



## PRESS RELEASE

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## MAYOR'S SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION COUNCIL AWARDS FUNDING TO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS TO GROW JOBS AND WORK TO PREVENT TOBACCO USE IN PROVIDENCE

*CHisPA, John Hope Settlement House, Urban League of RI, Young Voices, Providence Community Health Centers, and Providence Housing Authority receive portion of \$3.3M Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant funding*

**PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND** – Providence Mayor David N. Cicilline's Substance Abuse Prevention Council today announced that six city-based organizations have been named grantees under a \$3.3 million federal stimulus grant recently awarded to the Council and the Rhode Island Department of Health. The grantees, The Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy (CHisPA), John Hope Settlement House, Urban League of Rhode Island, Young Voices, the Providence Community Health Centers, and the Providence Housing Authority will work in partnership with the Council to lead an 18-month initiative aimed at dramatically reducing smoking rates and improving community health.

"Each of these organizations has had years of experience and success organizing and engaging residents across our City," said Providence Mayor David N. Cicilline. "This funding will enable the organizations to hire employees dedicated to community mobilization, education, and outreach. Their goal will be to alert the public to the dangers of tobacco use, to help tobacco users quit, and to work with young people to ensure their healthy development."

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant, funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will finance the Providence Tobacco-Free Campaign, a citywide tobacco prevention initiative. Under the Tobacco-Free Campaign, funds will go to the grantee organizations to reach culturally diverse populations that are disparately impacted by tobacco-related disease.

"The Tobacco-Free Campaign will help us to protect our children, friends, and fellow community members by building a healthier, safer, and stronger community that is free from the harmful effects of tobacco" said Peter D. Lee, MSW, President and CEO of John Hope Settlement House.

The campaign will include development of policies aimed at restricting tobacco access as well as marketing. The campaign will also provide free smoking cessation services for the uninsured through the Providence Community Health Centers, a pilot smoke-free program in Providence Housing Authority sites, and the creation of smoke-free campuses and restriction of tobacco sponsorships in Providence Public Schools. The campaign will also be expanded with funds

from the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH) to enhance police enforcement of underage tobacco sales.

“Department of Health research suggests that young people in low-income, urban neighborhoods are exposed to more tobacco ads near their schools and gathering places than their suburban counterparts,” said David Gifford, MD, MPH, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health. “As a result, they may be more likely to try smoking and potentially become addicted. Working with the City of Providence and the selected community organizations, we hope to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use among our children as well as eliminate health inequity in our capitol city.”

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death and disease in Rhode Island. More than 182,000 adult Rhode Islanders smoke and need help quitting. 73,000 kids now under the age of 18 in Rhode Island will become smokers, and 23,000 of those children may die prematurely from a smoking-related illness. Each year, tobacco use kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined.

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#### Rhode Island Department of Health

The Department of Health (HEALTH) strives to prevent disease and to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of Rhode Island. It is a diverse and interactive state agency with broad-ranging public health responsibilities that are aimed at ensuring all Rhode Islanders receive quality healthcare and live in a safe and healthy environment. As the state’s sole health department, HEALTH relies on its partnership with community and professional groups throughout the state to achieve its vision and bring critical public health programming into Rhode Island neighborhoods. For more information, visit [www.health.ri.gov](http://www.health.ri.gov).

#### Mayor’s Substance Abuse Prevention Council

Mayor David N. Cicilline created the Mayor’s Substance Abuse Prevention Council on July 17, 2003. The MSAPC aims to protect youth and prevent harmful alcohol and drug use by implementing evidence-based programs, building awareness, providing effective education, supporting comprehensive environmental strategies, and promoting the health and wellness of communities. For more information, visit [www.msapc.org](http://www.msapc.org).

#### Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH):

BHDDH is a state agency that is committed to assuring access to quality services and supports for Rhode Islanders with developmental disabilities, mental health, and substance abuse issues, and chronic long term medical and psychiatric conditions. BHDDH’s mission includes addressing the stigma attached to these disabilities as well as planning for the development of new services and prevention activities. For more information, visit [www.bhddh.ri.gov](http://www.bhddh.ri.gov).

#### The Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy (CHisPA)

CHisPA is a bilingual Latino community-based non-profit organization in Providence that is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Latinos by providing a variety of programs and services. CHisPA’s goal is to empower Latino families and individuals to achieve their full potential as productive members of the Rhode Island community.

#### John Hope Settlement House

John Hope Settlement House is a community-based organization that provides leadership through comprehensive and dynamic human services, community outreach, and advocacy for children, youth and families in Providence and beyond. John Hope programs and services strengthen families, foster leadership and youth development, broaden opportunities, and promote social, educational, economic, and civic improvement.

### Providence Community Health Centers

Providence Community Health Centers is an integral part of the Providence, R.I. community, employing a highly skilled, compassionate, and culturally diverse workforce of doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, and certified nurse midwives for more than 35,000 patients at health-care facilities across the city. Established in 1968, they are the largest primary health-care provider in Providence and treat patients regardless of their ability to pay.

### Providence Housing Authority

The Providence Housing Authority (PHA) exists to develop and maintain decent, safe, and sanitary housing, and to address the economic and social needs of residents. PHA is committed to high standards of public accountability and continuous improvement through management excellence, professional development, and customer satisfaction. PHA Housing is home to more than 5,700 residents. There are 13 public housing developments in Providence, including 6 family developments, 7 elderly/disabled high rises, and 246 scattered site homes. In addition, the PHA administers a Section 8 Program, which includes more than 2,500 households.

### The Urban League of Rhode Island, Inc.

The Urban League of Rhode Island (ULRI) is a community-based, non-profit, tax-exempt organization that aims to eliminate racial discrimination and segregation in the state, and to achieve parity for blacks, other minorities, and the poor in every phrase of American life. The Urban League implements its mission through advocacy, program services delivery, bridge building among the races, and research.

### Young Voices

Young Voices is a youth-driven non-profit that provides a supportive environment for young people to develop and actualize their goals. The youth-led advocacy group trains young people to become leaders in their communities, and provides youth in Rhode Island with transformative hands-on experiences that lead to systemic change.