

Contact:

Chelsie Smith, Healthy Communities Member

Phone: (715) 839-4718

Eau Claire Healthy Communities Receives Grant to Focus on Mental Health Needs of Hmong Community

Eau Claire, WI, January 17th – Eau Claire Healthy Communities was recently announced as a recipient of a \$10,000 mini-grant from Security Health Plan of Wisconsin, Inc. The mini-grants are presented to non-profit organizations focusing on health areas that need greater attention in the community.

The Mental Health Action Team of Eau Claire Healthy Communities is partnering with Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association to provide educational sessions and trainings to members of the Hmong community and healthcare providers about how to approach conversations about mental health in the Hmong community.

Recent community events have indicated the need for education on this issue. Earlier this year, Wisconsin United Coalition of Mutual Assistance Associations, Inc. hosted a legislative dialogue about the current status of Hmong health in the Eau Claire community. Mental health emerged as the top health focus area of concern for the Hmong community.

- Wisconsin holds the nation's third largest Hmong population in the USA, with a very high concentration residing in the Western region of the state.
- Wisconsin Hmong have previously indicated that their biggest barriers to receiving any type of health care treatment were language and low literacy.
- Mental health providers in the Eau Claire area report low number of Hmong that receive mental health services. Services are sought out only when individuals are in crisis.
- A 2008 assessment of mental health needs in the Eau Claire Hmong Community indicated a low level of mental health literacy - and that education is needed to understand mental health/mental wellness.

“This grant will help open the door to conversations around mental health in our Hmong community—what is mental illness, how to recognize early signs, how and when to seek professional help. Mental health is a very complex issue, but talking about it is a crucial first step to improving the mental health of our community members,” said Chue Xiong of Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association.

For more information about the grant project or to get involved with the Mental Health Action Team, please visit Eau Claire Healthy Communities at www.ehealthycommunities.org and click on Get Involved.

###