

AN OUTLINE FOR THE  
COUNTY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CHIP)

In Passaic County

Written by  
Steven Peters, M.A., H.O., R.E.H.S.  
Assistant Director – Passaic County Department of Health

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To Public Health Partners:

I have reviewed the County Health Improvement Plan for the County of Passaic. I endorse this Plan and its initiative to identify issues within our communities which may hold people back from receiving a proper quality of life.

The issues are identified and meetings have been held to recommend ways of addressing these needs within our communities.

I look forward to the implementation of this Plan.

Sincerely,

Deborah Rucki Drake  
Director/Health Officer

The Passaic County Department of Health would like to thank the following individuals for their extra effort in helping to contribute to the Mobilizing for Action through Partnerships and Planning process:

Passaic County Governmental Public Health Partnership/Community Public Health Partnership Steering Committee:

- Current Chair Person, Carlos Perez, Health Officer – City of Passaic
- Former Chair Person, Albert Greco, Former Health Officer/Current City Administrator – City of Clifton
- Donna Barry, Montclair State University
- Phillip Berlier, Passaic County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
- John Biegel, Health Officer – City of Clifton
- Barbara Hohf, Saint Mary's Hospital
- Maryanne Orapello, Health Officer – Township of Wayne
- Margaret Perry-Bach, Saint Joseph's Medical Center
- Steven Peters, Passaic County Department of Health
- Maureen Promin, Passaic County Division of Senior Services
- Deborah Rucki-Drake, Health Officer, County of Passaic
- Father Allen Savatt, Passaic County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
- Joseph Surowiec, Health Officer, City of Paterson
- Maria Young, Rutgers Extension for Nutrition

All Health Officers in Passaic County:

- John Biegel, Health Officer – City of Clifton
- Christopher Chapman, Health Officer – Borough of Ringwood
- Kenneth Hawkswell, Health Officer – Township of West Milford
- Carlos Perez, Health Officer – City of Passaic
- Maryanne Orapello, Health Officer – Township of Wayne
- Deborah Rucki-Drake, Health Officer – County of Passaic
- Joseph Surowiec, Health Officer – City of Paterson

Consultant for various parts of the process:

- Robert Schermer

## **ANALYSIS AND PRIORITIZATION OF CURRENT AND POTENTIAL HEALTH ISSUES**

Through use of the Mobilizing for Action through Partnerships and Planning (MAPP) system Passaic County performed a countywide health assessment beginning in 2004. Through the course of the MAPP system, numerous issues were identified that have or could have impacts in the near future on those that live and work within Passaic County. For further information on the MAPP system and the identification of issues through the components of the MAPP system, please see the appendices on Methodology 1 and County Health Assessment 3.

A list of the issues identified through the entire MAPP system was compiled. This set up into a modified nominal group process to perform Prioritization. In October of 2006, a form was emailed to all members of the Governmental and Community Public Health Partnerships for Passaic County. This form included the list of all issues identified through the MAPP system and requested that the respondent pick three issues as the most important with these issues enumerated in order of importance with number one being the most important and number three being the least important. Responses were limited to one representing each agency responding. All responses were collated in one of two categories.

Category One consisted of representative responses from each health department in Passaic County. Only one response from each health department was counted. If multiple responses were received, the response from the highest ranking individual from that health department was counted. Ranked responses from given inverse weighted values with a response of one having a value of one having a value of three, a response of two having a value of two and a response of three having a value of one. All issues that had responses were listed with each corresponding value. The values were then added for an aggregate weighted value.

Category Two consisted of representing responses from Community Public Health Partners in Passaic County. A method mirroring the one described above for the health departments was performed for these responses.

Only one vote was allowed per organization to prevent larger organizations from eclipsing the input of smaller organizations. The results of Category One and Category two were compared and found to mirror each other. The following issues received the highest aggregate weighted value rankings from this Prioritization procedure.

- Access to Health Care
- Cancer
- Drug Abuse
- Health Education
- Heart Disease and Stroke

A session of the Passaic County Governmental and Community Public Health Partnership Steering Committee was convened in December of 2006 for the purpose of identifying strategies for addressing these issues. The results of that meeting – the strategies for action – will be outlined in the next section.

## ACTION PLAN

This section will identify proposed ideas for improvement in the status of the issues identified through the Strategization meeting performed in December 2006. Some of the strategies identified were highly obtainable and will have responsible organizations and outcomes identified. Some strategies are proposed as potential ideas and may not be obtainable, but provide an ideal to strive for.

Issue 1 – Access to Health Care – reaching uninsured/underinsured individuals and overcoming geographical obstacles between those needing health care and those providing health care.

Goal – Helping uninsured and underinsured individuals identify possibilities for health care in the form of screening and treatment. Helping all individuals identify either a health care provider they can reach that will provide service or identify a method of transportation for the individual to reach a health care provider that will provide service.

Strategy I – Identify where target communities meet and set health fairs in those locations.

- Many health fairs are held by health departments in Passaic County. These health fairs are often held at locations convenient for the health departments and attendees are enticed to come to that location. Identifying where target communities meet on their own and scheduling health fairs in those locations could help increase the number of individuals the health fairs service.

Responsible Organizations – All health departments and other organizations convening health fairs in Passaic County

Action to be taken – Try to organize health fairs at locations where target populations will be meeting to provide easier access to the health fairs.

Strategy II – Connect individuals with low cost transportation to the two Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) in Passaic County in Passaic City and Paterson City

- There are two FQHC in Passaic County that could provide screenings and some medical care to individuals that need their services. However, many of the individuals that need these services lack the transportation to reach the facilities. This is exacerbated by the fact that both FQHC are in the far southern portion of Passaic County. Residents of the northern portion of Passaic County may have extreme difficulty in reaching these locations. There is a potential transportation provider in the form of Passaic County Paratransit.

Responsible Organization – Passaic County Department of Health will research the possibilities of using Passaic County Paratransit resources.

Action to be taken – Passaic County Department of Health will discuss this issue with Passaic County Paratransit to identify if any resources could be expended to help in transporting individuals to the FQHC's. Passaic County Department of Health will make initial inquiries on this issue by April 2007.

Strategy III – Identify the possible organizations that can provide health care for individuals when a health problem is identified through a database.

- There is currently a disconnect when screening is performed and a health problem is found. The individual may be informed that they have a health problem with no information available as to where to seek treatment if they are uninsured or underinsured.

Responsible Organization – Passaic County Department will attempt to spearhead an initiative to develop a database.

Action to taken – A database that will identify organizations with contact information that could provide potential low cost or pro bono health care services to individuals. The database will be based on the given health care problem and provide a list of organization that could provide assistance in healthcare for that problem. This will be an ongoing project, but initial structuring will establish the database infrastructure by December 2007.

Strategy IV – Identify Brownfields properties where a FQHC could be established at low cost.

- There is currently only two FQHC's located in Passaic County. Having more FQHC's could provide a more expansive infrastructure for health care of uninsured or underinsured individuals. Passaic County has multiple Brownfields sites, former industrial sites with chemical contamination. Brownfields renovation funding could provide low cost property at a low level contaminated site where a FQHC could be established.

Responsible Organization – Paterson Division of Health representatives championed this strategy and will be responsible for researching feasibility.

Action to be taken – Research into the feasibility of a Brownfield site suitable for a FQHC and finding an organization willing to establish a FQHC at this site.

## Issue – Cancer

Goal – To reduce the cancer transmission rates and increase the amount of successful interventions the lead to successful treatment of cancer thus prolonging life of individuals in Passaic County. In particular, to address those types of cancer that Passaic County population have been identified as above the New Jersey State average – Lung and Skin – as well as the New Jersey priority cancers of Colorectal, Breast, Cervical, Lung, Skin and Prostate.

Strategy I – Continue support for the Passaic County Cancer Coalition to assist in augmenting improvements being pursued through this organization that is dedicated to this issue.

- A Cancer Coalition exists for Passaic County that is funded through the State of New Jersey that is dedicated to dealing with this issue. Initiatives focusing on skin cancer have already begun and another initiative focusing on oral cancer is launching.

Responsible Organization – Passaic County Cancer Coalition as the leader and each organization in Passaic County that is involved in the Cancer Coalition – particularly health departments and hospitals.

Action to be taken – Continued efforts to pursue initiatives through the Passaic County Cancer Coalition.

Strategy II – Increased efforts to provide cancer screenings of various types at health fairs.

- There are many types of cancer screenings, with the screening specific to the types of cancer. Efforts to include a wide variety of cancer screenings for a variety of types of cancer would aid in early detection. This particularly important for priority cancers for Passaic County and the State of new Jersey.

Responsible Organization - All health departments and other organizations convening health fairs in Passaic County.

Action to be taken – Efforts to include a variety of cancer screening services at health fairs.

Strategy III – Work with popular activity organizations to gain their aid in marketing of cancer screenings and health fairs with cancer screenings.

- Many organizations exist that have popular participation for the community (e.g. Freemasons, Rotary, Church groups, Youth Groups, etc.) These organizations may have insight into how to recruit participation for screenings.

Responsible Organization - All health departments and other organizations convening health fairs in Passaic County

Action to be taken – Partner with popular activity organizations to gain further participation for screenings at health fairs.

Strategy IV – Improve health education infrastructure and increase the number of health educators available to educate about prevention and identification of cancer.

- Further health education for the both the youth and adult population could aid in individuals taking a more advanced stake in their health status with more individuals seeking cancer screenings and performing self examination. Further health education for both the youth and adult population could aid in individuals pursuing healthier lifestyle paradigms such as improved nutrition, weight control and abstinence from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Responsible Organization – All health departments, hospitals and other organizations involved in health education.

Action to be taken – See section on the issue of health education that will follow.

Issue – Drug Abuse

Goal – To reduce the amount of use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD). To promote responsible use of legal substances, such as alcohol, tobacco and prescription medications. To encourage individuals to abstain from use of illicit substances. To develop infrastructure for individuals to utilize to escape from addiction to ATOD.

Strategy I – Advocate for further funding for addiction assistance programs.

- Infrastructure exists in Passaic County that aids individuals in obtaining treatment for addiction. Further development of the infrastructure through excess funding would help provide aid to more individuals that need treatment for addiction.

Responsible Organization – Passaic County Department of Human Services –  
Division of Addiction Services and Division of Mental Health

Action to be taken – Advocate for and seek further funding for addiction services.

Strategy II – Search for grants to support more long term care centers.

- There are few centers for long term care of individuals with addictions. In particular, there is a lack of facilities that can provide long term care for females and females with families.

Responsible Organization – Passaic County Department of Human Services –  
Division of Addiction Services

Action to be taken – Seek grants to develop long term care centers.

Strategy III – Needle exchange programs can reduce the spread of communicable disease through populations of individuals using intravenous methods for delivery of drug use.

- Passaic County has the third highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS among counties in New Jersey. Spread of HIV/AIDS, as well as many other diseases including hepatitis can be reduced through needle exchange programs that help prevent the reuse of hypodermic needles among the population of individuals using intravenous drugs. Locally based pharmaceutical companies may provide donation of needles to support this program.

Responsible Organization – Paterson Division of Health voiced interest in this issue.

Action to be taken – Research the feasibility of developing a needle exchange program.

Strategy IV – Legalization of some drugs may aid helping to bring individuals that use the drugs forward from “underground” where treatment for health issues and utilization of hygienic paraphernalia would be more likely.

- Individuals that use illicit drugs are less likely to seek medical treatment and use paraphernalia that have not been hygienically maintained. Disease that emerge in that population are often spread throughout the population and then spread out from that population through “casual use” of illicit drugs from other individuals or other contact with individuals within the population that uses drugs on a regular basis. Legalization of certain drugs and thus “destigmatization” of the individuals using those drugs could lead to those individuals seeking attention to health issues.

Responsible Organization – Paterson Division of Health voiced interest in this issue.

Action to be taken – Research the feasibility of legalization of certain illicit drugs.

Strategy V – Provide more personnel and more expansive drug education to target populations, particularly elementary children and older adult.

- Existing infrastructure for addressing drug abuse issues have voiced concerns over needing further personnel for education on the issues of drug use. Targeting children with appropriate drug education can help to prevent drug use and experimentation. Targeting older adult populations can help to inform those individuals on the importance of proper use of prescription medications that may be misused.

Responsible Organization - All health departments, hospitals and other organizations involved in health education.

Action to be taken – See section on the issue of health education that will follow.

Issue – Health Education and Promotion

Goal – To improve and augment the health education and promotion systems that are serving Passaic County.

Strategy I – Establish a joint health education council for Passaic County.

- Establishing a joint council on health education in Passaic County that all involved in health education in Passaic County can meet. This will allow all the health educators to coordinate to work more efficiently. This will allow sharing of presentations between health educators, identification of key projects and allocation of work between health educators to prevent duplication of effort.

Responsible Organization – All health departments, hospitals and other organizations involved in health education, including public health nurses and private companies.

Action to be taken – Passaic County Health Educators will initiate meetings to begin the cycle of health educators meeting.

Strategy II – Establish an Area Health Education Center (AHEC) system for Passaic County

- The joint council on health education could be developed further into an AHEC which could obtain funding to support health education initiatives.

Responsible Organization - All health departments, hospitals and other organizations involved in health education, including public health nurses and private companies.

Action to be taken – Explore the possibility of establishing an AHEC from the joint health education council.

Strategy III – Hire a full time grant writer to aid in acquiring funding for entire health system.

- An individual dedicated to grant writing and grants management would aid all the agencies involved in public health and would assist in identifying funding sources.

Responsible Organizations – Passaic County Department of Health and Paterson Division of Health

Action to be taken – Both LINCS agencies in Passaic County will explore the possibilities of hiring a grant writer to assist with program development.

## Issue – Heart Disease and Stroke

Goal – To reduce the number of individuals that suffer from heart disease and stroke. To increase the lifespan and number of years individuals experience free of the symptoms of heart disease and stroke.

Strategy I – Provide health education to target populations of children to help with influencing development of health lifestyle choices and older adult populations to encourage lifestyle changes that could prolong life.

- Health education can help encourage individuals to pursue lifestyle changes that will result in reduced risk of heart disease and stroke. Childhood obesity is an emerging issue that contributes to heart disease for a population that will face a lifetime of lifestyle choices that could be influenced by health education. Older adult populations are those most impacted by the effects of and mortality from heart disease and stroke. Health education could help to provide older adults with options to help prolong their life and reduce the impacts of heart disease and stroke.

Responsible organization - All health departments, hospitals and other organizations involved in health education.

Action to be taken – See section on the issue of health education above.

Strategy II – Banning use of trans fat at restaurants in Passaic County.

- New York City is pursuing a ban of Trans Fat use in restaurants. Trans fat is a cause of heart disease. Banning use of trans fat in restaurants would reduce the consumption by the public.

Responsible organization – Paterson Division of Health voiced interest in this issue.

Action to be taken – Research the feasibility of banning trans fat use in restaurants.

Strategy III – Increase the frequency of health fairs with screenings for blood pressure to help individuals identify if they are at risk for heart disease and stroke.

- Increased screening may help individuals to identify heart disease so that they can seek treatment before cardiac arrest or stroke.

Responsible organization - All health departments, hospitals and other organizations involved in health education.

Action to be taken – Perform health fairs and screening events on a more frequent basis.

Strategy IV – Develop a database of those who have been screened to allow follow up on whether individuals obtain treatment and possibly to monitor progression of the condition through screening findings.

- A database identifying the individual screened and their results could assist with performing follow up to ascertain if any treatment has been sought and also to monitor progress for individuals that seek subsequent screening. However, tracking of individuals in this manner borders on private treatment. Issues with HIPPA rules would emerge. Also, if their information is being tracked, many individuals may decide not to participate in screenings.

Responsible organization – All health departments and hospitals.

Action to be taken – Research the feasibility of developing databases to follow up on individuals who are screened. The issues involved in tracking and whether to track individuals should be resolved by each health department or hospital.

Strategy V- Develop infrastructure to support physical activity.

- Infrastructure may include internal measures to encourage physical activity for personnel, such as reimbursement for gym memberships, lunch hour activity programs, etc. External infrastructure to promote physical activity would encourage the public to pursue physical activity.

Responsible organizations – All county and municipal governments, health departments, hospitals, parks and recreation departments.

Action to be taken – Research any programs that could be developed by each agency to support physical activity.

## EVALUATION PLAN

The Practice Standards for Public Health Departments located in New Jersey Administrative Code 8:52 et seq. identify that community health assessments must be performed every four years on a the regional/county level. The county Local Information Network Communications System (LINCS) health departments have been designated by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) as the lead agencies for performing the regional/county community health assessments. The NJDHSS has endorsed the Mobilizing for Partnerships and Planning (MAPP) system as the suggested system for performing the community health assessment. The MAPP system involves four assessments that evaluate many aspects of public health and is a lengthy involved system that requires three to four years to perform. This establishes a perpetual assessment/evaluation system where a new MAPP process will evaluate the results of the MAPP process immediately preceding through its assessments.

Programs developed due to findings in the CHIP will continually be evaluated under their own merits and through the perpetual community health assessment system. If they have value and meet a need they will be perpetuated by the organizations operating them, if not they will be eliminated due to the economic necessity of supporting programs that produce and closing those that do not to reallocate resources to those that do.

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## **Appendix 1: Methodology**

The issues discussed in this County Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) were identified through a County Health Assessment (CHA). The CHA was performed utilizing the Mobilizing for Partnerships and Planning (MAPP) system, which was developed by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

The MAPP system functions by convening partnerships of stakeholders in addressing public health. Passaic County began convening meetings to establish a Governmental Public Health Partnership (GPHP), composed of the Health Officers of all seven (7) health departments serving Passaic County, and a Community Public Health Partnership (CPHP) composed of stakeholders in public health issues including other non-public health governmental agencies (i.e. Passaic County Sheriff's Department, Passaic County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), municipal police departments and OEMS), private companies, hospitals and not-for-profit organizations in 2003. A Vision Statement for the MAPP process was developed in July 2004.

The MAPP system requires performing four (4) separate health assessments: Local Public Health System Assessment, Community Strengths and Themes Assessment, Community Health Status Assessment and Forces of Change Assessment. The Local Public Health System Assessment is an examination of the governmental and public health organizations that address public health issues and is performed using a tool developed by NACCHO. The Community Strengths and Themes Assessment is an examination of the public's opinions on the status of public health and where action should be taken, this was performed through a survey sent to 9,000 county residents. The Community Health Status Assessment is an examination of health statistics and was performed utilizing statistics from various sources. The Forces of Change Assessment is an examination of the emerging public health issues that may impact the county within five to ten years and was performed utilizing input from Health Officers and the GPHP/CPHP Steering Committee.

All of the issues identified through all of the assessments were compiled into a list. The list was sent to all members of the GPHP and CPHP requesting their votes to prioritize the issues on the list using a modified nominative group process. One vote was accepted representing each organization in the GPHP and CPHP. If multiple votes were sent, the vote from the highest ranking official from that organization was accepted. The votes were considered in two different pools, the Health Officers and the CPHP. The results of the two pools were then compared to each other. The result was the five priority issues discussed in this CHIP. Strategies for addressing the priority issues were identified through a brainstorming session of the GPHP/CPHP Steering Committee.

Results of the visioning, individual assessments and prioritization sheet are available in Appendix 3 of the hard copy of this report.

## **Appendix 2: Communications Strategy**

Former President Eisenhower once said, "...plans are useless, but planning is indispensable." One reason this statement is valid is that unless a plan is communicated to those involved, it is just a useless collection of words on paper that will eventually be recycled. Communication of the issues in this plan is important.

Information in this CHIP will be communicated to both the GPHP/CPHP and the community in general in the following ways. All members of the GPHP/CPHP will be sent a copy of this CHIP via Email. The electronic copy of this CHIP will not include all

attached appendices, which will include the reports on the individual assessments from the MAPP process, because it would be too large a file to send. Firm file copies with all attached appendices will be available upon request. The reports that will be the attached appendices have already been sent out to all GPHP/CPHP members.

In addition, the CHIP and all attached reports from the appendices will be posted on the Passaic County Department of Health website at [www.pcdh.org](http://www.pcdh.org) and available for download and viewing by the public. The Risk Communicator for the Passaic County Department of Health will draft a press release addressing the CHIP and provide the press release to all local newspapers.

### **Appendix 3: All Hazards Emergency Planning**

Current All Hazards Planning was found to be adequate through the MAPP process. The only All Hazards Planning related issue that was raised during the MAPP process was that of planning for Pandemic Flu. This issue was not placed as a priority issue and is being addressed through planning efforts by the Passaic County Department of Health and Paterson Division of Health LINCS programs and by each local health department.

### **Appendix 4: Community Health Assessment**

Reports generated through the MAPP process that contributed to this CHIP:

- MAPP Visioning Statement
- Passaic County Health Status Indicators Report
- Community Strengths and Themes Assessment Results Report
- Local Public Health System Assessment Results Report
- Forces of Change Assessment Results Report
- Prioritization of Issues from MAPP