Community Health Assessments & Community Health Improvement Plans

Public Health
IOWA HHS

The community health assessment (CHA) identifies key health needs and issues through comprehensive data collection and analysis. The assessment gives counties information about the community's current health status, needs, and issues. In turn, this information can help with developing a community health improvement plan (CHIP). The CHIP is a long-term, systematic effort to address public health problems based on the results of the CHA. For any questions, please contact cha-chip@idph.iowa.gov.

BEST PRACTICES

READABILITY

Please keep health literacy in mind when drafting CHAs and CHIPs. Typically, public health communications should be written at or below an 8th grade level. The SMOG Index is the most commonly used readability formula in Public Health and Healthcare settings.

DATA

The CHA should include both primary (data collected and analyzed by the county such as a survey, focus groups, etc.) and secondary data (information collected, published, or reported by others). It is recommended to include the demographic profile of your county, morbidity and mortality data, disparities, and factors (positive or negative) that impact the health of the county. Do not forget to include your County's top issues identified during the CHA process.

PARTNERSHIP/ INVOLVEMENT

One benefit of a CHA is the development of partnerships between organizations and community residents with the shared goal of improving the health of the community. In your work, think about who is currently involved, who is missing, and how you can engage your community.

TIMELINE

The CHA/CHIP process should occur at least once every five years. Once completed, the CHA and CHIP should be living documents that you frequently reference in your day to day work.

CHIP ELEMENTS

The CHIP that you publish should have (at minimum) the following items identified: priority health issues, as well as goals, objectives, and strategies for each issue. This will serve as your action plan.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- SparkMap Community Assessments
- County Health Rankings
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
- Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal

- Iowa HHS CHA/CHIP Homepage
- ISU Data for Decision Makers
- Readable; Readbility Checker (free)
- Inclusive Communication Principles - CDC

As a part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, a private nonprofit hospital is required to complete a Community Health Needs Assessment to maintain its tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) status; this requirement applies to tax years beginning after March 23, 2012. For more information on IRS requirements, please visit the IRS website or contact Wanda Hilton at wanda.hilton@idph.iowa.gov.

IRS REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

COMMUNITY SERVED

☐ Geographic area served

☐ Target populations served
   - i.e., children, women or aged; as applicable, include mentally underserved, low-income or minority populations

☐ Principal functions
   - Specialty area or targeted disease

CHNA PROCESS AND METHODS

☐ Data and other information used in the assessment

☐ Data collection and analysis methods

☐ Collaborative or contracted partners noted

BROAD INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY SERVED

☐ Description of how input was collected and received from persons who represent the broad interests of the community served

Required sources:
   - At least one state or local public health department or state Office of Rural Health
   - Members of medically underserved, low-income, and minority populations served
   - Written comments received from recent CHNA and Implementation Plan

SIGNIFICANT HEALTH NEEDS

☐ Description of identified significant health needs

☐ Description of resources available to address identified health needs

☐ Evaluation of the impact of any actions taken to address identified health needs from the preceding CHNA

AUTHORIZED BODY ADOPTION

☐ Documentation of CHNA report adoption by a hospital authorized body

☐ Widely available to the Public
   - Webpage
   - Paper copy available upon request