



Creating Healthy Counties

July 2013 Issue

Welcome to NACo's third issue of *Creating Healthy Counties*!

Numerous factors impact health such as access to care, diet and exercise, environmental influences and social and economic factors. These factors can 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/>

In This Issue...

Learn about the *County Health Rankings and Roadmaps* workshop at the upcoming 2013 County Solutions and Idea Marketplace Conference; July 19 – 22, 2013 in Tarrant County/Fort Worth, Texas. It's not too late to register!



NACo Workshop: Addressing Community Needs through the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

2013 County Solutions and Idea Marketplace Conference in Tarrant County/Fort Worth, Texas

July 19 – 22, 2013

NACo workshop, *Addressing Community Needs through the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps*, will take place at the Fort Worth Convention Center in Tarrant County, Texas on **Sunday, July 21, 2013**. The session will provide county officials with an opportunity to learn about the *Rankings* model and measures used through the *County Health Rankings* project. Tools, guidance and resources through the County Health Roadmaps will be shared to inform effective policy change opportunities in the community. Angela Russell, an expert on the *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* initiative, will provide an interactive discussion on opportunities for county officials to get involved and use the initiative to improve communities' health.

Angela Russell will be joined by representatives from the United Way in Montgomery County, Texas. The local United Way will provide insight on how its leaderships has used the *Rankings* data in Montgomery County to ignite action in their community. Montgomery County United Way has incorporated the *County Health Rankings* into a county-wide health needs assessment that was conducted with the assistance of the local health department, a local university, multiple hospital systems and other local stakeholders. Several key data points were even collected and assessed at the zip code level – providing a level of granularity that has given the United Way, their partners, and others an opportunity to truly explore and address some of the health and social inequities plaguing the community.

United Way Montgomery County representatives will be joined by colleagues with the Montgomery County Hospital District to demonstrate how the local United Way has worked with one of its local partners to improve the health of the Montgomery County community.

Tarrant County Commissioner and Healthy Counties Advisory Board Chair, Roy Brooks, will be moderating the workshop. Not able to attend the conference this year? The workshop will be recorded and viewable to NACo members at a later date.

Resource Spotlight: Focus on What's Important

Once your community has assessed and understands its current needs, resources, strengths and assets, the next step is to [Focus on What's Important](#), determining which issue or issues should be addressed first. Without starting with the initial step, assessing needs and resources, it may be difficult to decide where to direct a community's valuable and limited resources.

In order to achieve a greater impact on your community's health, it's important to rank the

County Health Roadmaps Action Center

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. Check out the May edition of [Creating Healthy Counties](#) for a resource spotlight on assessing communities' needs and resources.

problem(s) and provide a primary focus for the community. Consider involving local leaders and stakeholders (e.g. county officials, local businesses, health and human services staff, members of wellness- and health-related coalitions, staff from local health and wellness non-profit agencies) in the discussion to get a county-wide perspective of the availability and gaps in resources currently in the community. Below are some key activities to consider when bringing together local leaders and stakeholders to evaluate what's important.

Consider using a skilled, neutral presenter to facilitate the discussion. Having a facilitator from the outside can ensure that all participants are heard and that negative viewpoints don't affect the process, but rather add to the discussion. For more information on the role of a facilitator, click [here](#)

Reviewing the data collected during the initial step, assessment of needs and resources, can assist in setting the priorities of the community. What was found in the initial assessment? Where are there gaps in resources? Having materials (e.g. presentations, fact sheets, reports) available when bringing together local leaders and stakeholders can speed the process and assist in prioritizing the issues.

Review your community's vision and mission statement to assist in *determining the guided question*. Is the community striving to provide the greatest impact on health? Provide health improvements to a vulnerable population in the community?

Determine the number of priority issues you will select for your community. This can be difficult, since it may feel that every issue is important to your community. Consider the valuable and limited resources available in your community and try to prioritize the most important issues to tackle first.

Set criteria for considering priorities, keeping your community's vision and mission in mind. You may consider; who is affected? How many people are affected? Based on the Rankings data, how much of this issue contributes to health outcomes? For a full list of potential criteria to consider, please click [here](#). A [problem solving checklist](#) can assist in setting criteria for your priorities.

Determine the process you will use to select priorities. There is no universal priority-setting method that will work for all priorities. A well done priority-setting clearly defines; the criteria on which you will compare options, processes to vote, score, rank options, and roles and processes to make the final choices. Consider reviewing the National Association of County and City Health Officials tool, [First Things First: Prioritizing Health Problems](#).



During a meeting with local leaders and community stakeholders, consider having each person *brainstorm potential priorities* based on the material that addresses the community's needs and resources and the county's current mission and goals when it comes to community health. There are multiple tools available to assist you in this process. Mind Tools, provides resources on brainstorming and generating ideas. [Read more](#). Click [here](#) for more suggested tools.

Use your selected process and criteria to prioritize among the brainstormed list. Tools and resources are available to assist in the selection process. Healthy People 2020, provides a template to assist in prioritizing issues. [Read more](#). Click [here](#) for other suggested tools.

Discuss and finalize priority issues as a team. Do the priorities make sense to the team? Will the community overall be able to understand the priorities? Consider the following [checklist](#), to assist in priority setting. Lastly, not only should you *communicate the priorities* to the overall community, it is important to communicate them to decision makers and those who can influence them. Consider the following questions:

- Who must understand and support your plans to address priority issues?
- Who should tell them?
- What media or methods should be used to tell them (e.g. news, reports, new media)

Resource: [County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Action Center – Focus on What's Important](#)

National News

Marin County ranked healthiest place for kids

Marin County, a community with a population of 255, 031 in the North San Francisco Bay area of California, was ranked number one among the top 50 healthiest places to live for kids. The new set of rankings was set forth by [U.S. News & World Report](#), with support from the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. The rankings used the *County Health Rankings* data on children's health - infant deaths, low-birth weight babies, deaths from injury and children in poverty. The report indicated that even though Marin County ranked number one, there are still areas and opportunities for improvement. For example, Marin County has relatively low teen birth rates and children in poverty, but it's still twice as high as Ozaukee County in Wisconsin. [Read more](#)

Counties selected for the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention's National Healthy Worksite Program

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, through its partner Viridian Health Management, have identified 104 employers in eight counties across the country that have voluntarily chosen to participate in the National Healthy Worksite Program, an initiative aimed at reducing chronic disease and building a healthier, more productive workforce. The eight counties participating include Buchanan County, Mo.; Harris County, Texas; Kern County, Calif.; Marion County, Ind.; Philadelphia County, Pa.; Pierce County, Wash.; Shelby County, Tenn.; and Somerset County, Maine. [Read more](#)

Creating Healthy Counties Brochure

From the pages of County News, NACo has released a brochure on the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. The new piece reflects the Special Edition County News Issue on the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps that was published in March during the release of the 2013 Rankings. Click [here](#) to view the publication.



**County Health
Rankings & Roadmaps**
A Healthier Nation, County by County



Linn County Selected as One of the 14 Counties Nationally for Funding to Enhance the Well-being of Area Youth

Linn County and the City of Cedar Rapids are among 14 cities and counties throughout the United States that were chosen to go through a leadership training with the goal to improve the health and well-being of youth in Linn County. The selected groups receive funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to participate in the Community Coalition Leadership Program. The Healthy Youth Promotion Effort (HYPE) Coalition, a group of individuals that work together to enhance and create healthier environments in schools, attended a training at the Center for Creative Leadership in San Diego, Calif. in June. [Read more](#)

Genesee County's participation in Commit to Fit!

Local businesses and organizations in Genesee County, Michigan signed up to participate in the second annual Commit to Fit! 6 Week Wellness Challenge to determine who could practice the healthiest behaviors to earn Commit to Fit! Wellness Points. Nearly 75 local employers and community organizations participated in the event. [Read more](#)

Catawba County Public Health gets national recognition

Catawba County Public Health Department in North Carolina received the Superior award and was recognized by the National Association of County Information Officers for its public service announcement on emergency preparedness. [Read more](#)

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Webinar Series

The *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* program is 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.

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.

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.

For more information on the 2013 webinar series and review past recording, 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.

Additional Updates & Resources

- **NEW:** Check out the new June 2013 Healthy Counties brochure on the *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps*. The special report is from the pages of County News. The report highlights the County Health Rankings model and stories of counties that have used the *Rankings* to spur improvement. View the report [here](#)
- **NEW:** Check out the [County Solutions and Innovation Blog](#) that launched late last month. The CSI blog will contain posts from NACo's subject matter experts in the areas of community and economic development, health, human services, justice, and public safety and resilience.
- NACo 2013 Annual Conference, County Solutions and Idea Marketplace, July 19-22 in Tarrant County/Fort Worth, Texas. For more information and to register, click [here](#).
- NACo Conference Workshop, *Addressing Community Needs through the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps*, will take place at the NACo Annual Conference, Fort Worth Convention Center, on Sunday, July 21 from 10:45 – 12:00pm. Workshop will be recording and available for viewing at a later date.
- On May 30, NACo hosted a webinar on the Community Health Needs Assessment process and opportunities for county officials to get involved. Click [here](#) to view the webinar recording. PowerPoint slides are available [here](#).

Contact

**County Health Rankings &
Roadmaps Initiative**

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