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***Richmond, California, Becoming International Role Model for  
Innovative Community Planning and Urban Design***  
*Dr. Richard Kreutzer to Present Richmond's  
Public Health Emphasis at Forum in Shanghai, China*

December 11, 2007—A breakthrough concept from Richmond, California, that's fundamentally changing the way cities plan for the future, will be presented in Shanghai, China. Dr. Richard Kreutzer, Branch Chief of the Environmental Health Investigations Branch of the California Department of Public Health, is presenting "Public Health in Community Planning and Urban Design: Sharing the Experience of Updating the Richmond, California, General Plan" at an international forum for public health sponsored by the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Health and the Shanghai Center for Disease Control, December 11-14, 2007.

"Recent advances in public health science demonstrate the critical relationship between urban design—the built environment—and community health," said Dr. Kreutzer. "Where people live, work and play has a fundamental effect on their health." Dr. Kreutzer is a member of Richmond's Community Health and Wellness Element Technical Advisory Group.

"Richmond is at the forefront of new thinking about the impact of the built environment on humans; our new General Plan now includes Public Health as an integral element," said Bill Lindsay, Richmond City Manager. A General Plan provides policy and planning guidance for the physical development of a city.

"We're seeing in China a demographic shift from rural to urban settings on a scale we've never seen in the world before," Dr. Kreutzer said. "This historically agrarian society is constructing a very large number of very large cities at a very fast pace."



Public health in a city is not just ensuring adequate hospitals and doctors; it is a foundational element of a community, according to Dr. Kreutzer. For example, city design that encourages people to depend on their cars to access goods and services leads to increases in obesity, diabetes, heart disease and stroke rates, as well as injuries and pollution-related respiratory illnesses. Designing traffic calming features and interconnected pedestrian and bike paths, along with activating underused city streets, encourages people to walk again.

“Sharing experiences across our two societies and cultures offers tremendous benefits to both,” said Dr. Lu Wei, executive chair of the forum. “China has a wonderful opportunity to learn from the successes and mistakes in US cities, and we hope that later, other cities will learn from creative solutions and successes in our cities.”

Richmond is using state-of-the-art Geographical Information System techniques and data from many sources to map health issues and opportunities for health improvements throughout the city. The team is analyzing nutrition, bicycle and pedestrian safety, physical health and wellness, hazardous materials and contamination, air and water quality, homelessness, and crime and violence. Dr. Kreutzer will share the results of that analysis and the actions Richmond plans to take in the areas of “walkability,” access to healthy food, public transportation, reducing pollutants, access to health care, parks and open space, and new urban design concepts.

The city is a relatively new form of human habitation. Rapidly industrialized cities can result in increases in crime, epidemics of infectious disease, chronic diseases and intolerable crowding. “But the converse is that great cities draw people, jobs and economic opportunities, increase human connections, nurture the arts, provide a sense of who we are and remind us of what we have in common as a community,” said Dr. Kreutzer. “People like to live in cities; we need to ensure that the cities we live in are conducive to good public health.” The Richmond General Plan Community Health and Wellness Element is being jointly developed by MIG, Inc., a Berkeley, California-based land use planning firm, and the Contra Costa County Health Services Department. MIG’s work is being funded by a grant from The California Endowment. The grant is being administered by PolicyLink.

The project was conceived by the Sequoia Foundation, a nonprofit public health research collaborative located in La Jolla, California, in partnership with MIG, Inc. Dr. Kreutzer’s presentation grew out of a six-year epidemiology training collaboration among Sequoia Foundation, the California Department of Public Health and the Shanghai CDC, funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health, Fogarty International Program.

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