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## ***Boston Receives CDC Funding to Eliminate Health Disparities***

### ***Children's Hospital Boston Is One of 40 Organizations Selected From 22 States***

Boston Massachusetts was recently awarded \$2 million dollars over 5 years from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities among minority populations. The funding was provided to the Children's Hospital Boston, which is one of 40 organizations selected from 22 states across the country.

The five-year funding will support local efforts to address and overcome the unique causes of health disparities among specific ethnic populations and in key health areas. Locally, the CDC funding will benefit residents in Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and Mission Hill, and will be used to address asthma care among children and adolescents aged 2-18 years who have been seen in the emergency room or admitted for asthma exacerbations.

“We are extremely pleased to receive this funding that will allow us to continue this important effort to address the health disparities in childhood asthma in the local communities,” says Elizabeth R. Woods, MD, MPH, who is the Director of the Children's Hospital Boston Community Asthma Initiative. Working with community partners, the program provides nurse case management, individualized asthma management plans, asthma education, home visits, and connection to community resources. The home visits combine environmental assessments to identify asthma triggers in the home with education and materials to help reduce these triggers. Preliminary data shows a 48% reduction in the need for emergency room visits and 67% reduction in inpatient stays at 6 months of follow up. “By helping families better understand and treat their children’s asthma, we hope to continue to demonstrate large improvements in asthma control and quality of life for the families we serve,” says Woods.

The award, which is funded through CDC’s Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) U.S. program, will target five racial and ethnic groups: African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans, Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, and American Indians/Alaska Natives. REACH U.S. activities focus on a range of key health areas that contribute to health disparities, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, breast and cervical cancer, hepatitis B, asthma, infant mortality, and adult immunizations.

“Despite improvements in the overall health of the nation, health disparities remain one of the most important public health challenges of our time,” said Janet Collins, Ph.D., director, CDC’s National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. “We are extremely excited about the new REACH award recipients because they offer a plethora of knowledge in addressing health disparities and their innovative approaches

will help improve people's health in our communities, health care settings, schools, and work sites.”

Through the REACH U.S. initiative, 18 national and regional Centers of Excellence in the Elimination of Disparities (CEEDs) and 22 Action Communities will be established throughout the country. The CEEDs will serve as national resource centers with expertise in specific ethnic populations and will train additional communities to further spread the impact of REACH activities. The Action Communities will implement and evaluate successful approaches within a specific community to impact population groups, rather than individuals, and focus on key health conditions that contribute to health disparities.

Since 1999, the REACH program has demonstrated that fully engaging communities in health strategies that address the unique social, economic, and cultural circumstances of racial and ethnic minority groups can reduce health disparities. For more information about the REACH program, visit CDC's Web site at [www.cdc.gov/reach](http://www.cdc.gov/reach).

To learn more about Children's Hospital Boston Community Asthma Initiative please visit [www.childrenshospital.org/communityasthma](http://www.childrenshospital.org/communityasthma).

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**Note to editors:** Wayne H. Giles, MD, MS, director, CDC's Division of Adult and Community Health, is available to discuss the REACH U.S. cooperative agreement program. Please contact the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's Office of Communication at 770-488-5131 to arrange an interview.