

HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE HAVE DONE AND ARE DOING NOW
Spring 2005

CHS is addressing racial and cultural disparities through several methods.

- o CHS Division-wide efforts include:
 - **Action Teams** focused on Leadership, Recruiting and Hiring Staff, Staff Retention and Support, Training, and Contracts.
 - **Friday Manager's Group** has focused on Anti-Racism leadership since January of 2004.
 - A **Cultural Responsiveness Coordination Team** was formed to facilitate the integration of the work being done by the Action Teams, the Service Teams and Friday Manager's Group.
 - **Anti-Racism Reorganization Effort** – It became obvious that the work needed to be more integrated, inclusive and reorganized under a larger plan. This group has worked with Jim Addington and Carmen Valenzuela of MCARI to accomplish the reorganization. The most tangible result of the reorganization has been the establishment of the CHS Anti-Racism Leadership Team
 - **CHS Service Team Efforts** - Service Teams are responsible for planning and managing the service delivery systems for the groups of clients we are responsible to serve. These Service Teams are incorporating the work of identifying and eliminating racial disparities in outcomes into their ongoing work.
 - **East African Task Force** – The Ramsey County Board approved representatives nominated by the five ethnic communities from East Africa to serve on a task force on identifying barriers to services for East African. CHS is providing staff support for the task force.

The following describe the work and accomplishments of the efforts occurring within CHS.

Community Human Services Department

1. Action Teams

- **The Leadership Action Team's** goal is to create a heightened level of cultural sensitivity for CHS leaders. The Action Team has taken the following steps:
 - Established Basic Diversity Practices for Leaders
 - Developed Culturally Competent Performance Appraisal Factors
 - Created a Self-Assessment Instrument for Leaders
 - Planned and initiated Leadership Training on Racism and Cultural Diversity

Spring 2005 Update:

 - The Team will reconvene to explore how it might contribute in the reorganized CHS anti-racism effort.

- **The Recruiting and Hiring Action Team** goals are that career development and promotion opportunities are equivalent among all CHS members. The Action Team has taken the following steps.
 - Explored issues related to hiring from culturally specific registers.
 - Working to improve recruitment of applicants of color.

Spring 2005 Update:

 - Developing a survey to discover the informal hiring channels in CHS.

- **The Staff Retention and Support Action Team's** goal is to improve retention rates of staff who are persons of color. The Action Team has taken the following steps:
 - Investigated issues related to staff retention, including differential retention rates for staff of color.
 - Developed a proposal for funding for an assessment of racial and cultural issues within the Department.

Spring 2005 Update:

 - When no funds became available for the assessment, a proposal was submitted and accepted for a Leadership Academy project to explore and make recommendations regarding retention issues for staff of color through interviews with staff.
 - A meeting is scheduled for June 29, 2005 for the Action Team to review the findings and recommendations of the Leadership Academy project.

- **The Training Action Team's** (*new section for 2005 update*) primary goal is to increase the cultural competence of CHS staff. The purpose of the action team is to develop and coordinate a training continuum for CHS on cultural diversity and anti-racism. The action team formed in January 2004 and will be guiding the Department's anti-racism and diversity training. The Action Team continues to work toward:
 - Developing an integrated strategic approach to providing training on cultural diversity and anti-racism for CHS.
 - Developing and assembling appropriate resources for Staff and work units and providing access to those resources. The resources will fit their individual and/or group needs.
 - Integrating CHS training efforts with the countywide cultural diversity efforts.

- **The Contracts Action Team:** Ramsey County Community Human Services has vendor contracts to provide approximately one-half of the services delivered to its' clients. It is critical that a range of contracted vendors are able to provide services to individuals from different cultures and backgrounds. The Contracts Action Team's goal is to increase the ability of contracted vendor organizations to be as culturally responsive as possible. Toward achieving this goal, the Action Team has taken the following steps:
 - Adopted the United States Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Minority Health, Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards (CLAS) for health service organizations as the framework for human services organizations to improve their cultural responsiveness.
 - Developed a CLAS based assessment tool for vendors to assess their level of cultural and linguistic responsiveness.
 - Completed a pilot Request for Proposals incorporating the input from meeting with communities of color in the planning and design.
 - Identify strategies for increasing vendor capacity.

Spring 2005 update:

 - Developed and implemented a plan to pilot the CLAS assessment tool with vendors. Through the pilot, it was determined that the tool, with some modification, worked well.
 - Developed a recommendation that was adopted by the Cultural Responsiveness Coordinating Committee for managers to determine a roll-out plan of the assessment tool with each of their respective service teams.

2. CHS Friday Manager's Group

CHS Directors and Managers started meeting monthly to coordinate cross-divisional issues about 2 years ago. This group has been working on issues related to the Department's Anti-Racism effort over the last year.

- Work began with the introduction of the Leadership Self-Assessment Instrument. The instrument was developed by the Leadership Action Team as a way for leaders in the organization to reflect on their knowledge and skills regarding anti-racism. In an effort to move CHS forward, the group identified issues that needed to be worked on in addition to the Self-Assessment.

Spring 2005 Update

- The Self-Assessment Instrument has now been used by all Directors and Managers and most Supervisors.
- The development of a background document (i.e., the "Why" document) that provides information about the reasons for CHS's Anti-Racism work. This was followed by the development of a list of Frequently Asked Questions (with answers). Both documents were used in orientation for supervisors about the Anti-Racism Initiative and are being used in many department units.
- The Department Managers are also working on developing resources for leaders related to holding authentic dialogue about racism. This is part of an effort to develop and use more tools for managers and supervisors to continue our anti-racism work.

3. CHS Cultural Responsiveness Coordination Committee

This group was formed to facilitate the integration of the work being done by the Action Teams, the Service Teams and Friday Manager's Group as well as future efforts to design, implement and monitor improvements in how CHS addresses the issues of racism and cultural bias. The Committee is also working to provide context and continuity to the training of CHS staff on Cultural Responsiveness/Racism.

Spring 2005 Update:

- Working of the transition of duties from the Coordination Team to the Anti-Racism Leadership Team.
- Exploring the use of "authentic dialogue" for staff training.
- Review and modify CHS anti-racism training efforts.

4. CHS Anti-Racism Reorganization Effort

- History
 - During the spring of 2004 the Minnesota Collaborative Anti-Racism Initiative (MCARI) provided training sessions for county employees on recognizing institutional racism. Many CHS staff affiliated with the CHS Cultural Responsiveness effort thought that MCARI's definition of institutional racism should be adopted as CHS's working definition of racism. The Cultural Responsiveness Coordinating Team (CRCT) and the Ramsey County Manager's office contacted MCARI to provide additional training sessions and to present MCARI's model for helping organizations to embed anti-racism as a standard operating practice within their organization. The first step towards CHS's Anti-Racism Reorganization was the July 29/30 retreat, which was facilitated by James Addington and Carmen Valenzuela of MCARI.
- Purpose
 - The overall purpose of the retreat was two-fold: Learn more about the MCARI model for transforming an organization into an anti-racism organization; and where appropriate, adapt the MCARI model to the context of CHS's ongoing cultural responsiveness efforts. The CRCT and the Ramsey County Office of Diversity invited representatives from several departments including Public Health, Parks and Recreation, Revenue, CHS Directors and Managers, Co-Chairs of the Cultural Responsiveness Action Teams, members of the Cultural Responsiveness Coordinating Team, and representatives of AFSCME local 151. The specific goals of the retreat were to:
 - Establish a common understanding of institutional racism among the participants;
 - Describe the organizational requirements for supporting transformation change of CHS to an anti-racist organization; and,
 - Develop an anti-racism leadership capacity.

- Results of the July 29/30 Retreat
 - Retreat participants decided that an organizational restructuring would be more effective than a limited modification of the existing CHS's Cultural Responsiveness effort. The reorganization places a heavy emphasis on a clarification of roles, responsibilities and relationships between the various units. Although the reorganization is still in the formative stage, the result is expected to retain, and add to, all of the functions presently fulfilled by the current effort. However, it is likely that the organizational units fulfilling those functions will change.
 - Retreat participants performed an assessment of the current cultural responsiveness and anti-racism efforts, where we need to go, and what factors enable or inhibit the transformation of CHS into an anti-racist organization. The most significant change from the current organization is the establishment of a Anti-Racism Leadership Team that will provide unified leadership for the various cultural responsiveness and anti-racism efforts within CHS. In addition to the establishment of an Anti-Racism Leadership Team the retreat participants made the following recommendations:
 - Need to be careful, intentional, and deliberate as we move ahead.
 - Need centralized leadership to ensure consistency in goals, stakeholder input, and immunity from threats.
 - Leadership is important, everyone is important – all need to be part of the process.
 - Establish a group responsible for guiding implementation of the anti-racism / cultural responsiveness efforts. Some see the CRCT taking on this role.
 - Review existing groups regarding their place in the new organizational structure of the CHS anti-racism / cultural responsiveness effort.

- Continuing to Develop the Leadership Team
 - The participants at the July 29/30 meeting agreed that additional time was necessary to determine the mission, responsibilities and membership criteria of the Leadership Team. On August 13 the group reconvened with the goal of establishing a plan to create and maintain a Leadership Team. The meeting was facilitated by MCARI. The Leadership Team discussion was structured around three critical functions that need to be met for the Leadership Team to be effective and sustainable.
 1. Describe the charge, operating structure, and membership of the Leadership Team.
 2. Identification and acquisition of the critical resources (e.g., financial, staff, organizational, and community) necessary to enable the leadership team to be effective.
 3. Establish a comprehensive and reliable means of information flow both from, and to, the leadership team (e.g., an established communication mechanism).
 4. Participants met again on August 27 to continue working on the design and commissioning of the anti-racism / cultural responsiveness leadership team. The group agreed that the charge of the Leadership Team is to:
 5. Lead the effort to eliminate institutional racism and cultural bias,
 - in the way we serve the community
 - and how we treat each other.

A subgroup of participants will meet again to develop a proposal on the composition of the Leadership Team. The CRCT will develop a plan on how to recruit and select applicants for membership on the Leadership Team. Both proposals will be presented to the larger group for approval.

Spring 2005 Update:

- Applicants for the Anti-Racism Leadership Team (ARLT) were recruited.
- The ARLT membership selection committee was formed and they reviewed the applications, interviewed applicants, and selected members for the ARLT.
- The ARLT members attended a 3-day training and team building retreat.
- The ARLT meeting regularly and it is developing an organizational history of CHS to help understand the origins current CHS policies and practices.

- **CHS East African Task Force**

- Ramsey County Board approved representatives nominated by the five ethnic communities from East Africa to serve on a Task Force focusing on identifying barriers to services for East Africans. CHS is providing staff support for the task force.
- Ramsey County Board endorsed the purpose of the Task Force as:
 - to clearly identify the barriers to service, including whether there are any significant differences for the different ethnic communities,
 - to provide an opportunity for county departments to educate the community members on their respective missions and mandates, and
 - to develop a list of potential solutions that county departments could implement without a significant increase in resources.

Spring 2005 update:

- The Taskforce met seven times.
- The Taskforce participated in community meetings with Somali, Eritrean and Oromo communities.
- Learned of issues facing the East African refugee communities and possible solutions to those issues.
- A final report from the Task Force was presented to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners. The Task Force has adopted seven recommendations for significantly improving the lives of East African (and other) refugees and immigrants to Ramsey County:
 1. Development of an African Community Center
 2. Creation of a City of Saint Paul / Ramsey County Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs
 3. Develop a series of on-going education programs for both County staff about East African cultures and East African residents about available services.
 4. Ramsey County should move expeditiously to increase the number of employees across all Departments who are bilingual and bicultural in the primary African languages. As an interim measure, all county departments should ensure that employees are fully aware of how to access interpreter services.
 5. Ramsey County should assist our East African community leaders in working with community development banks, foundations and others to establish a no-interest revolving Micro-Enterprise loan fund.

6. Ramsey County should seek opportunities to partner with East African community non-profit agencies through purchase of service contracts to provide bilingual and bicultural services to our East African residents.
7. The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners should endorse the Report of the Ramsey County East African Task Force along with its recommendations and ask that a report be presented to the Board on progress in implementing the recommendations not later than one year following the plan's endorsement.

5. CHS Service Delivery System

The goal of eliminating racial and culturally based disparities for CHS clients requires that each Service Team explore issues of disparities within the context of the services they provide. Service Teams are working to assess racial disparities within their services and to develop strategies that will address these disparities.

Children's Services Division

- The Children's Services Division has taken the following steps:
 - Completed a study of racial disparities within the Child Protection System.
 - Participated in a case review of decision points focusing on racial disparities with DHS.
 - Participated in studies with Howard University and the University of MN looking at disparities in services and outcomes for clients.
 - Provided training to staff on racial and cultural issues.
 - Assigned a delinquency worker to work in partnership with community agencies providing services to Hmong girls being exploited.
 - Developed and received funding for a proposal to continue work on disparities that includes:
 - Contracting with community cultural consultants
 - Forming a steering committee of key partners
 - Staff Focus groups and community meetings
 - Identification and implementation of strategies to reduce disparities
 - Evaluation of impact of the work.

Spring 2005 Update:

(Need CS-wide items here)

- **Child Protection Intake Team** (new section for Spring 2005, material pending)
- **Child Protection Program Team** (new section for Spring 2005)
 - CP program staff have been trained in the use of a family centered strength based assessment tool and now develop strength based case plans building on the naturally occurring strengths of the families within their respective cultures.
 - Continues to added culturally specific SW staff as resources allow and to be consistent with changing county demographics
 - Earlier kinship searches and engaging of extended families
 - Mentorship training program for new CP SW staff

- **Children's Mental Health & Delinquency Team**

- Begun a development process designed to increase the cultural competence of management and staff and to promote anti-racism work in the CMH section.
- Participated in the East African Task Force and begun discussions about how to identify children's mental health needs in the East African community.
- Screening/Early Intervention Program has:
 - Arranged to have screening tools translated into Hmong and Somali. (Spanish translations already exist.)
 - Hired a Hmong early identification and intervention specialist
 - Arranged to meet with statewide providers of color network to facilitate culturally appropriate referrals.
 - Partnered with community agencies to provide mental health screening for the new Hmong child and family refugees.

Spring 2005 Update:

- Received a DHS grant for ongoing children's mental health services to Wat Tham Krabok refugees. Hired a staff as liaison with the Transitional Learning Centers (TLC's) in St. Paul to work with students from the camp to address their mental health needs.
- Met with St. Paul School SW's and Counselors, who are mainly serving Hmong students, to be responsive to emerging mental health needs and to discuss County resources that would be available.
- Worked with the CMH Collaborative Cultural Competence Team to build capacity including addressing issues in licensing and credentialing, small business startup and billing, and mentoring new providers (especially in the area of Children's Therapeutic Services and Supports certification application).

- **Children's Mental Health Crisis Response**

- Added a Hmong crisis worker.
- Begun training a Somali MSW intern.

- **Family Support Services** (*new section for Spring 2005*)

- Discussions have been held with all work groups regarding the Racial Disparities Initiative
- The Section supervisors and manager have met with Carol Fogarty (CHS Training) to explore the staff training options available regarding disparities and racism. Each Section supervisor is planning a staff development strategy for her unit.
- One work group has had the "Individual Differences" training with Carol Fogarty and the other work groups have plans for this training.
- A series of discussions, including a debriefing session on the TECHR training with Dr. Jaiya John, have been held with the Child Foster Care program regarding the ways in which cultural values affect case practice and case decisions. A similar series of discussions will be held with the Adoption/Guardianship unit.

CHS Adult Services Division

- **Adult Mental Health Team**

- County mental health staff are partnering with community agencies to provide mental health screening for the new Hmong refugees.
- Two Hmong individuals were added to the staff compliment of the Mental Health Crisis Team. One Hmong staff has been added to the Prepetition Screening team.
- A Southeast Asian Adult Corporate Foster Care facility was developed.
- Plans are underway to develop a Southeast Asian Assertive Community Treatment team with services beginning January 1, 2005.
- Ramsey County Mental Health Center providing collaborative psychiatric services with Southeast Asian specific providers.
- A Hmong therapist at the Mental Health Center will be starting outpatient groups.
- All adult mental health staff has attended training on diversity.
- A Southeast Asian Mental Health resource group is meeting monthly.

Spring 2005 Update:

- Added missing demographic information to the client database. This facilitates calculation of rates of service access and utilization by communities of color.
 - Increased the number of staff who have specific cultural or ethnic familiarity.
 - Added a Hmong case manager who is serving the SE Asian community and now is beginning to receive referrals from those who came from Thailand.
 - Added a Hmong speaking worker onto the ACT team as a vocational worker. Originally he was on the crisis team.
 - Seeking African American sensitive persons for pre petition and case management.
 - Taken initial efforts to explore the issue of connecting with the Somalian community.
 - Hired a Nigerian staff member to work in the partial hospital program
 - Added a Hmong medication clinic and support group lead by a CNS one day a week
 - Added one Hmong staff person and one clinical supervisor who is bicultural/bilingual Hmong at the Mental Health Center.
- **CADI Services** (new section for Spring 2005)
 - Viewed PBS Series with each session followed by facilitated group discussion.
 - Began gathering data on racial disparities in CADI service area.
 - Met with interpreter service contract vendors to review service manual and solicit recommendations on targeting under represented groups.

- **Adult Services Teams** (Elderly Services, Adult Protection, Detox, Chemical Health)
 - Service Teams in Adult Services are gathering data and information regarding racial disparities in their service areas and developing strategies to improve services.
 - New hires are being assessed for their cultural responsiveness ability.
 - Created an Adult Day Service for elderly Hmong.
 - Contracted with a Hmong agency to provide case management for elderly and disabled adults.
 - Recruited Spanish and Hmong speakers to complete a needs assessment survey of elderly persons.
 - Formed a work group in Detox to address the work culture, including racial awareness and understanding.
- Spring 2005 Update:*
 - Adult Protection Intake & Case management, People Inc. contract workers and Elderly Services Unit participated in a two part training “Understanding Differences” which included the film, Last Chance for Eden.
 - Detox Cultural Steering Committee has reviewed the document “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack. Participated in the training “Understanding Difference” presented by Jules Laing.
 - Developing a staff survey that asks whether, or not, working relationships between Detox staff members from different racial groups have improved.
 - Worked toward restoring culturally specific assessment and treatment services for the Hmong target population within Ramsey County. A process is underway to re-engage a provider to meet this need.
 - Participated in piloting the draft Ramsey County Human Service Providers Cultural Responsiveness Assessment tool with two contracted vendors.
- **Developmental Disabilities Team** (New section for Spring 2005)
 - Working on a “Hmong common terminology”.
 - Section-wide training including discussion of the “Why” document; PBS series; “The Culture of Poverty”; Dismantling Racism.
 - Unit level education/training efforts. Materials used vary by unit.
 - An annual training plan both at the section and at the unit levels has been prepared.

Financial Assistance Services Division

MFIP Services Team (Workforce Solutions and CHS)

- The Team completed a study in 2003 looking at disparities in outcome by race and ethnicity.
- The Team funded and supported Latina Listening Sessions which has been the foundation of community-developed initiatives to respond to resources requested by Latinas on the east side of Saint Paul.
- MFIP engaged individuals to convene community-based and community-directed planning in the African American and Native American communities.
 - Workforce Solutions launched a three-year contract with Powderhorn Phillips Cultural Wellness center in 2004 to work with African Americans on MFIP, to organize community-based strategies to support African Americans moving off welfare and to identify critical areas for system change within Ramsey County MFIP services.
 - Planning in the American Indian community resulted in a set of recommendations being finalized for presentation to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners in the early fall 2004.

- o Ramsey County MFIP has developed group intake sessions and consolidated employment services with the Hmong American Partnership for Hmong families arriving from Wat Tham Krabok.

Spring 2005 Update:

- o The Ramsey County MFIP program is in its second year of a contract with Powderhorn Phillips Cultural Wellness Center to help address disparities in outcomes for African Americans. The center's staff have joined Ramsey County staff in key meetings to participate in decisions about program policy. Workforce Solutions and the Center are launching an outreach effort to African Americans who lose part of their grant for not complying with program expectations about attending meetings, following a work plan, etc. The Center is also working with the greater African American community to identify resources and leadership to support African Americans who are moving from welfare to work.
- o Two financial workers now have offices at the American Indian Family Center. The financial workers and the staff at the Family Center have cross trained each other in the programs and services they offer. The American Indian Family Center has also just presented Workforce Solutions with recommendations on how the family center could work more closely with MFIP employment services.
- o MFIP produces monthly reports on outcomes and those reports include reports of outcomes by race and ethnicity.

Financial Assistance Services (new section for Spring 2005)

- In the process of scheduling training sessions, "Understanding Differences" in the coming months for all FAS staff.

Administrative Services Division (Planning/POS/Evaluation/Revenue/Financial & Support Services/Information Services/Training/Volunteer Services)(new section for Spring 2005)

- Several anti-racism / cultural responsiveness sessions with Admin Mgrs & Supervisors
 - On the doorstep of conducting some focus groups with staff of color in our division.
 - Focused on a Division-wide anti-racism /cultural responsiveness efforts.
 - Developed a "roadmap" for division anti-racism efforts.
- o **Volunteer Services** (new section for Spring 2005)
 - The Volunteer Services program contributes to the achievement of agency goals surrounding the issues of cultural responsiveness and strengthening relationships with the community through volunteer recruitment and training, and community outreach.
 - From January 2004 forward, all new volunteers receive training on cross-cultural communication entitled "An Introduction to Cultural Competency".
 - 34% of volunteers oriented during 2004 represent communities of color.
 - 62% of volunteers oriented during the first quarter of 2005 represent communities of color.