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# NEWS

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**Recap of Center for Health Equity's Success in 2009**

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – 2009 marks the second year for the Sedgwick County Health Department's Center for Health Equity (CHE). The mission of the Center is to examine and advance the understanding of disparities in health risks, health status, treatments, and survival among the diverse groups of Sedgwick County residents.

One of the primary focuses of the CHE is access to affordable, appropriate health care. In line with this focus is the Community Health Navigator (CHN) Project. This program places volunteers into the community at the neighborhood, church and other civic organization levels with health access information and "toolkits." The navigators provide education about options for affordable medical homes in the community and appropriate usage of health service resources.

Twenty-four individuals are active as Community Health Navigators (CHNs). This group provided more than 1600 Health Access toolkits to Sedgwick County residents this year, many of whom are uninsured. More than 30 planned presentations took place to small and large audiences. Besides meeting the requests for presentations, the CHE felt additional strains on their resources this year due to the poor economy. Over 500 recently laid-off residents were reached via the United Way's Laid-Off Worker Center from June-November.

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During their monthly outreach at the United Way's Center, CHNs encountered residents who have been without needed medications, due to uninsured status. CHNs were able to direct these individuals to the Sedgwick County Prescription Discount Card and provide information about the Project Access program and the many Community Health Clinics in Sedgwick County.

The other focus of the Center for Health Equity is to educate the community about health disparities. The Center met this goal by conducting a successful health equity campaign, through the use of the documentary *Unnatural Causes*. Town hall meetings, college lectures, and other public forums were used in 2009 as a way to show the film and lead a dialogue with more than 500 residents.

The future for the Center includes following a three-year strategic plan that was also created this year. Strategic objectives include:

- 1) conducting health impact assessments
- 2) improving access to health disparities data
- 3) expanding the health equity campaign

If you are interested in becoming a Community Health Navigator, would like to request a presentation from a navigator, or would like to schedule a viewing of the *Unnatural Causes* series, call Pamaline King-Burns at 660-7402. You can also reach Pamaline via e-mail at [plburns@sedgwick.gov](mailto:plburns@sedgwick.gov) or visit [www.sedgwickcounty.org/healthdept](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org/healthdept). At the County's Web site you will find more information about Health Access, including downloadable health access kits that include lists of local community health clinics.

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