

Appendix E

Locations and Dates of Ethnic Community Forums

Health District	Forum Location	Date	Time
Northwest	Avalon Hotel, Erie	9/26/01	10:00 a.m. – Noon
	Booker T. Washington Ctr., Erie	9/26/01	6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
North Central	Lycoming College, Williamsport	9/20/01	3:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Northeast	Boy Scout Center, Montage	9/20/01	1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
	Church on the Move, Allentown	10/02/01	1:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Southwest	East Liberty Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh	9/10/01	1:00 – 3:30 p.m.
	Hill House, Pittsburgh	9/26/01	6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
	Head Start Center, Rochester	10/23/01	1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
South Central	Arches Restaurant, Harrisburg	9/20/01	1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
	Susan Byrnes Health Education Center, York	9/26/01	1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
South East	Philadelphia Department of Health, Health Ctr. #10, Philadelphia	9/25/01	4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
	Intercultural Service Center, Philadelphia	9/26/01	4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
	Lincoln Plaza Hotel, Reading	9/27/01	4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
	Conclio Hall, Philadelphia	10/17/01	4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Appendix F

CREATING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

Introduction

Creating healthier communities is about improving the quality of life for everyone in the community. Healthier communities means building stronger, more positive relationships in the community that cross racial, geographic, interest-group, and ideological lines. It's not just the business of institutions - every citizen has a role to play in creating health. This approach is successful because community participants with diverse interests and skills work together to identify issues, seek solutions and measure progress. They do this to improve the quality of life for its citizens. The potential of a healthy community to positively influence its future - in all its dimensions - is virtually without bounds. Realizing this potential will take the collective work and diverse skills of everyone in the community.

The recommendations and strategies included in the SHIP Special Report on The Health Status of Minorities in Pennsylvania provides information, resources, and suggestions which can empower communities to increase the years and quality of healthy life for all citizens. Our commitment to share responsibility and accountability can and will make our communities a healthier place to live, work, and play. Together, we can make a difference!

Characteristics of a Healthy Community

Healthy communities don't just happen – they stem from deep seated commitments from citizens, businesses, agencies, institutions, government, and cultural and faith-based organizations to a vision of a healthier tomorrow. The Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities has compiled a listing of the attributes of a healthy community.¹ The healthy community:

- Practices ongoing dialogue among residents to build relationships and a shared vision of what the community is, what it should be, and how to get there.
- Generates leadership within the community, fosters a leadership style that emphasizes facilitation and collaboration, and encourages coalitions and partnerships.
- Shapes its future based on a shared vision of the community.
- Embraces the diversity of its residents.
- Gathers information about its assets and needs.
- Connects people to community resources.
- Creates a sense of responsibility and belonging among its residents.

Guides and Resources for Community Action

Communities are not alone in their desire for healthier neighborhoods and citizens. Numerous organizations and agencies have developed and published detailed planning guides which can help community leaders systematically assess, analyze, and prioritize health issues and develop locally managed programs and plans to address local concerns. While this list is not comprehensive in nature, the following offer specific information about how to plan for community health improvement.

➤ *Resource Documents:*

- ◆ The Planned Approach to Community Health (PATCH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The PATCH model is designed for planning, conducting, and evaluating community health promotion and disease prevention programs. Available on-line through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/patch/.

- ◆ Apple 2: A Guide for Implementing Community Health Improvement Programs, Institute for Healthy Communities.

This document provides an easily understandable guide to developing health improvement partnerships, assessing local health status, and developing a vision of a healthy community. Available through the Institute for Health Communities' Resource Center: www.hap2000.org/ihc/resources/rescenter/index.asp or (717) 564-0303.

- ◆ APHEX: Assessment Protocol for Excellence in Public Health, National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

This provides a helpful model for engaging with public health departments to improve community health. NACCHO has also developed a community-wide strategic planning tool for improving community health called MAPP (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships). APHEX and MAPP are available at www.naccho.org/tools.cfm.

- ◆ Healthy People 2010 Tool Kit, Public Health Foundation.

This document contains useful information about developing action plans based on the United States Department of Health and Human Services "Healthy People 2010 – Health Status Objectives for the United States." Available at www.health.gov/healthypeople/state/toolkit.

➤ *Technical Assistance Resources*

- ♦ Pennsylvania Department of Health (www.health.state.pa.us)
 - Bureau of Health Planning
 - Bureau of Health Statistics
 - District Health Offices
 - County/Municipal Health Departments
- ♦ Center for Minority Health, University of Pittsburgh (www.cmh.pitt.edu)
- ♦ School of Public Health and Office of Minority Affairs at MCP Hahnemann University: www.mcphu.edu/pubhealth/comm/cbmpspracticums.htm and www.mcphu.edu/minority/minority.html#MOREINFO.

Let's Get Started

Below is a general outline of suggested steps that communities can take to get started in creating a healthy community. By taking action and making choices that support community health partnerships a community can increase the quality of life for its citizens. Our actions make it happen.

Step 1: Get ready. Create a community health improvement partnership.

A successful and sustainable community health improvement partnership begins with broad involvement of community leaders from a variety of organizations. Just as community health is more than just the absence of clinical illness, community partnerships must reflect the broad influence of other factors on a healthy community – clean air, clean water, economic and social considerations and other factors. Participants in healthy community partnerships should include financial institutions, community-based organizations, local governments, hospitals, businesses, academic institutions, schools, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, and local citizens. Note, there may be an existing community collaborative partnership in place that can expand and focus on health improvement. For list of existing community health improvement partnerships visit the Pennsylvania Department of Health's website at <http://webservice.health.state.pa.us/health/lib/health/partnerships.pdf> and the Institute for Healthy Communities at www.haponline.org/ihc/resources/directory/index.asp.

Step 2: Get folks involved. Realize the value of widespread community ownership.

In healthy communities, all people take active and ongoing responsibility for themselves, their families, their property and their community. A leader's work is to find common ground among participants so that everyone is empowered to take direct action for health and influence community directions. Partnerships should realize that community health is everyone's business, and strive to involve as many citizens as possible. Similarly, the community at large needs to know about the activities of the partnership, and have a voice in suggesting the priorities of the community partnership.

Step 3: Define your purpose. Develop a vision of a healthy community.

Health is not the absence of disease. Health is defined broadly to include the full range of quality of life issues. It recognizes that most of what creates health is lifestyle- and behavior-related. Other major factors are genetic endowment and the socio-economic, cultural and physical environment. Health is a by-product of a wide array of choices and factors, not the simply the result of a medical care intervention.

By using as broad a definition as possible of what makes up a community, individuals and partnerships can address their shared issues in the most fruitful way possible. Communities can be based on faith, perspective, land and profession, as well as being determined by geographic lines.

A community's vision is the story of its desired future. To be powerful and inspiring, a community's vision should reflect the core values of its diverse members. A vision is not just a statement on the wall - it is a living expression of shared accountability and responsibility to priorities. A mission defines why you exist and the purpose of the partnership.

Step 4: Get organized.

Working together, the partnership should create an organizational structure that will help the partners achieve the vision. While each community may approach this differently, this may include electing officers and other leaders, the development of bylaws and ways for getting things done, and forming task forces and subcommittees. The organizational structure of the partnerships may change as the partnership evolves.

Step 5: Get informed. Conduct a health status evaluation of your community.

The partnership should collect and review health related data of their community. Sources may include local, state, federal agencies. If data is not available, a partnership may want to conduct its own community health survey. Data about health status are available from the Department of Health's District Offices, County/Municipal Health Departments, the Departments Bureau of Health Statistics, other state agencies and programs as well as associations and local government. Also, partnership members may have access to relevant data that their organizations have gathered. Technical assistance in conducting a local health status assessment is available from the above organizations. Some partnerships have used community surveys to obtain information about the concerns of local residents. Local hospitals may be a source of assistance in gathering this information as well.

Step 6: Get started. Establish priorities and build capacity using local assets and resources.

It would be nearly impossible to do everything at once. Therefore, successful community partnerships establish priorities for health improvement based on the results of the community health status evaluation. Select the one or two most pressing community issues which are realistic, which garner widespread support, and which offer a community partnership the best opportunity for an initial success. Review existing community strengths,

resources, and assets that will effectively address priorities. Partnerships will be able to determine where resource gaps exist and where community assets should be directed. Integrate your quantitative data from the health status evaluation with qualitative information collected through focus groups. Focus groups may empower community members to take action.

Step 7: Get moving. Develop an action plan to address priorities.

Set goals, objectives, and strategies to address priorities. Provide opportunities for community input to the plan. Seek technical assistance if necessary. Focus on systems change. Remember, this is about changing the way people live and work together. It is about how community services are delivered, how information is shared, how local government operates, and how business is conducted. It's also about agencies and individuals cooperating a new and different ways to direct their resources toward common problems. Think in terms of long-term commitment and sustainability.

Step 8: Report to your community. Develop a plan to measure progress and outcomes.

Overall, community partnerships garner their support and sustainability from their community members. Therefore, they must consider themselves accountable to the community for their activities and results. Healthy communities use performance measures and community indicators to help expand the flow of information and accountability to all citizens, as well as to reveal whether residents are heading toward or away from their stated goals. Reporting timely, accurate information to the community through regular progress reports is vital to sustaining long-term community improvement.

¹ Coalition for Healthier Cities and Communities, Seven Patterns of a Healthy Community. Accessed via the Internet at www.healthycommunities.org/usa/index.cfm. The Coalition offers additional publications and links to other resources. Click on “healthy communities agenda campaign” to access the Seven Patterns of A Healthy Community. Click on “community library” to access the Community Toolkit and other resources.

