

Senator West says auto replacement program just in time

DALLAS — State Senator Royce West (D-Dallas) says the implementation of a plan to remove older, polluting automobiles from Texas roads comes just in time for the holiday season.

The accelerated vehicle replacement plan will pay up to \$3,500 to auto owners in various parts of the state as part of an overall plan to improve air quality, particularly in Texas' urban centers. "Texas has this plan to help thousands who own older vehicles," said Senator West. "While the assistance program is not available to everyone, it's a great opportunity that amounts to a substantial down payment on a new or late model car that lower-income Texans should hurry to take advantage of."

The program is part of a six-year-old emissions plan by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality administered by the North Central Texas Council of Governments. Single auto owners who live in Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Austin and their surrounding counties who earn up to \$30,630 are eligible to apply for assistance.

For a family of four, the figure is \$61,950. Other requirements include that the vehicle must have been registered within a participating county for the previous 12 months and have passed inspection within the past 15 months. The car or truck must

be at least 10 years old. Officials say the program may remove as many as 40,000 older vehicles from the road.

"During the 2007 legislative session, more funds were approved for the vehicle emissions-auto replacement program," said Senator West. "When added to existing funds, about \$100 million is now available to Texans to help buy new cars and clean up our air," said Senator West. "It's

a win-win situation for everyone involved."

Brochures on the vehicle replacement program can be found at authorized vehicle inspection locations. Money is also available for minor vehicle repairs if a car fails inspection. If eligible, a voucher of up to \$3,000 for gasoline-powered vehicles and \$3,500 for hybrids will be issued and can be redeemed by participating auto dealers. The payments can go toward the purchase of a new car or truck, or a one to a two-year-old vehicle worth up to \$25,000. The program will go into effect this month.

Applications may be obtained online at www.driveacleanmachine.org or by calling the North Central Texas Council of Governments at 1-800-898-9103 or visiting their website at www.nctcog.org/air-checktexas



Senator Royce West

African American health disparities disturbing

by FurlichJuly Arrington



All Families and Children should have access to health care services that ensure their health wellness and productivity. Many of our nations most vulnerable children and families do not have access to good affordable health care and health services. This is especially true for those within racially and ethnically minority neighborhoods. According to the Texas Health Data Center projections, the population of Texas was around 23 million in 2005. Percentage breakdown by race was: Anglo 49.4 %, African American 11.4%, and Hispanic 35.4%. The burden of disease and death is not evenly distributed according to population where statistics show high rates of diseases in minority communities; HIV and STD sexually transmitted diseases, Obesity and diabetes and low rates of childhood immunization.

In addition to such disparities in health, Blacks also report suffering from disparities in the care they receive. A recent study found that 80% of Blacks believe they receive different medical treatment and have different care options due to their race and ethnicity. Findings from a 2001 study by The Kaiser Family Foundation's National Survey of Physicians corroborates Black patients' sentiments. The study's first part examines phy-

sicians' perceptions of disparities in medical care. Of the white physicians interviewed, 77% believed that disparities in how people are treated within the healthcare system "rarely" or "never" happen based on factors such as income and fluency. In the same survey, 8 out of 10 Black physicians reported that the "healthcare system at least 'somewhat often' treats people unfairly based on various characteristics, with differences particularly striking with regard to race and ethnicity." The Tuskegee Institute Syphilis study still influences African Americans willingness to participate in medical studies which are vital finding medications that work and produce cures as a result. The Texas department of State Health Services Health Disparities Task Force selected six priority health issues to improve the health of Texans, promoting childhood immunizations, decreasing obesity, promoting physical activity and fitness, promoting responsible sexual behavior, and promoting adequate prenatal care among minority women..

In spite of improvements, these health disparities for African Americans are off the charts percentage wise.....2005 African American Adult obesity was 76% as compared to 60% Anglo, HIV and STD infection rates for adolescents and adults 78.4% as compared to 15.6% for Anglos.

African Americans makeup 14% of the national population but lead the nation in heart disease and diabetes.

If you need more facts go to>
<http://www.cdc.gov/omh/AboutUs/disparities.htm>

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