
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For additional information contact:

Lisa LaPlante at (616) 632-7182 or Lisa.LaPlante@kentcountymi.gov

**Refugee Women and Girls to Receive Services from Kent County
Health Department, Thanks to March of Dimes Grant**

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Health Department recently received a March of Dimes Community Grant Award to implement the "Refugee Women's Health Project." This one-year, \$25,000 grant was developed to better integrate refugee women into available maternal-infant health and prevention services. The goal is to help refugee women adopt healthy behaviors – there by leading to improved maternal infant health and healthier pregnancies - and increasing health literacy among refugees.

The project will target refugee women and girls resettled by Bethany Christian Services (BCS) and Lutheran Social Services of Michigan (LSSM). Since Burmese refugees comprise the single largest refugee language group—216 of 711 total KCHD refugee clients in 2013—and the largest arrival group in Kent County since 2008, the project will target services to this population. “This grant gives us an opportunity to work with a growing population in West Michigan,” explains Adam London, Administrative Health Officer of the Kent County Health Department. “It is important for our staff to provide information and education in a linguistically- and culturally-sensitive manner.”

“Through this grant, Kent County is providing services to a very at risk population”, said Kara Hamilton-McGraw, State Director of Program Services and Government Affairs at March of Dimes Michigan Chapter. “The model of group prenatal care has shown extremely positive birth outcomes, especially in at-risk and underserved areas.”

During their resettlement period, refugees have frequent contact with these agencies and often meet for orientation events. Women and teens will be recruited for the Women's Health Education sessions through this network. Refugee Health Worker intervention will target women who participate in one of the local Maternal Infant Health Programs (MIHP)—including KCHD.

ABOUT THE MARCH OF DIMES: *The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. For more than 75 years, moms and babies have benefited from March of Dimes research, education, vaccines, and breakthroughs. Find out how you can help raise funds to prevent premature birth and birth defects by walking in March for Babies at marchforbabies.org. For the latest resources and information, visit marchofdimes.org or nacersano.org. You can also find them on Facebook and Twitter.*

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

700 FULLER AVE. NE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503