

SMALL INVESTMENTS IN HEALTH CARE YIELD BIG PAYOFFS

From U.S. Dept. of Health
& Human Services

■(WASHINGTON) Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Kevin L. Thurm on Monday named five innovative local health programs "Models That Work" for providing better, lower cost health care for people with few options, and for a positive economic and social impact on communities.

The HHS Models That Work campaign—a public/private sector partnership that promotes replication of grassroots programs — identified the five projects in El Paso, Texas; Los Angeles, CA, Philadelphia, PA; Tampa, FL; and Monroe, MI, for showcasing and replicating in other communities. The replication success of 1995 Models in East St. Louis, IL, and Vista, CA, were also featured.

"Models That Work offers good sense, big payoff solutions for communities wanting to improve health care services, save dollars and create jobs," Deputy Secretary Thurm said. "These programs exemplify the best in local problem solving to meet local needs—we want to multiply these successes."

Applying innovative solutions to tough problems, doctors, nurses and community health care workers are providing care in public housing, migrant farmworker camps and poor rural communities. Successes include fewer emergency room visits; higher childhood immunization rates; better informed and educated individuals, families and health care workers; help for homeless youth; and volunteer and paid jobs for community workers.

Some 41 million Americans—most of them in working families — have no health insurance. Additionally, cultural, geographic and language barriers block access to basic health care for many individuals and families. They postpone or forego needed care, miss time at work or school, and end up

caught in a vicious cycle of poor health and lost productivity.

"These Models That Work break the cycle," said Ciro Sumaya, M.D., M.P.H.T.M., administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the HHS agency primarily responsible for putting health care services and professionals in underserved areas and sponsor of the Models That Work campaign.

More than 250 local programs competed in this year's Models That Work competition. The winners, selected for innovation, effectiveness, community involvement and replicability, are:

Tampa, FL, Hillsborough County Health Care Plan: Has enrolled 27,000 poor and uninsured county residents in its own version of managed care. The plan has seen its members' hospital admissions drop 28 percent, hospital stays decrease 40 percent and per person health care cost plummet 61 percent. Hillsborough County estimates it has saved \$6 million by diverting 8,000 emergency room visits to outpatient primary care.

El Paso, Texas, Project Vida: Provides primary health care, education and social services to poor, uninsured, predominately Hispanic people and families. Recruits patients to become volunteer or salaried community health workers. Project estimates it

saves the local health system \$150,000 annually in uncompensated and unnecessary emergency room visits.

Los Angeles, CA, Los Angeles Free Clinic Hollywood Center: Reaches out to homeless youth with medical, dental, psychiatric, substance abuse and pregnancy care. Provides HIV testing, job training and placement. Relies on peer counselors to move troubled, vulnerable young people off the streets and into more stable living arrangements.

Philadelphia, PA, Resources for Human Development: One of the first nurse-operated managed care programs in the state. Serves two public housing communities. Has dramatically increased child immunization rates, sharply decreased incidence of low birthweight, cut health care costs and created jobs for public housing residents.

Monroe, MI, Camp Health Aide Program: Trains migrant and seasonal farmworkers as health aides to provide health education, first aid and other health and social services to their peers, and to train health care providers in cultural sensitivity. Encourages and assists aides to complete nursing or medical assistant training programs.

Two of the first Models That Work, chosen last year, shared their success in helping

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PUBLIC COMMENTS REQUESTED ABOUT BELL OPERATING COMPANIES' ENTRY INTO LONG DISTANCE

From U.S. Dept. of Justice

■(WASHINGTON) The Department of Justice is asking all interested parties to submit position papers addressing several important questions relating to the impact of the Bell companies' entry into the long distance services market.

Joel I. Klein, Acting Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Department's Antitrust Division, said that the submissions would assist the Department in developing a general analytical framework for evaluating the Bell companies' applications to provide in-region long distance service.

"This process is extremely important," said Klein, "and we want to get as much input and provide as much guidance as possible."

Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Department will consult with and provide comments to the Federal Communications Commission — which must give "substantial weight" to the Department's evaluation in determining whether to grant or deny any Bell Company application to provide long distance service within its region.

Klein further commented that, once the Department has developed its approach to considering the various applications, he intends to explain publicly the Department's analytical framework in order to set out under what conditions the Department will support Bell entry into long distance services.

All interested parties are invited to address the questions outlined in the attached letter and submit their response by December 13, 1996.

The response should not exceed 25 pages, and should be submitted to Don Russell, Chief of the Telecommunications Task Force, Antitrust Division, Department of Justice, 555 4th Street, Room 8104, Washington, D.C. 20001.

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pore Stratton Taylor, D-Claremore, and other members of the Democratic Party, who criticized the governor for what Taylor called "frequent personal attacks" on incumbent Democrats and his involvement in raising funds "to help bankroll campaign attack ads" against those incumbents.

Said Taylor, "Oklahoma needs a statesman, not the partisan attack dog we've seen for the past year and a half."