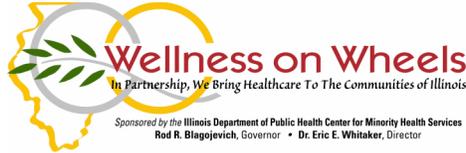




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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District



Sponsored by the Illinois Department of Public Health Center for Minority Health Services
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Champaign-Urbana Has Vision Care Access Challenge - Local Partnership Creates Program to Help

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District, Illinois Department of Public Health's Center for Minority Health Services, Illinois Department of Public Health's STD Section, and Carle Foundation Hospital have combined their efforts and resources to create the "Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Vision Cooperative".

Champaign, IL –

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD), Illinois Department of Public Health's Minority Health Services, Illinois Department of Public Health's STD Section, and Carle Foundation Hospital have joined together to address the challenge of Medicaid covered children and adults without vision care access in Champaign County. The alliance, titled *Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Vision Cooperative*, will work to secure funding, manage referrals, optimize volunteer hours, and case manage clients who receive the services.

Starting July 2, 2007, the *Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Vision Cooperative* will be officially accepting a limited number of referrals for children and adult patients. Local optometrists and ophthalmologists have generously donated 64 appointments per month to the program, and during the short trial period in May and June, have helped 71 Medicaid patients receive optical prescriptions. Persons referred through the CUPHD Vision Cooperative must be residents of Champaign County, and have a current Medicaid card.

“The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District and its partners are committed to providing programs to our communities that will not only enhance the well-being and quality of life of our citizens, but can afford them the tools to assist others. Only by working together can we hope to effect change.” said Julie A. Pryde, Acting Administrator of CUPHD. “CUPHD is grateful that our partners share this vision and have furnished us with the financial means to help so many in need in our community.”

The *Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Vision Cooperative* is looking for additional partners in the Champaign County community to assist in further developing this endeavor, including local optometrists and ophthalmologists who will volunteer time, and accept a limited number of clients with Medicaid referred to them through this program. The CUPHD Vision Cooperative is an exciting necessary program, and CUPHD and its current partners are committed to its successful expansion. “We are hopeful that other local businesses will take our partners lead in providing financial and volunteer support so that this program will thrive,” added Ms. Pryde.

The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Vision Cooperative program includes a mobile outreach branch to grant better access to CUPHD programs for communities with transportation challenges. A 40 foot “wellness on wheels” vehicle will soon be visiting communities and schools offering a variety of programs including the CUPHD Vision Cooperative. The CUPHD mobile unit will be a “one-stop health service shop” which will include such services as vision care, dental services, immunizations, communicable disease prevention, testing and management, and basic health check and education programs. “CUPHD is thrilled to be able to bring these mobile services to those community members that truly need them.” said Tamie Nagrodski, Mobile Program Manager at CUPHD. “Too often people forgo utilizing necessary services due to scheduling constraints, transportation challenges and the lack of awareness of program opportunities. We hope the CUPHD mobile program, including the CUPHD Vision Cooperative, will alleviate many of these issues.”

The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Vision Cooperative will go a long way towards helping to fill a tremendous need in the Champaign County community. CUPHD, Illinois Department of Public Health’s Minority Health Services, Illinois Department of Public Health’s STD Section, and Carle Foundation Hospital have recognized and responded to this need and have proven that “Together We Can SEE Things Better!”

For more information about the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Vision Cooperative program, please contact the following:

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