

*Minneapolis, Minnesota*

**Reviving Health Education:  
Innovative Coalition Plays Key Role**

**Problem Overview**

Updates to the health education standards established by the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) District had not occurred since 1995. In addition, school staff faced two key challenges in providing sexual health education to students:

- The content of the curricula used across the district's 16 K–8 schools and 7 middle schools was inconsistent.
- Not all teachers delivering curriculum content had received recommended teacher preparation and opportunities for professional development in sexual health education.

**Program/Activity Description**

MPS's health curriculum review process, begun in fall 2008, presented an opportunity to revamp the district's approach towards health education. Several public and private organizations collaborated to form the Minneapolis Urban Initiative to support the district's selection of the sexual health education component of the health curriculum. The Minnesota Departments of Education and Health, with support from the CDC, contributed to the coalition's work by offering training, curricula, and teaching materials to conduct pilot projects.

The Minneapolis Urban Initiative coalition activities included

- Providing research findings to support district staff as they identified sexual health education curricula to evaluate and pilot.
- Working with staff to develop a strategy for implementing new curricula.
- Providing updates to parents on the curriculum adoption process.
- Supporting the training of teachers to pilot curricula.
- Assisting district staff in understanding state laws, revising health-related policies to adhere to a science-based approach, and fostering support for the curriculum revision process.

**Program/Activity Outcomes**

In 2010, the MPS

- Adopted new health education standards that included sexual health education components for middle and high school students.
- Piloted four health education curricula and adopted two of them—one each for middle school and high school—that were science-based and included sexual health education components.

Through CDC funding, the state Departments of Health and Education provided training in the selected curricula for designated teachers from MPS middle schools. A master teacher, funded by the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, oversaw the implementation of the new curricula during the 2010–2011 school year.