Jeb Bush
Governor

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH

M. Rony François, MD, MSPH, PhD
Secretary

Dear Community Health Partner,

The Local Public Health System Assessment (LPHSA) results are in! It is encouraging to know Polk County residents will benefit from this in-depth appraisal of the private, public, and voluntary organizations that contribute to the public's health and well being in our community.

The Local Public Health System includes all private, public and voluntary entities, as well as individuals and informal associations.

This year, all of Florida's 67 counties brought together a cross section of their community partners to complete their own community health system assessment utilizing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) National Public Health Performance Standards Program assessment instrument. In the report which follows, you will find a summary of the results for the entire public health system in Polk County.

The LPHSA is designed around CDC's Ten Essential Public Health Services and the results identify local system strengths and areas for improvement. *Our challenge now is to use this information to create and maintain a shared vision to improve the quality of life of Polk County residents and visitors.*

Local Public Health System partners are encouraged to take these findings and integrate them into strategic priorities that will result in more effective delivery of services that improves community health.

Let me take this opportunity to once again thank our many community partners who participated in this assessment, including but not limited to, Polk County hospitals, community coalitions, governmental entities, educational institutions, health clinics, physicians, social service providers, public safety and emergency response teams, and non-profit organizations. Your continued dedication to implementing innovative solutions to community health problems is invaluable.
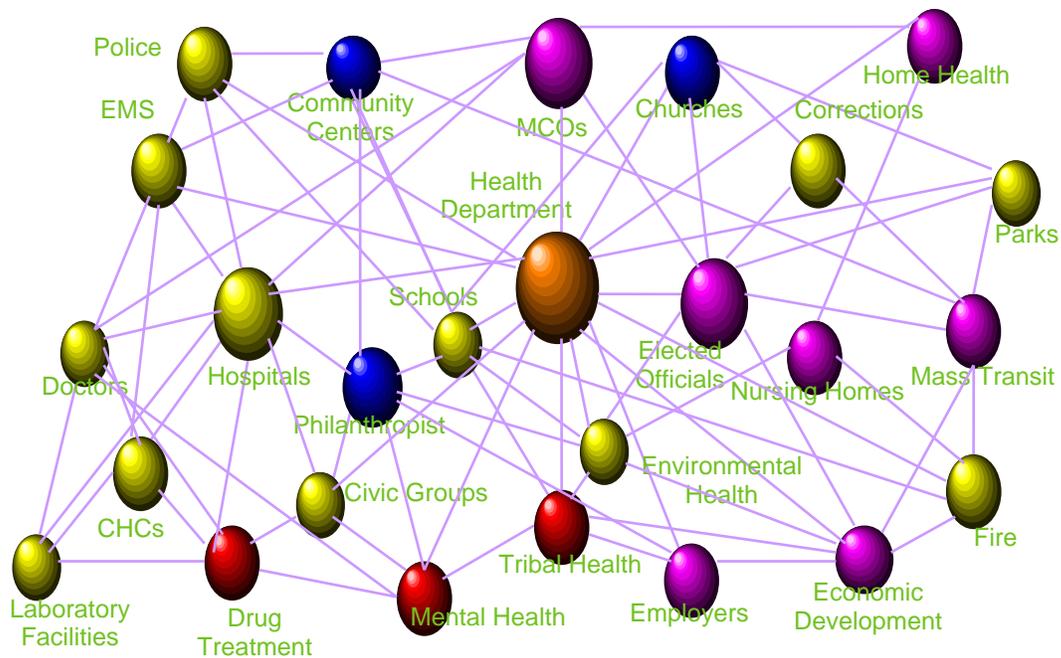
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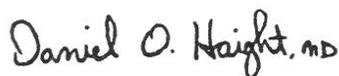
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The Local Public Health System Assessment

Breakout Results for Community Partners in Health

Polk County, Florida

October, 2005

U.S. Centers for Disease Control

Executive Summary

The Local Public Health System includes all private, public and voluntary entities, as well as individuals and informal associations. The Local Public Health System Assessment (LPHSA) is an initiative first established by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1999. At that time, Polk County was one of several counties in Florida that participated in the pilot instrument. In 2005, all 67 Florida counties participated in the assessment. This assessment highlights the CDC's Ten Essential Public Health Services, which provide standards for quality in public health.

The assessment is also a vital part of MAPP - <u>M</u>obilizing for <u>A</u>ction through <u>P</u>lanning and <u>P</u>artnerships, a state-wide Florida Department of Health Initiative. MAPP is a community-wide strategic planning tool that provides "best-practices" for improving the public's health. MAPP is a valuable method to help communities prioritize public health issues, identify resources for addressing them, and take action.

MAPP and the LPHSA challenge the community to <u>practice systems thinking</u>. Systems-thinking promotes an appreciation for the dynamic interrelationship of all components of the local health system. System partners work cooperatively to develop a vision of a healthy community. This perspective bridges the gap between public health and the personal health care system, and allows system partners to focus on key factors that contribute to health outcomes - access to care, continuous quality improvement, and social and community activism.
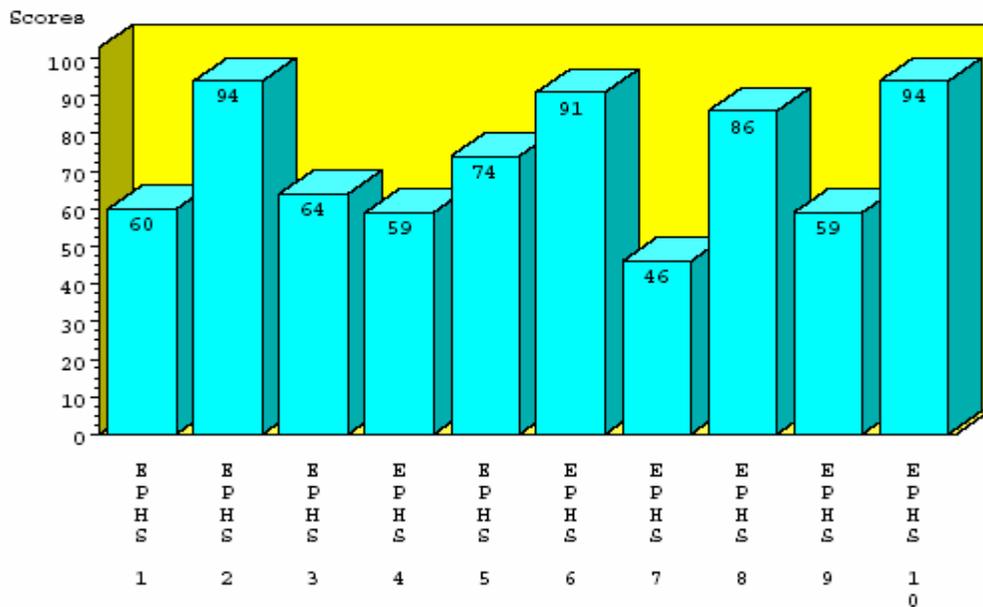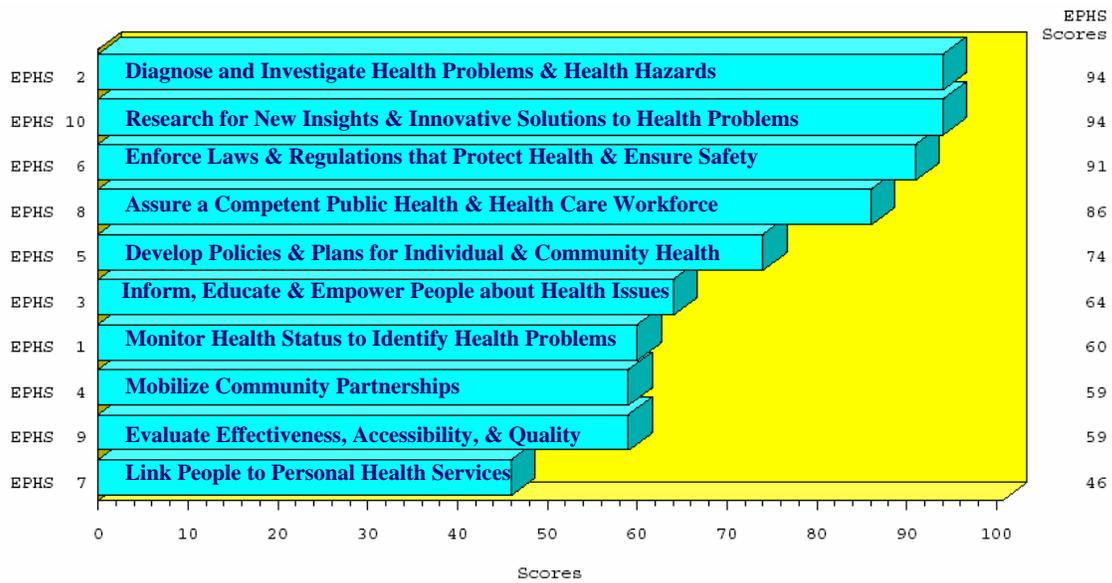
The Ten Essential Public Health Services

- *Monitor Health Status to Identify Community Health Problems*

- *Diagnose and Investigate Health Problems and Health Hazards in the Community*

- *Inform, Educate, and Empower People about Health Issues*

- *Mobilize Community Partnerships to Identify and Solve Health Problems*

- *Develop Policies and Plans that Support Individual and Community Health Efforts*

- *Enforce Laws and Regulations that Protect Health and Ensure Safety*

- *Link People to Needed Personal Health Services and Assure the Provision of Health Care when Otherwise Unavailable*

- *Assure a Competent Public and Personal Health Care Workforce*

- *Evaluate Effectiveness, Accessibility, and Quality of Personal and Population-Based Health Services*

- *Research for New Insights and Innovative Solutions to Health Problems*

10/14/2005

Using Results

Scores for this assessment are categorized in the CDC's Ten Essential Service standards. Each performance standard represents a "best-practice" in that area. The standards are intended to support a continual process of quality improvement for local public health system partners. The following charts highlight Polk County's summary scores for each of Ten Essential services.

Essential Public Health Services (EPHS)

The goal is for agencies to review the strengths and weaknesses provided in this assessment and to identify specific areas for improvement that can be addressed by their agency as a community health system partner. It is anticipated that this assessment will be conducted again in 2009/2010, during which time these benchmarks can be measured again to gauge progress in community health systems-wide.

The following pages provide a detailed narrative on the strengths and opportunities for improvement in each of the ten essential services. Strengths are ranked by a key symbol, a stethoscope. The stethoscopes are presented as 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, with 5 being the highest possible score. **The essential services with the fewer stethoscopes, the more opportunities for improvement!**

ESSENTIAL SERVICE #1: MONITOR HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY

Best Practices **in Essential Service #1 are identified as:**

- Conduct community health assessment to identify public health risks and inform public health planning.
- Review available health data to determine most prevalent health problem afflicting community.
- Identify groups of people who might have a greater chance of becoming ill because of where they live or work, because of social economic situations, or because they have behaviors that can cause health problems.
- Develop community health profile to educate community and community leaders about public health promotion.
- Establish website to provide community information about persistent health problems within community and how to prevent these problems.
- Use information from population health registries to guide action.

Our *Local Public Health System Strengths* **in this area were:**

- Our community does an excellent job of monitoring the health status of Polk County residents.
- We are in compliance in terms of maintaining our population health registries and use information from these registries to guide practice.
- Our community has access to geo-coded health data, and uses computer-generated graphics to identify trends and compare data.

Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:

- By conducting a regular community-wide health assessment.
- By identifying groups most in need.

- By developing a population-based Community Health Profile which is maintained and updated on a regular basis. This profile would include data about community health; community demographics; community socioeconomic characteristics; health resource availability; quality of life data; behavioral risk factors; environmental health indicators; social and mental health data; maternal and child health data; death, illness and injury data; communicable disease data, and sentinel events data.
- The local public health system would promote community-wide use of this health assessment and community health profile data for systems-wide strategic planning for health improvement.
- By utilizing information from population health registries to guide action.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE #2: DIAGNOSE AND INVESTIGATE COMMUNITY HEALTH PROBLEMS AND HAZARDS IN THE COMMUNITY

***Best Practices* in Essential Service #2 are identified as:**

- Investigate food borne outbreaks.
- Communicate serious health threats to community in timely manner.
- Develop emergency response plans for public health emergencies.
- Respond to public health emergencies including disease outbreaks or terrorism.
- Ensure access to laboratory with capacity for sampling.

Our *Local Public Health System Strengths* in this area were:

- Local Public Health System partners are very active in diagnosing and investigating health problems.
- The agency partners are active in identification and surveillance of health threats.
- Our community plans appropriately for public health emergencies and disasters.
- Our community is collaborative in its approach to investigating and responding to public health emergencies and disasters, and has procedures to alert communities about health threats and disease outbreaks.
- Our community has access to laboratory support for investigation of health threats, as well as epidemiologists and statisticians.

Opportunities for Improvement include:

- Submitting timely reportable disease information to the State or local public health system.
- Develop and maintain a procedure to alert communities about health threats and disease outbreaks.
- Create and maintain a roster of response personnel with technical expertise.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE #3: INFORM, EDUCATE AND EMPOWER

Best Practices **in Essential Service #3 are identified as:**

- Provide health information that is easy for people to get and understand.
- Develop and provide community with information on seasonal and ongoing public health issues including influenza and West Nile Virus prevention, cancer and obesity prevention, and bioterrorism preparedness.
- Provide health promotion activities like cholesterol screening, blood pressure screening, and flu clinics.
- Support legislation that will improve the community's health, such as clean indoor air legislation.

Our *Local Public Health System Strengths* in this area were:

- Public health partners provide community residents with information on seasonal and ongoing public health issues, such as flu and blood-borne illnesses and prevention. The agency partners also target specific illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease.
- The agencies sponsor health education programs.
- The local public health system provides information on the status of the community's health to public and policy leaders.
- The local public health system uses various media to communicate health information.

Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:

- By providing additional health education, in particular to diverse groups, targeting health disparities within specific health populations.
- By identifying groups most in need in terms of health education efforts.
- By assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of health education activities.
- By assessing community-wide health promotion activities which emphasize collaboration among system partners.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE #4: MOBILIZE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Best Practices **in Essential Service #4 are identified as:**

- Convene other health organizations (e.g., hospital) within community to develop community-wide health improvement plan.
- Coordinate agreements between other community health organizations to determine specific roles and responsibilities toward improving community's health.

Our *Local Public Health System Strengths* in this area were:

- Organizations participating in the local public health system have a process for identifying key constituents, and encourage these constituents in improving community health.
- The local public health system has established a broad-based community health improvement committee. This was identified as including the Citizens Health Care Oversight Committee, as well as the Polk County Health Care Alliance in additional to other community-based groups.

Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:

- By increasing and expanding community partnerships to include businesses, diverse groups, and citizens.
- By creating and maintaining a current directory of organizations that comprise the local public health system.
- By assessing the effectiveness of community partnerships.
- By using communications strategies (such as Social Marketing) to strengthen community partnerships and system linkages.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE #5: POLICY DEVELOPMENT

***Best Practices* in Essential Service #5 are identified as:**

- Advocate for policies that will improve public health, such as clean indoor air law.
- Testify at public hearings in support of legislation that will improve public health.

Our *Local Public Health System Strengths* in this area were:

- Our local public health system includes a local government public health entity, which was identified as the Polk County Health Department. This public health entity is aligned with the state public health system.
- Our local public health system partners contribute to the development of public health policies, and review these policies on an as-needed basis.
- Public health system partners have developed and implemented strategies to address community health objectives.

Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:

- By assuring participation of stakeholders in implementation of a community health improvement plan.
- By advocating for the development of prevention and protection policies.
- By establishing a community health improvement process.

- By ensuring that each organizational within the local public health system conducts a strategic planning process, and that each entity reviews its organizational strategic plan.
- By ensuring that the governmental public health entity conducts strategic planning activities.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE #6: ENFORCE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

***Best Practices* in Essential Service #6 are identified as:**

- Enforce public health code.
- Protect drinking water supplies.
- Conduct timely inspections (i.e., restaurants, tattoo parlors, campgrounds, day care)
- Conduct timely environmental inspections (i.e. septic systems, pools, lead abatement)
- Follow up on hazardous environmental exposures and preventable injuries.
- Serve quarantine/isolation order to individual infected with infectious diseases such as Tuberculosis, SARS, or Smallpox.
- Assist in revising outdated public health laws and development of proposed public health legislation.

Our *Local Public Health System Strengths* in this area were:

- Our local public health system scored extremely high in identifying public health issues addressed through laws, regulations and ordinances, as well as having access to current compilation of laws, regulations and ordinances.
- Our local public health system also scored extremely high as it participated in the development or modification of laws, regulations or ordinances, as well a provided technical assistance to legislative, regulatory or advocacy groups.

Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:

- By ensuring enforcement activities are conducted in a timely manner.
- By increasing authority to enforce public health laws, regulations, or ordinances.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE #7: LINK PEOPLE TO HEALTH SERVICES

***Best Practices* in Essential Service #7 are identified as:**

- Establish and maintain referral network for provision of personal health services to ensure that people who cannot afford health care get the care they need.

- Distribute mass quantities of antibiotics or vaccines in event of widespread disease outbreak (e.g., pandemic flu) or bioterror-related attack (i.e., smallpox or anthrax)
- Identify and locate underserved populations such as low-income families, minorities, and the uninsured.
- Provide culturally and language appropriate materials so that special groups of people can be linked with preventive services.

According to the LPHSA our community DID NOT meet this standard, and indicated that potential areas for improvement might be focused on:

- Identifying the personal health service needs of the population.
- Defining personal health service needs for all areas.
- Assessing the extent personal health services are being provided.
- Identifying the personal health services of populations who encounter barriers to personal health services.
- Assuring linkage to people to personal health services.
- Providing outreach and linkage services for the community.
- Creating initiatives to enroll eligible beneficiaries in state Medicaid or medical assistance programs.
- Assuring the coordinated delivery of personal health services.
- Conducting an analysis of age-specific participation in preventive services.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE #8: ASSURE A COMPETENT WORKFORCE

Best Practices in Essential Service #8 are identified as:

- Fund professional development and opportunities for staff.
- Test emergency response plan during mock event to evaluate performance.

Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:

- By providing additional opportunities for continuing education, training and mentoring.
- By providing opportunities for health care personnel to develop core public health competencies.
- By encouraging Public Health Leadership Development via accredited educational institutions.
- By developing community leadership through expanding mentoring opportunities.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE #9: EVALUATE QUALITY

Best Practices **in Essential Service #9 are identified as:**

- Monitor trends in disease rates to assess effectiveness of disease prevention activities.
- Monitor trends in risk factors (i.e., unprotected sex, drinking-and-driving, smoking) to assess effectiveness of health promotion activities.
- Evaluate effectiveness of public health programs and services.

Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:

- By regularly assessing and evaluating population-based health care services.
- By assessing community satisfaction with population-based health services.
- By identifying gaps in the provision of population-based health services.
- By using the results of these evaluations in the development of strategic and operational plans.
- By evaluating specific personal health care services in the community against established criteria.
- By conducting an evaluation of the Local Public Health System every three to five years.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE #10: RESEARCH FOR NEW INSIGHTS

Best Practices **in Essential Service #10 are identified as:**

- Monitor rapidly changing disease prevention research and health promotion research
- Revise practices in order to remain current with recommended practices resulting from evidence-based research.

According to the LPHSA our community met this standard. There was one area emphasized for possible improvement.

Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:

- By evaluating research activities in epidemiological, policy and service research activities.

In summary, the LPHSA provides Polk County an opportunity to utilize a standardized, well received and respected assessment instrument which can be used to guide overall community health improvement. **It is hoped that the information presented in this report will be used by the local public health system collectively, to guide overall health improvement plans in Polk County.**

The Polk County Health Department again is grateful to all of the community health partner agencies which participated in this assessment. We look forward to conducting similar collaborative assessments in the future as we work together to improve the health status of all Polk County residents.

Special thanks to this year's assessment panel members and participants, including but not limited to, Polk County Government, Polk Works, the Polk County School Board, Polk Health Care Alliance, Central Florida Physician's Alliance, Healthy Start Coalition, Lakeland Vision, Polk Vision, Watson Clinic, Citizens HealthCare Oversight Committee, Polk Ecumenical Action Council for Empowerment (PEACE), Central Florida Health Care, Lakeland Regional Medical Center, Polk County Medical Association, Winter Haven Hospital, Heart of Florida Hospital, U.S.F. Public Health Leadership Institute, Florida Southern College, and citizens of Polk County.