

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 4, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *J*

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY AND CITY HEALTH OFFICIALS (NACCHO) TO SUPPORT AN OBESITY PREVENTION AND COALITION BUILDING INITIATIVE BY THE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES WORK GROUP OF THE PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHIER ALEXANDRIA

ISSUE: Consideration of a grant application to the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to support an obesity prevention and coalition building initiative by the Healthy Lifestyles Work Group of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Authorize the submission of a grant application in the amount \$15,000 (with an opportunity for an additional \$25,000 that will be awarded upon completion of NACCHO's initial grant planning requirements). The grant application was submitted on December 8, contingent on Council approval, since notification of the grant opportunity came too late for prior approval;
- (2) Affirm that, due to severe City budget constraints, no additional City funds will be available to fund this program in FY10 or future years; and
- (3) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: As a result of Alexandria Health Department's Community Health Assessment (completed in 2005) and the subsequent formation of the *Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria*, the Alexandria Health Department (AHD) is eligible to receive funding support from the National Association of County and City Health Officials. The funding will be used to strengthen AHD's coalition of community partners, and to develop a community action plan that addresses obesity prevention through policy, systems and environmental change strategies.

The AHD was notified of the availability of grant funds on Monday, November 17, and the grant application was due on Monday, December 8, 2008. The grant will be submitted on December 8, and staff will indicate that its acceptance is contingent upon Council approval. Submission prior to Council approval was necessary due to the Council meeting schedule.

The *Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria* and its Healthy Lifestyles Work Group has been working to address obesity prevention for the last two and a half years.

In 2007, Inova Health System, a member of the *Partnership*, undertook a comprehensive survey on obesity among parents and children, ages 2 to 18, in Northern Virginia. The survey results were released in the last six months. According to survey findings approximately 100,000 children in Northern Virginia (26.4 percent of those residing in the region) are either overweight or at risk for becoming overweight. The findings for Alexandria children ages 2-5 were particularly concerning, as 43.5 percent are overweight. The prevalence of overweight children in this younger age bracket is significantly higher than that of other Alexandria children (23.5 percent of children ages 6-10; 13.1 percent of children ages 11-14; 13.7 percent of children ages 15-18). In Arlington, the jurisdiction with the next highest percentage of overweight children, only 28.6 percent of children ages 2-5 are overweight or at risk for becoming overweight.

Inova Health System's survey underscored the need for the Healthy Lifestyles Work Group to target obesity prevention initiatives at children ages 2-5.

There are a number of coalitions and community organizations in Alexandria working to address issues that affect young children, including, but not limited to, the Early Childhood Commission, the School Readiness Council, Child and Family Network Centers, the Associations of Full and Half-Time Day Care Providers. This grant is intended to help the Healthy Lifestyles Work Group reach out to these potential partners to enable them to collectively create and begin executing an action plan that holistically addresses obesity prevention for children ages 2-5.

Funding will be requested for the following purposes:

- To provide the Healthy Lifestyles Work Group and its partners with leadership training related to coalition-building and how to best address obesity prevention (travel will be involved for some individuals);
- To create a community action plan that addresses obesity prevention for children ages 2-5; and
- To begin implementing the community action plan.

FISCAL IMPACT: The NACCHO grant proposal is for \$15,000, with an opportunity to receive an additional \$25,000 (this will be awarded upon completion of the initial planning requirements). No City match is required. It is intended, because of severe City budget constraints, that no City funds will supplement this program in future years, if the NACCHO funding does not 100 percent support all costs of this initiative.

No new City positions will be required. The Alexandria Health Department will serve as the fiscal agent for all funds received and does not intend to seek any City funds for this initiative.

STAFF:

Lisa Kaplowitz, M.D., MSHA, Alexandria Health Director

Carrie Fesperman, Health Planner, Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria