



# DIRECTIONS

## *Filling the Gap*

### PHMC Programs Reach At-Risk Populations

Obstacles to accessing and affording health care, difficulty communicating with health professionals and racial or ethnic bias in health care systems cause disproportionate harm to minority populations and contribute to health disparities. African Americans and women—whose contributions to history we celebrate in February and March respectively—face these challenges. African Americans die at alarming rates from preventable illnesses and injuries, and they suffer mortality and morbidity rates significantly higher than their racial counterparts. Women, particularly minority and underserved women, face similar health inequities.

Research shows that African Americans and women comprise two populations often at high risk for various health-related problems. According to the 2008 Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey conducted by PHMC's **Community Health Data Base** (CHDB), in our region:

- African Americans are more than twice as likely to be uninsured than whites and Asians.
- Poor women are nearly four times more likely than non-poor women to be uninsured.
- Poor women between ages 18 and 64 are over four times more likely than non-poor women to report that they are in fair to poor health. African Americans are more than twice as likely as whites to report being in fair to poor health.
- One in ten minority women (includes all non-white women) do not have a primary source of care and did not visit a doctor or other health care provider last year.
- African American adults and poor women are more likely to have health conditions that affect their quality of life such as high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes, compared with whites and non-poor women.
- One in three African American and Latino women are obese and 36% are

overweight. 38.3% of poor women are obese, compared with 22.1% of non-poor women.

Since we first began fulfilling our mission as a public health agency more than 36 years ago, we have continually sought opportunities to better serve our region's most vulnerable populations. From those living with HIV/AIDS, to single parents, to substance abusers, to victims of violence, to homeless teenagers and many more, PHMC serves clients and communities where they live, work, worship and play. In this issue of *DIRECTIONS*, we highlight just a few of the many programs PHMC and its affiliates offer to women and to the African American community.

#### Promoting Heart Health and Nutrition

PHMC and its affiliates have established a number of programs that seek to prevent the onset of heart disease and promote healthy living. The **Go Red for Women**—

*continued on page 4*

“Of all the forms of inequality, **INJUSTICE IN HEALTH IS THE MOST SHOCKING AND THE MOST INHUMANE.**” — Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

## A MESSAGE from Our President & CEO

With African American History Month in February and Women's History Month in March, this is one of the times that our attention turns to great pioneers such as Elizabeth Blackwell, Louis W. Sullivan, Solomon Carter Fuller, Joycelyn Elders and Sara Winifred Brown—all great contributors to the fields of health and human services.

Just as we have seen significant advances in the lives of African Americans and women, and in the field of health, much remains for us to do. With our keen focus on data—on science-driven public health—PHMC recognizes that the research shows minority groups experience poorer health status than other groups. Chronic conditions such as diabetes, obesity, HIV/AIDS, hypertension and cardiovascular disease disproportionately affect African Americans and women—particularly women of color. With minority groups expanding as a percentage of the total U.S. population, it is more critical than ever for the future of America's health that we improve the health of racial and ethnic minorities.

This is why PHMC devotes its resources—every day of the year—to its public

health mission of eliminating health disparities by striving for equal access to health education, information and care. We do this through outreach, health promotion, research, planning, technical assistance and direct services. You'll learn about some of this work as you read this issue of *DIRECTIONS*. **New Pathways for Women**, for example, targets women with substance abuse issues. **SHAPE IT**, from our affiliate **Health Promotion Council (HPC)**, increases health awareness among African American men. **Go Red for Women**, a joint program of HPC and our affiliate **National Nursing Centers Consortium**, helps women reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Our affiliate **Linda Creed** helps uninsured and underinsured women attain the breast cancer screenings and treatment they need. We collaborate with other highly effective organizations such as BEBASHI (Blacks Educating Blacks About Sexual Health Issues) and Black Women's Health Alliance as well as many others. And we truly represent the communities we serve with more than two-thirds of PHMC's staff from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, 72% of them women.



Thank you for the support and friendship you give to PHMC. It is because of you that we enjoy the tremendous privilege and opportunity to try to make significant strides in the health of African Americans, women, and all people in our region, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender or circumstances.

Yours in public health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard J. Cohen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard J. Cohen, Ph.D., FACHE  
President and CEO of PHMC

## Public Health Professionals Convene in Philadelphia

Hundreds of public health professionals attended "Collaborative Innovations in Public Health: Forming a More Perfect Union," the 2008 Pennsylvania Public Health Association (PPHA) and Public Health Institute annual conference. A number of PHMC employees participated and exhibited at the conference, November 17-19 at the Loews Philadelphia Hotel.

"The 2008 PPHA Conference was the largest in recent memory and we were thrilled to have so many outstanding presenters, as well as plenary and keynote speakers,"

says PPHA president-elect **Jessica Boyer**, who also served on the conference planning committee and is a senior program officer at PHMC. "The conference provided a wonderful learning and networking opportunity for our colleagues in public health from across the commonwealth."

PHMC employees presented in a variety of fields, including youth gun violence, nutrition, advocacy and policy, HIV/AIDS prevention, leadership development, health care access and tobacco control.

PPHA treasurer and PHMC Director of Training **Beth Shuman** served as chair of the 2008 conference planning committee, along with committee members Boyer and PHMC employees **Francine Axler**, **Allegra Gordon**, **Amanda Innes** and **Alex Lehr O'Connell**. "PHMC has always been a leader," says Shuman, "and seeing our employees take the lead in planning and participating in the conference was an indication of PHMC's commitment to the public health of our region." 

## A Model Welfare-to-Work Program

In the Summer 2008 issue of *DIRECTIONS*, we reported on **Rachel Kirzner's** and **Joel Tumberello's** workshop, "Hidden Wounds: Using In-Depth Assessments of Disabled Long-Term TANF Recipients to Inform Policy and Programs," at the 11th Annual ACF/OPRE Welfare Research and Evaluation Conference. Now their presentation, along with others from various states, is available as an online resource for welfare-to-work programs via the **Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network**. Kirzner serves as program director, and Tumberello as nurse practitioner supervisor, for PHMC's **Maximizing Participation Project (MPP)**, an initiative designed to reduce the number of families who receive benefits from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

The Welfare Peer TA Network gives MPP and similar agencies the opportunity to share best practices. "The model we've developed for Philadelphia is unique," says Kirzner. "We've received a lot of interest

from our peers." MPP employs a two-part approach that differentiates it from others. In addition to case management, MPP conducts home assessments carried out by nurse practitioners and licensed social workers. It also refers to traditional providers for assessments as needed. "We cater to our clients at their homes with a well-organized system and a database," says clinical supervisor **Jodi Houlon**, "since many of our clients have multiple, complicated issues and are unable to come to us or even leave their homes."

PHMC programmers developed the database and customized it for MPP in collaboration with Kirzner. "If you have an idea for a good program, there's always support and encouragement at PHMC," says Kirzner. "A place like PHMC has the resources to spread that idea further." ◆

To learn more about MPP, visit the Welfare Peer TA Network at [peerta.acf.hhs.gov](http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov)



## TRAINING at PHMC Winter Calendar

Get the best in public health training. PHMC's winter training calendar has begun. Here are some of our February and March offerings:

- Focus on Fathers
- Philadelphia Go Red for Women: Heart Health and Wellness
- Community Health Data Base Release
- Advocacy 101
- Safety and Self-Defense
- Interpreting Data
- Social Work Month: Future Directions for the Field
- Program Evaluation: Asking the Right Questions

Visit [phmc.org/training](http://phmc.org/training) for full descriptions, registration, payment, policy and continuing education information. Contact [training@phmc.org](mailto:training@phmc.org) for additional information.

In September, Pennsylvania Senator **LeAnna M. Washington** honored PHMC Outreach Project Assistant **Sabrina Thigpen** with an appreciation award for her support, hard work and commitment to the community, at the senator's 13th Annual Wadsworth Day community festivities.

In the fall, PHMC affiliate **Linda Creed** received the American Cancer Society's Project Award for its program "A Day in the Life of the Breast Cancer Research Laboratory... A Workshop for Breast Cancer Advocates." The award was presented at the Society's annual celebration on October 16, 2008.

LEADERSHIP Philadelphia named **Tine Hansen-Turton**, CEO of **National Nursing Centers Consortium (NNCC)**, executive director of Convenient Care Association (CCA) and vice president of Health Care Access & Policy at PHMC, a 2008 "Connector" on October 21. Hansen-Turton also received the Sharp Cutting Edge Award from the American College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP) on November 1.

**La Comunidad Hispana** is pursuing the coveted Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for its new building, which will open its doors this spring. LEED buildings deliver significant savings in energy, water and other key consumption figures.

**PRISE** (Promoting Recovery through Integrated Services and Education) welcomes **Ted Bunch** as its new program director. Bunch, who has worked in the mental health field since 1995 as a music therapist, supervisor and verbal therapist, oversees PRISE's operations including programming enhancement and staff supervision.

*continued on page 5*

**Philadelphia** program helps to improve the heart health of African American women by reaching them in their workplaces, in their homes and through their health care providers. A partnership between PHMC affiliates **National Nursing Centers Consortium (NNCC)** and **Health Promotion Council of Southeastern Pennsylvania (HPC)**, with the American Heart Association and the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the program trains health care providers working in low-income communities on current clinical guidelines for cardiovascular risk assessment and treatment of women. It also educates women about strategies to reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease. NNCC's **Heart and Soul** program also focuses on heart-healthy living, providing African American women and youth in West Philadelphia with information on nutrition and exercise. According to recent studies by CHDB, 43% of women in Philadelphia do not exercise for the recommended 30 minutes or more three days per week. Heart and Soul assists them with weight loss and overall health improvement. Through programs like Heart and Soul and Philadelphia Go Red for Women, PHMC continues to fight for women's heart health.

#### Supporting Recovery

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, more than four million women in America abuse drugs. Founded in 1971 by **Clara Baxter Synigal**, an African American woman and recovering alcoholic, PHMC's affiliate **Interim House, Inc.** was the first specialized residential treatment program in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and one of the first in the nation primarily for women. Today the program annually serves 80 women battling substance abuse and mental health disorders. Employing a trauma-sensitive holistic approach to treating drug and alcohol addiction, a focus on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual issues surrounding addiction forms the foundation of the Interim House approach.

PHMC's **Interim House West**, located in Philadelphia's East Parkside neighborhood, provides similar care and a facility for women in recovery and their children. The program serves up to 20 pregnant and parenting women at any given time, and up to 45 children under the age of 12. In addition to a range of comprehensive services, Interim House West offers an on-site clinical preschool and afterschool program for the children. Through **CHANCES**, another PHMC program, up to 100 women with children receive outpatient and intensive outpatient substance abuse treatment as well as parenting, adult education and family literacy support. **GirlSpace**, PHMC's newest residential treatment program located in West Philadelphia, serves up to 18 girls, ages 14 to 18, with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders.

**New Pathways for Women**, a federally-funded community-based project in North Philadelphia, reaches active substance-involved African American women at high risk for HIV infection through street outreach and encouragement to enter substance abuse treatment and recovery-oriented programs. Women who enroll in New Pathways for Women can participate in weekly peer support sessions and receive individual pre-treatment counseling, case management, support services, on-site rapid HIV testing and, as needed, referral and accompaniment to confirmatory HIV testing, HIV primary care and case management services, substance abuse treatment, and other support services. PHMC conducts the program in collaboration with the Black Women's Health Alliance, a Philadelphia-based nonprofit health, education, advocacy and self-help organization.

#### Stopping the Cycle of Violence

Gun violence continues to plague the United States as a leading cause of death for young African American males. In Philadelphia, nearly a third of the 333 homicides in 2008 involved 15- to 24-year-old African Ameri-

can men killed by firearms. PHMC seeks to stop the cycle of violence in our region as the administrator and manager of **Pennsylvania Injury Reporting and Intervention System (PIRIS)**, a hospital-based injury surveillance and intervention program initiated by the Pennsylvania Department of Health in 2006. PIRIS reaches 15- to 24-year-old gunshot victims treated by and admitted to Temple University Hospital, Albert Einstein Medical Center or the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, institutions that collectively account for almost 40 percent of all gun-related hospitalizations in the state. PIRIS provides comprehensive intervention services to help prevent further violence, including victim and family counseling, assistance with health insurance and legal issues, and referrals for education and job training. The program also collects data on firearm-related injuries to aid state and local agencies and community groups as they develop new violence reduction activities and evaluate current efforts. PIRIS has served nearly 200 victims, 94% of them African American, and the number continues to grow.

#### Empowering and Encouraging Ownership of One's Health

African American men experience lung disease, heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes and other chronic illnesses in disproportionate numbers. Some experts attribute the disparities in part to the fact that African American men often do not seek necessary medical care for reasons that range from lack of health insurance to concerns about stigma and experience with insensitivity of physicians. To address such issues and to educate and empower African American men to make informed decisions about their health and take a proactive role in pursuing health care, HPC collaborated with the Philadelphia Department of Health, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and the Pennsylvania Department of Public Health to form the **Stroke**

*continued from page 3*

**Hypertension and Prostate Education Intervention Team (SHAPE IT).** SHAPE IT employs educational programs, resources and community activities to help reduce disease and death from prostate cancer and stroke among African American men age 35 and older in Philadelphia. Since it began three years ago, SHAPE IT has reached nearly 7,000 men throughout the Philadelphia region and provided free educational workshops and health screenings. More than 900 men received health screenings, 80% of whom followed up with doctor visits. Men United for a Better Philadelphia, Concerned Black Men and the Philadelphia chapter of the NAACP are among the community organizations that have participated with HPC in these activities.

#### Closing the Communication Gap

Linguistic, cultural and socioeconomic barriers represent serious threats to the quality of health care and access to services for many populations. To help close the communication gap across all groups, HPC implements solutions such as **Health Literacy Program (HLP)** and **Diversity Dialogue**. HLP staff consult with pharmaceutical companies, managed-care organizations, government agencies and medical and social service providers to create easy-to-read, culturally appropriate materials; increase consumer understanding and satisfaction; and enhance community outreach to improve health communications between low income, high-risk consumers and their providers. Diversity Dialogue promotes effective cross-cultural communication through workshops tailored to the needs of client organizations, which include medical institutions, social service agencies and community-based public health organizations in Montgomery County. Diversity Dialogue's team members conduct a needs assessment with organization staff and gather demographic data and trends to provide an intimate and relevant diversity dialogue. After the workshop, the organization

receives a report that can help it implement recommendations and continue the conversation about cross-cultural communication.

#### Training the Trainer

**Safe Circle**, an outreach arm of affiliate **Linda Creed**, responds to the health disparities that perpetuate late diagnoses and high mortality rates of breast cancer among African American women. Safe Circle provides culturally relevant outreach to the African American community. Through church and community-based organizations, educational facilities, work sites and small groups, Safe Circle offers breast health information, screenings and support services. Using a train-the-trainer model, Safe Circle recruits volunteers from within the African American community and prepares them to deliver breast health education workshops to their peers. These "Safe Circles" are specially designed to address women's fears and worries; identify myths and barriers that prevent access to screening and follow-up treatment; increase knowledge and understanding; and encourage participants to act on behalf of their own health.

Societal barriers also can prevent members of lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) communities from accessing the health care they need. Similar to Safe Circle, Linda Creed's **Rainbow Circle** provides inclusive education, information and services to women in the LGBT community to encourage and provide access to optimum breast health care. It also employs the train-the-trainer model to recruit volunteers from within the LGBT community to present breast health information and address concerns in a comfortable, sensitive and understanding environment. ●

For more information on these and the many other programs from PHMC and its affiliates, please visit **PHMC.ORG**.

Philadelphia Allies Against Asthma (PAAA) Coalition's **Child Asthma Link Line** recently earned a National Exemplary Award from the Environmental Protection Agency. This award recognizes community-based asthma programs for their leadership and commitment to comprehensive asthma care. PHMC affiliate **Health Promotion Council** serves as the lead agency for PAAA.



On December 6, PHMC affiliate **Linda Creed** hosted its Annual Volunteer Recognition Awards Ceremony at The Crystal Tea Room in the Wanamaker Building in Philadelphia. The awards recognize individuals, corporations and health organizations that have made significant impact on the ability to provide access to basic breast health care in the region. Among the honorees were: Dr. **Lisa K. Jablon**, who received the Dr. Elaine M. Ominsky Humanitarian Award, Dr. **Gerard Olson** of Villanova University, **Karen Wheeler**, **Stephanie Forehand** and **Lisa Johnson Nutter**.

*Pictured above, left to right: Donna Duncan, Linda Creed executive director; Dr. Lisa K. Jablon, award recipient; Kathy Lentini, Linda Creed board president*

# Targeted Solutions

## *Fiscal Services Help Nonprofits Face Economic Realities*

Even in a strong economy, nonprofit organizations can face tight financial constraints. So when the economy takes a downward spin, for many nonprofits the financial pinch can be especially severe.

Today's financial crisis causes great anxiety to which no sector is immune. Unfortunately, many nonprofits now find themselves facing a burgeoning demand for services at the very moment when philanthropic and corporate giving are in decline. Nonprofits must now seek creative approaches to cut or constrain costs while maximizing program funding and service delivery.

Targeted Solutions provides nonprofits with a range of services to help them rise to

this challenge. Our fiscal consultants help organizations control costs through fiscal department assessments, full-service financial management and business planning. To address revenue maximization, Targeted Solutions fundraising experts help organizations uncover new and diverse funding streams and create targeted marketing plans to broaden the fundraising base. Our technology consultants offer a range of proprietary, customizable software packages to streamline operations and improve effi-

ciency, enabling staff to devote more time to program activities. Targeted Solutions offers affordable software packages for managing fundraising activities, professional development and third-party invoicing and billing.

As organizations face the challenges of the economic downturn, Targeted Solutions can ensure they don't go it alone by providing effective solutions that help them achieve greater fiscal strength.

As nonprofits seek new strategies to contain costs, they find that **strong financial and organizational management systems are key.**



Targeted Solutions, the consulting practice of Public Health Management Corporation, helps nonprofit organizations in the region address many of the challenges of today's changing health and human services environment. From improving communications with funders and donors to carrying out mission-critical initiatives and increasing operating efficiencies, PHMC's Targeted Solutions offerings bring practical, strategic, proactive consulting services and products tailored to meet the needs of client organizations. For a full list of Targeted Solutions products and services, please contact Farrah Parkes at [fparkes@phmc.org](mailto:fparkes@phmc.org) or 215.765.2343.

# Building Strong Identities: LCH's GUAPAS Program

With **Girls United Achieving Professional Aspirations and Successes** (GUAPAS), PHMC affiliate **La Comunidad Hispana** (LCH) reaches girls ages 14 to 18. They are the daughters of Latino laborers in Chester County's Kennett Square, most of whom work on mushroom farms and have little formal education. They are teens who constantly find themselves navigating two cultures: Latino and American.

"GUAPAS provides a safe place for them to share their experiences. It's a great opportunity for them to meet friends and it gives them hope and a sense of Mexico," says **Mirna Garcia**, program coordinator of GUAPAS. "They still have the normal teenage issues, but the difference is they have to balance the language barrier and two different cultures."



When **Krista M. Malott**, Ph.D., assistant professor of education and human services at Villanova University, heard about the girls of GUAPAS, she knew they would be ideal to participate in her research entitled "Ethnic identity development in Mexican-origin ado-

changed their minds about Latino culture and their place in it. After the sessions, one participant in the study reported that she "learned Latinos have worth and also can get ahead and succeed." Malott hopes to turn her research into an academic paper

**"A STRONG ETHNIC IDENTITY** has proven to act as a buffer against environmental stressors, such as negative peer pressure, for young people of color,"

GUAPAS offers teens culturally competent guidance in goal-setting and planning for post-high school opportunities; self-esteem and self-image workshops; life skills training; health education and primary care; and service learning projects based on career interests and capabilities.

Through weekly meetings at LCH, GUAPAS participants can manage some of the unique stresses of growing up as first-generation American teenagers. At GUAPAS, they meet girls from similar backgrounds, learn about healthy lifestyles and discover academic and career options. "Programs like GUAPAS are important because they provide young Latina girls a forum to find their voice, build self-esteem and make connections with peers and others of the community," says **Margarita Mirkil**, executive director of LCH.

lescents." The project calls for discussions with groups of Mexican-American teenagers about a variety of topics including racism, identity values and peer pressure—all aimed at increasing perceptions of identity and thereby lowering the risk of behaviors that threaten teenagers' health.

"A strong ethnic identity has proven to act as a buffer against environmental stressors, such as negative peer pressure, for young people of color," says Malott. She and her colleagues engaged GUAPAS girls in eight sessions, each with a distinct topic. "I know from research that when kids feel proud about their ethnic identity, they tend to do better in school," says Malott.

Her team measured the girls' perceptions of themselves and their cultures before and after the eight sessions. The results showed many participants had

and eventually create a program that can provide other teens with the benefits of sessions like those in GUAPAS.

Garcia says that many of the girls that come to GUAPAS have experienced difficulty navigating the culture clash that results from moving to America. "The majority of GUAPAS girls are first-generation immigrants," she says. "It can be an awkward transition." During her time as coordinator, she has seen many positive changes in the group. "I've had a couple of girls who are very shy and I can see them coming out of their shell—the program has helped them find friends." More than 50 girls have participated and benefited from the program since its inception in July 2006. ●

For more information about GUAPAS, visit [lacomunidadhispana.org](http://lacomunidadhispana.org).



## Thank You for Helping to Celebrate PHMC's evolution!

On November 18, 2008, 400 people gathered at Philadelphia's Academy of Natural Sciences for evolution! PHMC's BRAND CELEBRATION. Guests from government, private foundations, nonprofit organizations and area businesses enjoyed the festivities. "It was a wonderful night of networking," said PHMC board member **Margie Austin**. "The energy in the room was contagious."

The evening began with a pre-event for patrons featuring remarks from **Shelley A. Hearne**, Dr.P.H., managing director of the Health and Human Services Program

at The Pew Charitable Trusts. Later, as guests dined under the shadows of dinosaurs and mingled amid butterflies, actors from PHMC's PALMS project, an HIV prevention initiative, performed a series of lighthearted, brand-themed vignettes.

"PHMC's evolution! celebration captured the changing spirit in the public health field," said Hearne. "PHMC continues to draw experts from all walks of life and spur collaboration and creativity in ways that keep improving the public's health, even in the most challenging times." ◆





We truly appreciate everyone's support of our past accomplishments, our new name and our promising future that will continue to reflect our evolving, ever-growing role in public health. We wish especially to thank the following sponsors for helping to make evolution! possible:

**Amper, Politziner & Mattia, LLP**

**Bradberry & Kheradi**

**Bryn Mawr College**

**DOMUS, Inc.**

**Drexel University  
School of Public Health**

**ethos benefit partners**

*A division of Benefit Associates inc.*

**Hafer & Company**

**HUB International Pennsylvania, LLC**

**Independence Foundation**

**Jerome Kranzel**

**Patriot Construction**

**Pearl Pressman Liberty  
Communications Group**

**R. P. Getts Builders, Inc.**

**Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis LLP**

**St. Christopher's  
Foundation for Children**

**Temple University  
College of Health Professions**

**The Hayman Company**

**The Winter Group**

**United Way of SEPA**

**Wachovia Bank**

VIEW THESE PHOTOS AND MANY MORE AT [PHMC.ORG/EVOLUTION](http://PHMC.ORG/EVOLUTION)





## *PHMC Researcher Lee Carson Receives Leadership Achievement Award*

“Lee Carson is a **MAN ON A MISSION**. He is an individual who already has and will continue to make a huge difference in the LGBT community, particularly in the LGBT community of color.”

The Attic Youth Center conferred its Leadership Achievement Award on **Lee Carson**, PHMC research associate, at The Attic’s annual gala at the Philadelphia Ritz-Carlton on November 15. The Attic Youth Center is Philadelphia’s only agency exclusively serving LGBT youth and is one of only 13 LGBT youth centers nationally.

ic of efforts put forth by many toward creating a better quality of life for Philadelphia’s LGBT citizens.”

At PHMC, Carson works on several projects related to HIV prevention among men who have sex with men. “We are very proud of Lee and his recognition by The Attic,” says **Lynne Kotranski**, vice president of PHMC’s Research and Evaluation compo-

nization. While at MOCHA, Carson served as a board member for the New York State Black Gay Network. After moving to Philadelphia, Carson co-founded and became president of Black Gay Men’s Leadership Council, a nonprofit organization for black gay men in Philadelphia. He also is a founding member of the LGBT People of Color Coalition, whose 14 member organizations

“I am grateful to receive an award... and at the same time, I am fully aware that my work is only **ONE SMALL PART WITHIN A LARGER MOSAIC** of efforts...”

“Lee Carson is a man on a mission,” says The Attic’s executive director, **Carrie Jacobs**, Ph.D., of the activist, researcher, educator and social worker. “He is an individual who already has and will continue to make a huge difference in the LGBT community, particularly in the LGBT community of color.”

Carson has worked in the areas of HIV prevention and substance abuse rehabilitation in the LGBT population for the past 10 years. “I am grateful to receive an award from The Attic,” says Carson, “and at the same time, I am fully aware that my work is only one small part within a larger mosa-

ic. “Lee brings a unique set of skills to his work and commitment to the community. He has great clinical training blended with an understanding of conducting research on vulnerable populations.”

Carson also works part-time as a mental health therapist for the Mazzoni Center, a health center serving Philadelphia’s LGBT population, and he serves as an adjunct instructor in the graduate social work department at Temple University.

Carson’s activism in the LGBT community began in 2000, when he joined the New York-based Men of Color Health Awareness Project (MOCHA), an HIV prevention orga-

represent a broad cross-section of LGBT communities.

Carson’s commitment to the LGBT community has garnered him both local and national recognition. He serves on Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter’s advisory board on LGBT affairs and the Centers for Disease Control selected him as an expert advisory panel member for a new HIV prevention campaign targeting black gay men. ●

Carson earned a bachelor of arts degree from S.U.N.Y. Brockport and a master of social work degree from Nazareth College. He is a licensed social worker in Pennsylvania.



# Healthy Smiles Report: From That First Tooth Forward

## CHDB completes study on children's access to dental care

Every year, children in the United States miss school due to a variety of ailments. However, did you know that children miss more than 750,000 school days per year due to easily avoidable dental problems?

**40%:** Savings available to parents over a five-year period by taking their children to the dentist before age one

Tooth decay, for example, is a common condition among children, easily prevented by good oral hygiene and regular dental care. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that children receive at least two dental check-ups every year. Though 90% of all dental cavities are preventable, PHMC's **Community Health Data Base** (CHDB) findings show that 50% of children in Pennsylvania experience tooth decay by age 15.

Using data from the Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) 2006 Household Health Survey, CHDB examined use of dental care among children aged 4 to 17 years. The data trends identified areas for improvement in our children's dental care.

### How long since your child saw the dentist?

- About 13% of SEPA children did not receive a dental exam in the previous year. Of these 88,700 children, more than half did not visit the dentist due to cost.
- Urban children are more than twice as likely as suburban children not to have seen a dentist in the previous year.
- Children living below poverty level are more than twice as likely not to have seen a dentist in the previous year (22.9% vs. 10.9%, respectively).

- Uninsured children are significantly more likely not to have seen a dentist in the previous year compared with insured children (40% vs. 11.2%, respectively).
- African American and Latino children are more likely not to have had a dental exam in the last year.
- One in five (20.1%) children receiving Medicaid and 12% of children receiving CHIP had not seen a dentist in the past year.

### Can parents afford dental care?

CHDB data shows that dental conditions get worse as dental care is delayed. Aside from causing children to miss school, lack of dental care can create extreme pain or discomfort and can lead to higher dental expenses in the future.

In 2006, almost 7% of children who needed dental care did not receive it due to cost or lack of money. This represents 50,500 children in the region foregoing dental care due to cost.

**38%:** Rural counties in the U.S. experiencing dental health shortages due to geographic barriers

### Other CHDB data show:

- Of children aged 11 to 17 years, 8.6% were likely not to get the dental care they needed due to cost; the same was true of 4.7% of those aged 4 to 10.
- Latino children (14.7%) were more likely than black (9.8%) or white (4.1%) children not to get the dental care they needed as a result of cost.

### How long has the lack of dental care been affecting our children?

The good news is that things are getting better in our region. Since 1998, the number of

children ages four and up who have not seen a dentist has declined and the overall percentage of children who are receiving dental care has increased. Although more children now receive routine dental care, the percentage of children who needed dental care but did not receive it due to cost has increased from 5.4% in 2002 to 6.9% in 2006.

What does this data mean for our children? CHDB has found that there are ongoing race and income disparities in children's access to dental services.

**27:** States that have laws allowing dental hygienists, instead of dentists, to provide dental services to patients

Data from the 2006 Household Health Survey clearly indicate that uninsured children living in poverty are less likely to have received a dental exam in the past year. Trend data suggest that in recent years an increasing proportion of children who needed dental care had to delay or forego seeking it on at least one occasion due to cost considerations. Clearly, there remains room for improvement with regard to the utility and affordability of oral health services for children.

### Where can you go for affordable dental care?

In Pennsylvania, a number of dental clinics provide free or reduced-fee services to eligible patients. For a listing of these resources by county, please visit the Pennsylvania Dental Association website at [www.padental.org](http://www.padental.org).

For more information on the findings presented in this article, please contact CHDB research associate Allegra Gordon at [agordon@phmc.org](mailto:agordon@phmc.org).