



## How We Make A Difference

*In community health centers around Minnesota, creative efforts are underway to reach those in need. One innovative approach is the use of bi-lingual and multi-cultural community health workers (CHWs) who identify, educate and serve high-risk patients. CHWs are not limited to the "four walls" of the health center: they are in the community at schools, churches, local businesses and neighborhood events.*

*These outreach efforts not only improve health, they also help reduce costs – and save lives. Here are a few examples of these comprehensive, culturally sensitive and community-based approaches to health care.*

### Community-Based Approaches to Health Care

#### Braiding & Blood Pressure Checks

As part of its Stroke Prevention program, **Neighborhood HealthSource** in North Minneapolis has community health workers provide equipment and teach local barbers/hair stylists how to administer blood pressure checks at a local salon to identify those with uncontrolled hypertension. When a customer at the salon is identified with dangerously high blood pressure, she is able to get immediate medical and educational intervention.

At clinics and health fairs in the Twin Cities, **community health workers** conduct brief screenings - in various languages - to identify those at risk for diabetes and to encourage them to see a provider. Workers also help individuals identify specific nutrition and exercise goals, make lifestyle changes, develop self-management skills and monitor their progress.

#### Diabetes Interpreted

#### Culturally Appropriate Prenatal Care

In St. Paul, community health workers use **targeted outreach** and culturally sensitive education to help Hmong women overcome barriers so they will seek out early prenatal care and preventive gynecological exams.

At **Sawtooth Mountain Clinic in Grand Marais**, a physician builds rapport with a man who is resistant to seeking care for a cardiovascular condition. As a result, his undiagnosed diabetes is discovered, and through subsequent visits and diet modification, the man brings his blood glucose level under control, loses 25 pounds, and reduces his cholesterol level.

#### Attacking Heart Problems

#### Isolation to Integration

At **Community University Health Care Center in Minneapolis**, behavioral health workers work with clients with mental illness to integrate them into the community. Clinic staff educate public housing workers about the disease as well, and make regular visits to high-risk individuals to build trust and encourage participation in social activities.

At **Migrant Health Services in Moorhead**, health workers provide direct services to Latino migrant farm workers and their families. Through their efforts, they diagnose a 65-year-old man with diabetes, hypertension, obesity and cardiovascular disease, and help him make several lifestyle changes - regular blood sugar monitoring, clinic appointments and exercise - resulting in improved physical health and overall wellbeing.

#### Lifestyle Learning

#### Cost Effective Too!!!

These community-based approaches improve health and do much more: prevention, early detection and chronic disease management also help reduce costs. **Consider that every \$1 invested in diabetes self-management can cut health costs by \$8.76!** In addition, intensive blood pressure control can reduce risk of heart attack and stroke, cutting costs by \$900 over an individual's lifetime and extending life expectancy 6 months.