Free Worksites
 - Smoke Free Restaurants

With these recommendations, the Health Improvement Committee felt it might have the most successful and impact with a comprehensive media campaign (due to its past success with the "Just a Bit" campaigns).

The Committee chose to submit a grant application to the Ruth Mott Foundation to seek funds for such a campaign. The idea of the campaign, entitled "Smoke Free Genesee" is to promote a smoke free community. However, the issue of smoking was not a target giving priority for the Ruth Mott Foundation and the proposal for "Smoke Free Genesee" was not accepted.

In July, the Committee had a retreat to refocus its efforts. At the retreat a S.W.O.T analysis was performed and six primary focus areas were created. The six focus areas included:

1. Cultural Opportunities

2. Partnership/Collaboration
3. Youth
4. Celebration of Fitness/ Maximize image of CRIM
5. HIC goal Integration
6. Measurement

The issue of smoking, while it made the list of priorities, was not deemed a top priority of the Committee.

The Committee continued to focus on the six main priorities through out 2003, by sharing information of activities done by different organizations, and trying to identify projects to pursue.

In June of 2004, the Committee began to look at how the success of "Just a Bit Gets You Fit/YOuth Fit " as well as other programs have allowed the Greater Flint Health Coalition and its Health Improvement Committee to build credibility amongst the three foundations in the community. At the same time The Ruth Mott Foundation expressed interest in funding programs dealing with health promotion building upon a concept called the "Active Living by Design Movement." The active living by design is a program funded by the Robert Wood Foundation that has the goal of increasing physical activity by community design, for example constructing new walking trails and bike paths increasing the accessibility for citizens to get more physically active.

A subcommittee was formed with the purpose of coming up with strategic discussion points for the meeting with the Ruth Mott Foundation. The subcommittee was chaired by Charlie Estey and its member's consisted of those from the Committee who had direct connections with the Ruth Mott Foundation or played a pivotal role in the proposed upcoming projects.

Out of the subcommittee session came six strategic discussion points to take to the meeting with the Ruth Mott Foundation. The six points were:

1. An effort needs to be made to get to know the community better and learn what the barriers are.
2. Promotion of available urban resources such as a walk along the riverfront may help to encourage and increase physical activity.
3. Develop an activity day event or theme.
4. Behavior change-- if there is no access to healthy fruit and vegetables in the community, how can you change the eating habits of the area residents?
5. Development of safer walking areas and discussions with community leaders on the need for safer areas to walk
6. Will it be known after a period of time what the project has done and what has been accomplished? What are the areas that should be measured?

During the June 17th 2004, Committee meeting, The Ruth Mott Foundation expressed their interest in working with the Greater Flint Health Coalition in improving the health status of Flint residents by increasing the walkability of the City of Flint as well as increasing the accessibility to fresh healthy foods.

Following the meeting, a concept paper was submitted to the Ruth Mott Foundation regarding funding for the Flint River Trail. The concept paper for the River Trial project addressed one of the Health Improvement Committee's main goal in reducing the number of sedentary lifestyles in Genesee County. The project was broken down into different phases, phase I included:

- Expansion of the Trail
- Mileage Markers
- Beautification of the Trail

. A subcommittee was formed, chaired by Committee member Theresa Landis, to facilitate the implementation of the proposal.

Along the same line of reducing sedentary lifestyles amongst Genesee County residents the Health Improvement Committee decided to partner with the Healthy Families Community Collaborative (HFCC) and Healthy families Working Together (HFWT) projects. The HFCC and the HFWT were parallel pilot projects conducted over a year that focused on reducing childhood overweight through promoting healthy behaviors

and healthy environments for children and families. There were two primary goals of the projects:

Goal I--Community level intervention: To cultivate community level collaborations among providers of health programs aimed at youth and their families in order to improve the reach and efficiency of these programs and effect sustained environmental supports of healthy lifestyles.

Goal II—Family Level Intervention: To develop and pilot a family focused primary intervention program to assist in the prevention of childhood overweight and related diseases; and to promote healthy lifestyles and health advocacy at the family level.

The program also offered potential solutions, and a set of final outcomes.

Potential Solutions:

- Educate on healthier Individual and family choices
- Recognize and try to foil environmental barriers
- Offer support for a healthy lifestyle

Final outcomes must result in:

- Increased physical activity
- Decreased sedentary lifestyles
- Healthy eating habits for youth and their families

The HIC was designated to work on the community aspect of the project. A subcommittee was formed chaired by the new chair of the Health Improvement committee, Trissa Torres, M.D.

Both proposals for the FRT and the Healthy Families project were submitted in December of 2004, and both were accepted in April of 2005. Upon the acceptance of the proposals it was determine that the subcommittees will report back to the Health Improvement Committee as to their work and plans. It was concluded that the Health Improvement Committee would assist the projects in three ways:

1. It will provide linkages and advise the subcommittees if they are missing any details
2. It will provide guidance to the subcommittees
3. It will serve as a distribution channel of information

In the July of 2005, the GFHC Board of Directors decided to reinvigorate and readapt its very successful "Just a Bit Gets You Fit" Campaign to reduce sedentary lifestyles for Genesee County residents. A concept paper for reinvesting in the "Just a Bit Gets You Fit" Campaign was drafted by the Health Improvement Committee and submitted to the Ruth Mott Foundation in October of 2005 and a final proposal was submitted in December.

The proposal to reinvigorate the "Just A bit Gets you Fit" Campaign was not accepted by the Ruth Mott Foundation. A meeting with the Ruth Mott Foundation (RMF) followed the denied proposal to determine the health promotion focus of the RMF. In this meeting it was declared that the RMF is interested in health programs that would focus on neighborhoods where other RMF activities were already occurring.

For the beginning half of 2006 the Committee helped facilitate the Flint River Trail project and Healthy Families Community Collaborative/Healthy families Working Together projects.

In September of 2006, Jean DuRussel-Weston, Program Manager for the University of Michigan Health System presented on "Project Healthy Schools". The project is a program for 6th grade students designed to increase physical activity and healthier food choice through cultural change. The program comes equipped with five goals for the students:

1. Eat more fruits and vegetables
2. Make better beverage choices
3. Perform at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week
4. Eat less fast and fatty foods
5. Spend less mindless time in front of the television and computer

The program was installed in Ann Arbor public schools with excellent outcomes. The Committee recognized the cultural differences between Ann Arbor and Flint and that the

program would be hard to replicate, but tying the new program tied in with an older recognizable program, such as “Just a Bit Gets YOUth fit, would be the best way to install it in Flint . It was voted on and approved that the Committee would pursue the opportunity to develop a Project Healthy Schools replication model in Genesee County.