

Presenting Data

The MAPP process will generate a great deal of data. It is important that these data are well understood throughout the community. Presenting data in a clear and concise manner helps emphasize the important findings and results of the MAPP Community Health Status Assessment process.

Data can and should be presented in variety ways. These include:

- written updates of the process (e.g., newsletters, reports, and summaries of findings);
- presentations made to the community and media, and
- the maintenance of an open and public process.

Presenting Data in Written Reports

Helpful Hints: Use an attractive and colorful layout. Keep the community and media updated throughout the process. Consider launching a newsletter or publishing information in a report. Highlight only the important facts or findings. Don't waste space on details. Use clear, simple charts. The easier they are to understand, the better. Summarize major findings in as many places as possible. Write in a clear, simple style that can be understood by readers without a public health background. Acknowledge community perceptions of public health. If there is a specific area of interest, address it. Know your audience. Carefully select visual aids and language that will be understandable and interesting to participants. Double check all data and information presented. Incorrect data can affect the perceived credibility of the presenter and of the entire process.

In both graphic and narrative data reports make sure to include trend analysis, and comparisons. Compare community data to county data and compare county data to state data and to national data whenever such data points are available.

Oral Presentations

Helpful Hints: Keep presentations brief — less than 30 minutes per issue. Invite special interest groups and representatives from all community organizations. Cover only the highlights. What is unusual, either in number or by trend? What finding may be of particular concern to the community? Use visual aids that highlight only important information. Clear, simple charts get the point across better than numbers. Stimulate interaction. Encourage discussion about areas of specific interest. Be organized. Have information on hand that may be of interest to participants. Use everyday language. Scientific or statistical jargon may be unnecessary and confusing. Keep it simple. Be clear and concise. Summarize. Spend the last two minutes reviewing the major findings so that participants don't get lost among all the facts. Give participants summary handouts and fact sheets. Check equipment in advance to ensure they function properly. Have back-ups available in case of equipment failure. Use maps of geographic areas to show what the information means to different communities or neighborhoods.