

CITY OF BALTIMORE

SHEILA DIXON, Mayor



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Commissioner
1001 E. Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Rianna Brown
PHONE: 410-396-4398
Rianna.Brown@baltimorecity.gov

New Report Shows High Rate of Preventable Hospitalization in Baltimore

Baltimore, MD – (December 18, 2008) – The Baltimore City Health Department released a report by the RAND Corporation finding high rates of hospital admissions and emergency room visits for a variety of potentially preventable health conditions among city residents.

The report, *Ambulatory Care Sensitive Hospitalizations and Emergency Department Visits in Baltimore City*, was funded by the Aaron Straus & Lillie Straus Foundation.

The report finds:

- Baltimore's rate of potentially preventable hospitalization is substantially higher than surrounding counties and the District of Columbia;
- Thousands of city residents suffer from such preventable conditions as asthma attacks, skin infections, and heart failure;
- The problem is concentrated in certain areas of the city, including West and East Baltimore; and
- Difficulty accessing primary care in Baltimore is a leading reason why people fall ill with preventable problems and need to be hospitalized.

In a letter to the Straus Foundation about the report, Commissioner of Health Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein wrote, "The reports' findings reflect a fundamental failure of our city's healthcare system."

To respond to the report, the Baltimore City Health Department and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will hold a public hearing this spring on access to outpatient care.

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