

**CITY OF BALTIMORE**

SHEILA DIXON, Mayor



**HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner  
210 Guilford Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21202

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Kathleen Burns**  
**PHONE: 410-396-4387**  
**[mediahealth@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:mediahealth@baltimorecity.gov)**

## **Public Input Sought on Strategies to Reduce Cardiovascular Disease**

**December 11, 2007** - With cardiovascular disease the leading cause of death and a leading contributor to unacceptable healthcare disparities, Baltimore City and Baltimore County are requesting comments on five draft strategies to prevent suffering and save lives through public health efforts.

The draft strategies are:

- Increase or expand community-based smoking cessation programs.
- Increase partnerships with faith institutions to reduce heart disease.
- Launch a task force on reducing salt (sodium) intake.
- Increase screening in barbershops and beauty salons.
- Expand community health worker programs.

Detailed descriptions of the draft strategies and instructions for public comment are online at [www.baltimorehealth.org/disparities](http://www.baltimorehealth.org/disparities). The deadline for public comment is February 1.

“I urge everyone to read these proposals and contribute their comments and ideas about how we can develop a comprehensive strategy to effectively reduce cardiovascular disease in our communities,” said Congressman Elijah Cummings, co-chair of the effort to develop an agenda to reduce disparities in cardiovascular disease. “Lives of our friends, neighbors, and family members are at stake.”

“This is the start of a discussion about what it will take to end unacceptable disparities in heart disease and diabetes,” said Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, also co-chair of the initiative. “We are looking forward to developing an agenda, then collaborating with various groups and coordinating the resources to make it work.”

“Reducing cardiovascular disease is an important part of improving the health of Baltimore residents,” said Mayor Sheila Dixon. “I look forward to reviewing the final blueprint for progress.”

“Of all the challenges we face in public health, addressing health disparities is among the highest, and needs will remain a high priority. Helping people understand what diseases they are

at risk for requires effective, culturally-competent communication geared specifically to both men and women of every racial and ethnic background,” stated Pierre Vigilance, Health Officer, Baltimore County Health Department.

“I urge everyone interested to review the strategies and let us know what they think,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health. “Our goal is an agenda to save lives with broad support in Baltimore.”

# # #