



NEWS RELEASE

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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation lauds health department for “Persevering in tough budget times”

Multnomah County Health Department was featured in a series of videos, *Public Health in Action*, produced by the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation.

According to the foundation, “under the leadership of Lillian Shirley, the department has persevered amid severe financial constraints by capitalizing upon technology and staff capabilities and finding new ways to help people before they get sick in the first place.”

One of the videos, *Persevering in Tough Budget Times*, focuses on preventative care, showcasing department innovations and new programs, such as: nursing care for tuberculosis patients via video phone; in-home preventative care for childhood asthma; and the county’s recent H1N1 education, prevention and immunization campaign, all in a constrained budget environment.

Faced with budget cuts last year, Multnomah County Health Department had to make difficult choices: do away with certain services, or evolve. Under the leadership of Lillian Shirley, the department accepted severe budget constraints, but also focused on new ways to improve its quality of care while still battling the root causes of poor health outcomes and health disparities. This emphasis on finding ways to address the reasons people become sick before they get sick means better patient care at a lower cost to everyone.

“The health department is resilient,” says Shirley. “We’ve demonstrated we can survive and grow no matter how challenging our times.”

The videos can be viewed at <http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=54950>.

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