



Updating Minnesota's Fish Consumption Educational Outreach for the Hmong Community

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Concerns about detections of perfluorooctanoic sulfonate in fish in Twin Cities' lakes prompted a series of meetings between MDH and the St. Paul-Ramsey County Department of Public Health (SPRCDPH), and other stakeholders. Although MDH had developed specialized outreach to Southeast Asians in the past, MDH and SPRCDPH initiated a new Hmong Outreach project to conduct a needs assessment and produce updated materials. This project was funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Great Lakes States Consortium.

MDH and SPRCDPH staff began meeting with many individuals, organizations and researchers who had experience working with the Hmong community to learn about effective ways to communicate health information, other educational outreach projects, and potential outreach strategies. Based on these consultations, staff felt that several key questions needed to be answered in order to determine what specific product should be developed:

1. What fish do Hmong prefer to eat and how often do they eat fish?
2. How do the Hmong prefer to get health information?
3. What is the Hmong understanding of how contaminants get into fish?

These questions were addressed through a series of activities:

1. Youth from the St. Paul Parks and Recreation Youth Corps asked people fishing at park lakes a series of questions. The answers were summed up in a brief report.
2. MDH and SPRCPH staff participated in four "listening sessions," where a group of Hmong elders, youth or parents talked about fish, how they choose where to fish, contamination in fish, which fish and how often they prefer to eat fish.
3. MDH developed a simple video story about how mercury gets into fish, how people can choose the right kind of fish, and how to space fish meals.
4. At a meeting of the Captitol Sportsmen's Chapter of the Minnesota Deerhunters' Association, attendees with limited English participated in a visual and interactive process to show which fish they prefer to eat and how often they eat those fish.
5. At the same meeting, the attendees were tested on their knowledge of mercury contamination in fish and the fish consumption guidelines, shown the video and then tested again to see if their understanding improved.

Based on the results from these activities, a DVD, "Talk About Fish and Way of Eating Fish," in the Hmong language was produced. In the future, MDH staff will evaluate this DVD in a series of meetings with groups in the Hmong community.