May 2013 Issue

Welcome to NACo’s second issue of Creating Healthy Counties!

Numerous factors impact health—such as access to care, diet and exercise, environmental influences and social and economic factors—present complex challenges for county officials seeking to implement initiatives to promote health.

Through support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and in partnership with RWJF and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI), NACo is providing counties with information and insight into how they can develop effective local programs and policies to create healthy counties.

The project, Elected County Officials’ Guide to County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, serves as a hub of information and resources for counties about community health improvement and is designed to facilitate peer-to-peer learning among counties about ways to create healthier communities. Counties have the opportunity to utilize information from the annual County Health Rankings to help them learn how to address local health needs and to work toward improving health outcomes.

For more information, visit www.naco.org/improvingcountyhealth

For more information about the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program, visit www.countyhealthrankings.org

For more information about the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, visit http://www.rwjf.org/

For more information about the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, visit http://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu/
Implementation Insight: Model Initiative
Santa Cruz County, California
2013 RWJF’s Roadmaps to Health Prize Winner

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) awarded Santa Cruz County, California with a 2013 RWJF’s Roadmaps to Health Prize for its efforts in implementing innovative community health improvement initiatives. Examples of some of the county’s initiatives include increasing children’s access to health care, providing education, workforce training and substance abuse treatment to justice-involved individuals, and improving options for residents to obtain healthy and affordable food options. Only six communities nationwide were selected for the 2013 prize and Santa Cruz County was the only county government among the prize winners. Learn more about last year’s program winners here.

Santa Cruz County has developed initiatives and engaged local leaders from across multiple community-wide sectors to engage everyone in the mission to improve the health of all residents. What’s unique in Santa Cruz is that it has the second-oldest collection of community information and data on health factors (i.e. health, safety, economics and environment) in the nation. The annual publication, Community Assessment Project, details the community goals while benchmarking where it stands on county health indicators – quality, unemployment, high school graduation and crime rates.

A Go For Health! Initiative to address childhood obesity, a part of the Jovenes SANOS youth advocacy project, works to improve access to healthy food options and exercise through the implementation of long-term community environmental policies and systems change. Through this project, the county has gained new policies and encouraged restaurants to provide healthy food options and rewarded restaurants that had healthy food choices on their menus. The county has also encouraged healthy food options to be sold near schools and parks. Most recently, the county has been working to bring healthy vending machine options to the county’s transit stations.

Through a collaborative effort with diverse partners coming together to contribute various resources and expertise, the Healthy Kids of Santa Cruz County program works to ensure that county residents have access to comprehensive health, dental, vision and mental health services. Since 2004, the Healthy Kids of Santa Cruz County has covered more than 23,000 children.

Resource Spotlight: Assess Needs and Resources
The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program brings groundbreaking tools and resources to communities across the country through the County Health Roadmaps Action Center. Once you have reviewed the information for your county on its rankings, you can use the “snapshot” of your community’s overall health as a starting point to investigate and discuss ways to improve health in your community and to develop an action plan. The Action Center provides a step-by-step approach through the Roadmaps Action Cycle to find best ways to take action and implement locally-
driven change in your community. The initial step in the Action Cycle is to assess and understand your community’s current needs, resources, strengths and assets. Your county’s health ranking can be used as a guide through this process.

A multi-sector team of stakeholders with diverse backgrounds should be involved when assessing your county’s resources. Consider collaborating with diverse partners in a variety of fields such as, local businesses, health care, education, government, public health, funders, community organizations, or others who have a passion for health issues in your community.

Determine what you need to know about your community. Taking the four health factors (health behaviors, clinical care, physical environment and social and economic factors) into consideration, what specific information and types of assistance does your county need to improve its health system? To assist you in generating questions and identifying needs for your county, utilize the [County Health Rankings model](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org) to come up with additional questions or information you would like to know about your community.

Identify county assets and resources that will assist you in answering questions about your community. For example, one of the measures of the [County Health Rankings](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org) is adult smoking. There are opportunities for communities to identify and incorporate other measures and data on tobacco use, such as measures for pregnant women smoking, youth smoking, second-hand exposure to cigarette smoke and identifying policies and programs that currently exist in your community, such as smoke-free public buildings. Are there additional qualitative and quantitative sources of data (community surveys, focus groups) that your county can utilize to provide a clearer picture of your county?

Once you have collected and analyzed data on your county, you will want to share what you’ve learned about your county’s health with the community. There are opportunities through town hall meetings, fact sheets, and social media outlets. Sharing the results with your community will raise the community’s awareness, inform public opinion and mobilize support to develop an action plan to improve your community’s health.

For more information, the [County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Take Action Webinar Series](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org) hosted its first webinar on *Assess Needs and Resources* on May 14. View PowerPoint slides and recording [here](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).

**National News**

**Faulkner County, Arkansas – Town hall Meeting on 2013 Mayflower Oil Spill**

On March 29, 2013, an underground pipeline carrying oil ruptured in Mayflower causing a local emergency and what the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classified as a major spill. Many residents were evacuated from their homes and the impact that the spill may have on the health of the community is still unknown. On Earth Day,
April 22, the Faulkner County Citizens Advisory Group (FCCAG) hosted a town hall event to promote community health and all-hazard preparedness. The FCCAG received funding from the RWJF, through support from University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI) to share their most recent Faulkner County data across the state. The event allowed residents to network, share stories, brainstorm solutions, and recommend priority actions for the oil spill cleanup. Read more

Kane County, Illinois – Health Initiative Opportunities
After the release of the 2013 Health Rankings, Kane County is taking action steps to address community and population health outcomes. Kane County ranked 12th in the state this year, which is a decline compared to previous years in which the county had ranked in the 8th and 9th spot for the state. Recognizing the importance of taking immediate steps to address this issue, the county has identified four priorities in its Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). There is also a high demand in the county for locally grown produce. The county is looking to use local farmland to produce vegetables and fruits, which could address the demand for produce in Kane County and potentially neighboring counties and provide a revenue source and seasonal job opportunities for residence of Kane County. Read more

Healthy Communities Wyandotte Initiative
Healthy Communities Wyandotte (HCW) is a county-wide initiative to involve local stakeholders and residents in improving the overall community and population health. Wyandotte County has been ranked as one of the lowest counties in the state for the last four years. The initiative is guided by a steering committee that is made up of local elected officials, health care, education, community development stakeholders, faith-based programs and nonprofit organizations. The steering committee is responsible for developing a local action plan to improve community health. Read more

17 County Initiatives in Kansas: Project 17
Southeast counties in Kansas have developed the Project 17 initiative works to improve community health in the south eastern counties of the state. The initiative was implemented by State Senators Pat Apple, Jeff King, Bob Marshall and Dwayne Umbarger and includes the counties of Greenwood, Elk, Chautauqua, Coffey, Woodson, Wilson, Montgomery, Franklin, Anderson, Allen, Neosho, Labette, Miami, Linn, Bourbon, Crawford, and Cherokee. The initiative focuses on four areas; health, economic development, leadership and permanent structure. Read more

Frederick County, Maryland – Fighting smoking, obesity
Frederick County ranked third in the state in the 2013 County Health Rankings, though county officials believe that there is still a lot of work to do to address smoking and obesity. The county health department is working with local community stakeholders to combat adult obesity and adult smoking with programs and initiatives that encourage healthy eating and exercise. The county also plans to promote efforts to address issues impacting low birth weight. Read more

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Webinar Series
The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program will be hosting three webinar series throughout the year. The webinars are free, open to the public and take place on Tuesdays from 3-4 pm Eastern Daylight Time.
Breaking Down the Rankings Model Webinar Series provides an in-depth view of health factors that contribute to improving community and population health (i.e., access to health care services, environment quality, employment, education). The webinar series will discuss why certain factors are included in the Rankings data, the role of these factors in impacting a community and population health, and scientific-based strategies that have worked to improve health in a specific health factor area. The webinar series was launched on Tuesday, April 23 with an in-depth look at Tobacco and Alcohol Use. Click here to view PowerPoint and recording from webinar.

Partnerships Webinar Series addresses opportunities for stakeholders to work together across multiple sectors to improve community health. The series will address topics such as reaching out to different stakeholders in the community, sustaining partner engagement, and making an impact through opportunities to work together. The webinar series was launched on Tuesday, April 30 with its first webinar, Working Together – Starting the Conversation. Click here to view PowerPoint and recording from webinar.

Take Action Webinar Series introduces the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Take Action Cycle and provides tools and guidance to take action for each step of the cycle (Assess Needs and Resources, Focus on What’s Important, Choose Effective Policies and Programs, Act on What’s Important, and Evaluate Action). The series will provide an in-depth view of each step and you’ll hear from other communities that have successfully implemented each a stage of the Action Cycle. The first webinar in the series is on Assess Needs and Resources launched Tuesday, May 14. PowerPoint slides and recording from webinar will be available here.

For more information on the 2013 Webinar Series, please click here

Share Your Story
NACo would like to hear about your county’s efforts to promote overall resident and community health. Share your county’s story so that it can be included in NACo’s Healthy Counties Database or highlighted in our bi-monthly newsletter. Email Katie Bess at kbess@naco.org.

Upcoming County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Webinars

- **Partnering with Community Police** – Local police departments have a special role to play in improving a community’s health, from reducing violence and preventing crime to supporting strong community partnerships. Join this webinar on Tuesday, May 21 at 3pm Eastern to learn about how one police department is partnering with the community to improve health and safety for all. Register here

- **Take Action: Assess Needs and Resources In-Depth** – The second, in-depth webinar in the Take Action Series will be a smaller and a more interactive learning discussion of the Action Step. Join this webinar on Tuesday, May 28 at 3pm Eastern to learn about the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), a web based tool designed to assist hospitals and organizations seeking to understand the needs and assets in their communities. Register here
Recordings from County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Webinars

- **Take Action: Assess Needs and Resources** – View the PowerPoint slides and webinar recording from the May 14 webinar to learn about a variety of tools for the Action Step and how to apply them to your work. [Read more](#)
- **County Health Rankings 101** - View the PowerPoint slides and webinar recording from the May 9 webinar to learn about the variety of tools and opportunities the *Roadmaps* project can offer your community. [Read more](#)
- **Partnership: Working Together – Starting the Conversation** – View the PowerPoint slides, materials and webinar recording from the April 30 webinar. The webinar will address partnership opportunities and how to make an impact working together. [Read more](#)
- **Breaking Down the Rankings Model: Tobacco and Alcohol Use** – View PowerPoint slides and webinar recording from April 23 webinar. The webinar will provide an in-depth view of why alcohol and tobacco use are including in the Rankings data and discuss strategies that are being used to reduce tobacco and alcohol use. [Read more](#)

Additional Updates & Resources

- **RWJF Roadmaps to Health Prize** application deadline is **May 23, 2013 at 3 pm Eastern**. For more information, please visit [http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/prize](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/prize)
- **County Health Rankings Special Report** was in the March 25 edition of County News. The special report highlights stories of counties that have used *Rankings* to spur improvement. View the report [here](#)
- The PowerPoint presentation and recording from NACo’s March 15 webinar, *Understanding and Utilizing the County Health Rankings*, are available at [www.naco.org/improvingcountyhealth](http://www.naco.org/improvingcountyhealth)
- NACo Healthy Counties Initiative is hosting a webinar, *Using the Community Health Needs Assessment to Inform Policy Making*, on Thursday, May 30 from 2-3:15pm Eastern. The *Community Health Needs Assessment* (CHNA) is one assessment tool used by counties to better understand the needs and assets in communities. Please click [here](#) to register for the webinar
- Emmanuelle St. Jean has joined NACo’s health, human services and justice team as the new program manager. She will join Katie Bess in staffing the Healthy Counties Initiative. Her contact information is [estjean@naco.org](mailto:estjean@naco.org); 202.942.4267

**Contact**

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