

# Healthy Signs



UNIVERSITY of  
**ROCHESTER**  
MEDICAL CENTER

National Center for Deaf Health Research

October 2009

## Mission of NCDHR:

To promote health and prevent disease in the Deaf and hard of hearing populations through community-based participatory research.

## Save The Date!

### ASADV Family Fun Day

October 17, 2009  
11 AM to 4 PM  
Aldersgate United  
Methodist Church  
4115 Dewey Ave.  
Rochester, NY  
14616

Come visit the  
NCDHR Exhibition  
Table!

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## Commitment to Improved Health Fair Access

For Deaf women who attended an innovative local health fair last month, inadequate interpreter services overshadowed the good intentions of the organizers. The event was the Women's Health Screening (WHS) Fair, and took place September 19, 2009 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Rochester Public Market. It was part of Rochester Women's Health Week, sponsored by the City of Rochester and the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC). Free screenings for asthma, skin cancer, diabetes, heart disease and more were available.

ASL interpreting services at the WHS Fair were advertised through DeafTimes, Deaf Women of Rochester and NCDHR.

Approximately 15 Deaf women attended. Unfortunately, only one interpreter was scheduled for the entire event, causing problems with long wait times and lack of

privacy when discussing their sensitive screening results with a physician. Some women left in frustration, upset over lack of access to health screenings as well as language barriers.

Deaf community members and NCDHR faculty both witnessed first hand these experiences and gathered input from the Deaf WHS Fair participants. **Deirdre Schlehofer, Ed.D** from NCDHR provided direct feedback to WHS planners at the URMC. For more information contact DD at [deirdre\\_schlehofer@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:deirdre_schlehofer@urmc.rochester.edu).

NCDHR is committed to ensuring that the lessons learned from this year's WHS Fair lead to improvements in future events, and that Deaf community input will be heard. NCDHR will make every effort to ensure that Deaf women receive the same level of access as a hearing woman at the next annual Women's Health Screening Fair!

## Presentation to DWU by NCDHR and its Partners



On July 25, 2009, presenters from Rochester, NY attended the Deaf Women United (DWU)

conference in Portland, Oregon, and gave a landmark presentation called, "*Lessons learned about interpersonal violence: Importance of collaboration.*"

Until now, very little has been known about interpersonal violence (IPV) in the Deaf Community as no data were available.

The presentation described how the National Center for Deaf Health Research (NCDHR), Deaf Wellness Center (DWC), Advocacy Services for Deaf

Abused Victims (ASADV) and the Deaf community collaborated to collect data and learn more about IPV in the Deaf community. Several examples of working together were described: survey development, networking and seeking grants for future opportunities through community-based participatory research.

The presenters told the story of how ASADV was originally established to provide advocacy services to Deaf and hard-of-hearing victims of IPV, its volunteer programs, and the challenges ASADV has encountered over an 11-year period.

The presenters shared data about IPV from the

NCDHR Deaf Health Survey at the conference.

Through this collaboration and presentation, many key organizational leaders such as Executive Director Marilyn Smith from Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services (ADWAS) of Seattle and Director Keri Darling of Deaf Vermonters Advocacy Services, who founded their services with little data, now have access to powerful IPV data. This new knowledge will serve as a powerful driving force as well as a model for future IPV research.

The presenters were **Deirdre Schlehofer** (NCDHR), **Vicki T. Hurwitz**, **Mary Mowl** (ASADV), and **Sharon Haynes** (DWC).

## Deaf Strong Hospital

“Thank you very much for educating us about the Deaf community. I am a better person for having gone through this experience,” was one of several positive comments from first year medical students who visited Deaf Strong Hospital (DSH) on August 28, 2009.

Every year, NCDHR organizes an experiential exercise for medical students to appreciate the challenges faced by a linguistic minority. The students were “patients” who sought medical care from “doctors” who are American Sign Language users from the Deaf community.

The success of this “eye-opening” experience was made possible by enthusiastic volunteers, both Deaf and hearing, who have participated in this truly community-academic collaboration to sensitize future doctors who may see Deaf patients or people who do not speak English.

The event was covered by the local media. To view the media’s article, visit [www.urmc.edu/ncdhr](http://www.urmc.edu/ncdhr).



## Rochester Women’s Health Week (September 15—19, 2009)

Part of Rochester Women’s Health Week, two key events were held at two different places: 1) “*Researching Women’s Environmental Health*” at the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC), Wednesday, Sept. 16, and 2) the first Women’s Health Screening Fair at the Public Market, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 19. (See story, “Commitment to Improved Health Fair Access on page 1)

*Researching Women’s Environmental Health Workshop:* URMC held a one-day conference discussing topics around environmental exposures (for example, lead and plastics) and their impact on women’s pregnancy and health.

The morning session included well-known researchers who presented their work on fertility, lead exposure and osteoporosis, aging, and dioxin. In the afternoon, focus group sessions were held with three distinct groups: researchers, clinicians and community leaders, organized by **Nancy Chin, PhD, MPH**.

One of these focus groups included Deaf female leaders in the Rochester Deaf community. Contemporary concerns focused on dangerous chemicals affecting health, accessibility, safety of Deaf students and translation of research findings to the Deaf community and government entities. **Deirdre Schlehofer, M.Phil, Ed.D**, moderated the focus group; thoughts from the discussion groups

were reported back to conference participants. Analysis of this data is being conducted; findings will be shared with the community and published in a journal for environmental health researchers.

Deaf Health Talk  
“Swine Flu and Common Infections to prepare for”

October 15, 2009

6:00 PM

RRCD

1564 Lyell Avenue

We will talk about Swine flu and other common infections to prepare for. We will talk about prevention strategies including vaccines as well as possible treatments. The talk will be provided in American Sign Language.

## New staff member at NCDHR



Erika Sutter is a new full-time Senior Health Project Coordinator at NCDHR. She has been involved in the NCDHR Research Committee since the first year of the project. She analyzes data from the Deaf Health Survey, and will help to report and disseminate the survey findings. She will also be working on CAHPS (Consumer Assessment of Healthcare

Providers and Systems) survey development and the Deaf Weight Wise project. Prior to working at NCDHR, she was a research coordinator in the Division of Adolescent Medicine in the Department of Pediatrics at URMC. Before coming to Rochester in 2004, she worked at Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center in New York City while completing her Masters in Public Health at Hunter College.