

Grant County Health and Social Needs Assessment 2009



Vision 2015

Transforming Northern Kentucky Through
Talent, Innovation and Contribution



**NORTHERN KENTUCKY
INDEPENDENT DISTRICT
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Grant County Health and Social Needs Assessment Report

2009

Tabatha Fryman, Chair

The goal of the Vision 2015 Livable Communities objective is “Northern Kentucky will be recognized, both nationally and internationally, as a great place to live.”

One strategy to achieve this goal is to “conduct ongoing health and social assessments and implement a comprehensive regional approach to meet and fund those needs.”

Vision 2015 and the Northern Kentucky Health Department utilized the **Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships** strategic planning process. A MAPP Leadership Team was informed by four community assessments to update or revise the Master Health Plan for Northern Kentucky. This report presents the results of these assessments as they relate specifically to Grant County.

The **Community Health Status** assessment evaluates health and social indicators and analyzes supporting local data. This assessment answers the questions: “*How healthy are our residents?*” and “*What does the health status of our community look like?*” The results of the Community Health Status Assessment provide an understanding of the community’s health status and ensure that the community’s priorities consider specific health status issues. This assessment was repeated in each county to develop county priorities.

The **Local Public Health System** assessment uses the National Public Health

Performance Standards assessment of the services provided by the community public health system. This assessment answers the questions: “*What are the components, activities, competencies and capacities of our local public health system?*” and “*How are the Essential Services being provided to our community?*”

The Local Public Health System assessment focuses on the local public health system— all organizations and entities within the community that contribute to the public’s health. This assessment was a regional assessment that includes organizations that serve Grant County as well as other counties.

The **Community Themes and Strengths** assessment looks at the social and support assets of the community. The Community Themes and Strengths assessment answers the questions: “*What is important to our community?*” “*How is quality of life perceived in our community?*” and “*What assets do we have that can be used to improve community health?*” During this assessment, community thoughts, opinions and concerns are gathered, providing insight into the issues of importance to the community. Feedback about quality of life in the community and community assets is also gathered. This information leads to a portrait of the community as seen through the eyes of its residents.

This assessment used a regional community survey. The results of this survey have been sorted by county to indicate Grant County-specific concerns.

The **Forces of Change** assessment looks at the current social, economic and political trends in the community that will support or hinder the achievement of the Vision 2015 goals. During the Forces of Change assessment, participants answer the questions: “*What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of our community or the*

local public health system?” and “What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?”

The Forces of Change assessment results in a comprehensive, but focused, list of key forces and describes their impacts. This assessment was a regional assessment, but the forces identified also impact Grant County.

While many of the health and social needs of the Northern Kentucky region are the same, there are county and community differences at the local level.

To identify county-specific issues, the Community Health Status assessment was repeated in each of the four counties served by the Northern Kentucky Health Department: Boone, Campbell, Grant and Kenton counties.

In addition, Three Rivers District Health Department conducted the MAPP process separately in each of the other four counties in the Northern Kentucky Area Development District. The combined assessments cover eight of the nine counties addressed by Vision 2015.

The first step in the MAPP process was to develop the vision to guide the process, **“Thriving people living healthy lifestyles in a vibrant community.”** and to identify **community values:**

- Responsible and healthful lifestyle choices
- Green space and recreation opportunities throughout our community
- Air, water and environmental quality
- Wellness initiatives in schools, the workplace and the community at large
- Access to a health care system that encompasses wellness and sick care

- Technology and quality improvement practices for efficient and effective health care
- Resources for safety-net services
- Holistic approach to addressing health problems

To achieve this vision:

The **Community Health Status assessment** identified Grant County’s top four priority health and social needs:

- 1. Access to health care—the need for a Federally-Qualified Health Center or other community center**
- 2. Lack of recreational opportunities for youth and adults**
- 3. Smoke-free community**
- 4. Access to mental health and substance abuse services**
- 5. Healthy living and healthy weight**

1. Access to care: Primary health care was identified as the top health and social need issue in Grant County. There is no access in Grant County for low-income people lacking insurance. Those residents must leave Grant County to go to Gallatin, Owen or Kenton counties for their health care.

Grant County has the lowest family income among the four Northern Kentucky counties served by the Northern Kentucky Health Department and many citizens are uninsured. Transportation to distant health services is an issue for many in rural areas who are unable to drive themselves due to illness or disabilities.

2. Lack of recreational opportunities for youth and adults: The lack of recreational opportunities is seen as both a health and social issue in Grant County. Most of the recreational and entertainment in Grant County is focused around school sports and

other school activities. While these are needed, there is not much to do outside of school activities.

It was mentioned that the closest movie theater was in Florence and this was a long drive for most Grant County residents. The county parks were also cited as an excellent resource, but again opportunities for social, cultural and recreational activities are limited.

3. Smoke-free community: While Grant County has one of the highest adult smoking rates, with more than a third of the adult residents reporting that they smoke, a growing number of residents are beginning to realize that smoking contributes to many of the poor health outcomes for the population. There are many residents who would prefer a smoke-free environment in public places.

4. Access to mental health and substance abuse services: The number of families living in poverty is growing due to increased job losses. Pockets of poverty exist in Grant County. As noted for access for primary care, there is a need for additional mental health and substance abuse services in Grant County. Again the lack of transportation to existing services is also an issue.

5. Healthy living and healthy weight: As with the rest of the country, obesity is a growing problem for both adults and children in Grant County. The lack of recreational opportunities and poor eating habits contribute to this rising problem.

The **Local Public Health System assessment** identified weaknesses that will need to be addressed to effectively change the health and social needs of the community.

Those system weaknesses are:

- Linking people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.

- Mobilizing community partnerships to identify and solve health problems and review community partnerships and strategic alliances.

The **Community Themes and Strengths assessment** used a community survey to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the community. The community rated a variety of indicators for importance and how satisfied they were with the outcomes.

Issues rated highly important and high in satisfaction are community strengths, those rated high in importance but low in satisfaction are weaknesses. Items ranked low in importance, but high in satisfaction are opportunities and those ranked low in importance and low in satisfaction are potential threats.

Of the 1,875 responses to the survey, 58 reported living in Grant County. In the table on page 5 are indicators as reported by Grant County residents.

This was not a randomly distributed survey, so there may be some distribution bias in the results.

Discussion

The Quality of Life survey was a convenience survey and possibly has some bias in the results. Since one of the primary distribution points was the library system, it is not surprising that public libraries scored high. The public school systems also scored high. Air quality was rated high as a community strength. The feeling of safety and security and the lack of violence or threat of violence scored high as well.

Community weaknesses included the lack of affordable goods and services and a lack of

	High Importance	Low Importance
High Satisfaction	Strengths	Opportunities
	Public libraries	Noise pollution and traffic noise
	Outdoor air quality	Overall environment
	Safety, in general	Social interaction with neighbors
	K-12 public schools	Parks and natural areas
	Violence or threat of violence	Participation in fundraising events
Low Satisfaction	Weaknesses	Threats
	Job opportunities	Public transportation
	Overall economy	Vibrant business districts
	Drug and alcohol abuse	Sidewalks
	After school programs for youth	Community centers
	Variety of affordable goods/services	Local leaders respond to your concerns

programs for youth. Drug and alcohol abuse are seen as problems in Grant County. Given the recent economic downturn, it is not surprising that Grant County residents also thought the economy and lack of job opportunities were major issues.

Community opportunities are those items that were scored high in satisfaction but low in importance. Scoring high are low traffic noise, the environment and parks and recreation. Asset that can be used to help improve the community include social interactions with neighbors and participation in fundraising activities.

The community threats are those issues rated as lowest in satisfaction, but also lowest in importance. The low importance may account for difficulties in improving these areas.

While the county specific open-ended questions were not a large enough sample to generalize, the most important issues in the immediate neighborhood was the availability activities especially for youth. Most of the concerns in the larger region related to the economy and the availability of jobs. The

availability of public transportation is also a concern. See Attachment I for a complete listing of neighborhood concerns.

The **Forces of Change** assessment identified the most important forces affecting all of Northern Kentucky. They are:

1. Rising health care costs are making it harder for employers to provide insurance, and some are increasing the cost to the employees. Fewer people can afford insurance on their own. Related forces are increasing chronic diseases like dementia among seniors, diabetes, obesity and people improperly using hospital emergency rooms for ordinary medical needs.

2. The current economic crisis is creating an increase in the population living in poverty. There is a diminished capacity for government to fund programs and private funds are shrinking while people's needs are increasing. There is an increasing need for public transportation for certain populations such as seniors and those with special needs.

3. Early childhood needs are increasing like dental care, obesity and quality child care.

Related forces are a lack of personal accountability for health and wellness and a culture promoting increasing obesity.

4. New needs of the aging population are increasing such as unemployment, health care and housing. Related forces include elder care and the growth of the senior citizen population. There is an increasing lack of providers in health care, particularly in certain specialties.

the Health Department are organizing implementation teams to continue the development and implementation for the regional strategies. Where there is overlap, Grant County can contribute to the regional effort to achieve the vision of **“Thriving people living healthy lifestyles in a vibrant community.”**

Where identified issues are unique to Grant County or where implementation at the local level is most effective, Grant County might organize local implementation teams to address local priorities.

Next Steps

Many of the issues and risk factors identified specifically in Grant County are common the Northern Kentucky region. Vision 2015 and

Grant County Stakeholders

Tabatha Fryman, Chair

Participants

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Kathy Faulkner	Housing Authority of Williamstown
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Allison Mortenson	Grant County Youth Services Center
Clara Mulberry	Crittenden City Council
Elizabeth Rich	Precision Dental Care
Rhonda Schlueter	Grant County School District
Carolyn Thomas-Thompson	State Farm Insurance
Marylee Willoby	Grant County Coroner

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Attachment I

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Grant County Neighborhood Priorities

Quality of Life Survey Results

The responses below indicate the open ended question results from the quality of life survey.

Question: *What do you feel is the single most important issue facing your neighborhood?*

Responses have been edited for spelling, punctuation, capitalization and readability, but not content.

41010 Corinth

Activities for older kids,
middle school-graduates
Home invasion and theft
No city water
Pollution
Pollution in the lake
Poverty and substance
abuse
Safe roads

41030 Crittenden

Community awareness
Housing values
Need more involvement in
neighborhood
Public transportation
Road conditions
Security
Traffic and railroad crossing
dangers
Transportation

41035 Dry Ridge

Affordable, clean, safe
housing
Bad neighbors

Economic development
Education
Gang violence
Jobs
Lack of business growth
Lack of job opportunities
People having to make
decision to eat or buy
medications
Recreation
Safe drinking water
Vocational school

41035 Other

Houses getting built in new
neighborhood
Lack of education and
exposure
Missing things to do for
youth, recreation center,
after school programs
for a minimal fee
People losing their homes
Trespassing on private
property
Vandalism
Water quality

41097 Williamstown

Child safety
Country living
Increase in drug use
Kids need things to do
Lack of local businesses
Lack of things to do and
opportunities for youth
Traffic and speed
Water resources for the
future

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These assessment results, issues and strategies represent the collective work of the MAPP Leadership Team, committees, and retreat participants and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the board of Vision 2015, the Northern Kentucky District Board of Health or any member organization.

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National Public Health Performance Standards Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/od/ocphp/nphpsp/