

APPENDIX D

STATE THEMES AND STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT

Report of Results

2011

COMMUNITY THEMES AND STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT

PROCESS SUMMARY

Community Themes and Strengths Assessment results present perspectives from a cross-section of the public health system that includes Florida citizens and residents, state and community public health partners, and local county health departments. Specifically, this assessment seeks to answer the following questions:

What is important to our state?

How is quality of life perceived in our state?

What assets do we have that can be used to improve Florida's health?

BACKGROUND. The Community Themes and Strengths Assessment is one of four assessments that serves as the framework for the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). This document summarizes findings from several facets of the statewide public health system.

ASSESSMENT METHOD. The Community Themes and Strengths Assessment Team identified the priorities, resources and quality of life issues by analyzing data from the Community Health Improvement Survey, county health department strategic plans and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey data.

- **COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT SURVEY** Since 2003, county health departments have responded to an annual survey on community health improvement activities. The survey ascertains the unique capacities, current and planned community health improvement activities, and training, technical assistance and resource needs. The Assessment Team reviewed survey results from 2003 through 2011, looking at trends in how county health departments answered the questions “What themes are being addressed by community-identified strategic issues?” and “What topics are being addressed by community-identified goals and objectives?” Because Florida’s county health departments use the community-driven strategic planning tool, Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships, the answers to these questions reflected the concerns of a wide spectrum of residents of each county.
- **COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLANS** The Assessment Team reviewed and analyzed county health department strategic plans to ascertain local health priorities, existing infrastructure and resource allocation. This analysis provided another source of data that confirmed findings from the community health improvement survey by showing that at the local level, access to health care and chronic diseases are leading priorities.
- **BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SURVEY** BRFSS is a survey of randomly selected respondents ages 18 and older throughout the state about their health behaviors and preventive health practices related to the leading causes of morbidity and mortality. Additionally, the BRFSS queries participants about their perceived quality of life and the correlates that impact health and well-being. These data provide insight into how residents of our state perceive their quality of life. The Assessment Team reviewed 2007 and 2010 data from key survey questions: “percent of adults with good to excellent overall health;” “percentage of adults who are limited in any way in any activities;” “percentage of adults who use special equipment because of a health problem;” “percentage of adults who are ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with their lives;” “percentage of adults who always or usually receive the social and emotional support they need;” “percentage of adults with good physical health;” “percentage of adults with good mental health.”

- **ASSETS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES** The Florida DOH maintains its own snapshot that describes the priorities around which the agency and county health departments have chosen to organize their resources and efforts in support of the agency’s mission and vision. County health departments, in particular, function as the primary mechanisms of direct public health services. This document incorporates several areas of importance: health components, service populations, resources and organizing principles.

FINDINGS

ACCESS TO CARE AND HEALTH BEHAVIORS. The recurring themes in local community health assessment and health improvement planning processes in Florida are access to health care and health behaviors.

- Nearly all 67 county-level community health assessment and health improvement planning processes identified access to health care as a strategic health priority area.
- Diabetes, obesity and overweight, tobacco use and teen pregnancy were specified as health issues affecting communities and in need of intervention.
- Dental issues emerged in 2010 as a priority community health improvement topic for more than half of the communities.
- Concern over the public health infrastructure and policies and laws has continued to grow in significance over the past several years.

QUALITY OF LIFE. As people are living longer, quality of life becomes increasingly important to Floridians. Quality of life refers to perceived physical and mental health that impacts overall health status.

- A large majority of Floridians report a good quality of life that includes both mental and physical health.
- About nine out of every ten adult Floridians report being satisfied with their lives.
- Four out of every five adult Floridians report that they usually receive the social and emotional support they need.
- A minority of adult Floridians report physical and emotional limitations.
- Nearly a quarter of adult Floridians are limited in some way in their activities.
- One out of every ten adult Floridians uses special equipment because of a health problem.

ASSETS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES. Through identifying resources, community partners can analyze whether there are unrecognized assets or opportunities from which they can draw to enhance quality of life and to improve health outcomes.

- Locally, a network of partnerships exist between health care providers and ancillary care groups that augment the health care needs of the population in each county.
- DOH administers public health through 67 county health departments. They are the primary service providers in the areas of infectious disease control and prevention, family health services and environmental health services. Statewide functions such as the laboratories, Vital Statistics, a state pharmacy, and disaster preparedness and emergency operations assure efficient and coordinated approaches to monitoring diseases and responding to emerging needs at a population level.
- DOH provides specialized assistance to pregnant women, infants and children with special health care needs through its Children's Medical Services (CMS) Program. The statewide network of 22 local CMS clinics as well as private physicians' offices, regional medical centers and medical specialty care service centers includes a range of providers not usually available through individual health plans. CMS also coordinates care with community agencies such as schools and social service agencies.
- DOH's Health Care Practitioner and Access program improves access to health care and ensures practitioners meet licensing and practice requirements according to accepted standards of care. This program coordinates the placement of health care professionals in underserved areas through Area Health Education Centers, rural health networks and local health planning councils.
- Florida's public health statutes have been recently reviewed and are keeping pace with scientific developments and current constitutional, legal and ethical changes.