

Turning Needs into Actions...

A Community Health Forum

Summary Report



Approximately 85 community stakeholders attended the Lebanon Health Forum entitled “Turning Needs into Actions.” The forum was held on October 4, 2016. Part of the program was devoted to an activity to spur conversation and discussion around four community health priorities. The four topics were identified as priorities in the 2015 Lebanon County Community Health Needs Assessment conducted by WellSpan Health. The priorities discussed were:

- * Healthy Weight Management
- * Mental Well-being
- * Oral Health
- * Opioids / Heroin Use

There were several tables designated for each topic. Each table had a diverse group of participants, although an attempt was made to have at least one “content expert” assigned per table. Each group worked with a format that explored what achieving the stated goal would look like, the challenges to achieving the goal, and finally overcoming barriers to achieve the goal. An example of the format is outlined below:

Healthy Weight Management

- 70% of the adult population in Lebanon Co. is obese or overweight. Only 4% reported consuming 3 servings of vegetables daily and 16% reported getting the recommended amount of exercise

Key Questions

1. If we were successful in improving community health, how will we know we met the goal? (What has changed?)
2. What barriers are in our way that make it difficult to achieve this goal?
3. What can we do to overcome these barriers?

<p><u>Goal</u></p> <p>Lebanon Co. will be considered a “healthy community” that promotes the availability of healthful foods and increased physical activity.</p>	<p><u>Question 2</u></p> <p>Challenges?</p>	<p><u>Question 3</u></p> <p>Overcoming barriers -</p>
		<p><u>Question 1</u></p> <p>We met our goal because...</p>

The following pages capture the recorded feedback from each table and provide insightful views and perceptions concerning the identified health priorities. An exercise like this is designed to spur further dialogue and foster positive movement toward improved community health. It is important to ask: What can I do? What can my organization do? But more importantly, what can organizations and the community do working together?

Healthy Weight Management

Goal: Lebanon County will be considered a “healthy community” that promotes the availability of healthful foods and increased physical activity.

Question 1

We met our goals because:

- * The average BMI was reduced and the percentage of the population in the “overweight” and “obese” categories was lowered.
- * The rate of chronic disease (hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease) stabilized or was reduced.
- * Vegetable consumption increased.
- * The distribution of healthy vegetables to low-income populations improved.
- * The rate of physical activity increased.

Question 2

What barriers or challenges are in our way that make it difficult to achieve our goal?

- * Nutrition education.
 - Educating students in school / exposing children to fresh fruits & vegetables.
 - Ability to modify cultural / traditional foods.
 - Knowledge of food preparation.
- * Access to healthy food, especially in low income areas (food deserts). Regulate food access programs to promote healthier options.
- * Environments not conducive to exercise (workplaces, neighborhoods), safety concerns, walkability, bikeability of the community.
- * Cost of healthier food.
- * Effective collaboration.
- * Transportation to activity programs.

Question 3

What can we do to overcome these barriers?

- * Start nutrition education early. Have a strong curriculum throughout the grades.
- * Better healthy food accessibility for lower-income families.
 - Incentivize the farm community to move product in town. – Farm-to-Table activities.
 - Promote healthier food options at food banks.
 - Incentivize SNAP program around healthier options.
- * Collaboration
 - Leverage funds available for programs through effective collaboration.
 - Coordinate physical activity programs.
 - Centralize programs and then distribute information.

- Promote gyms and monitor memberships (walking groups, biking).
- * Improve Built Environments – Bikeability, walkability, community gardens, clean /safe neighborhoods.
- * Look at zoning for businesses to provide healthier products/menus.
- * Measure consumption of vegetables in all settings.
- * Offer more vegetables (cultural variety) at grocery stores.

Mental Well-Being

Goal: Lebanon County residents will be aware of and have access to appropriate services needed to improve mental health days and manage depression.

Question 1

We met our goals because:

- * Re-survey demonstrated a reduction in depression and poor mental health days.
- * Increased utilization of services.
- * Implemented standardized screening tools.
- * Suicide rate was reduced.
- * Reduction in admissions for depression.
- * Increased education.

Question 2

What barriers or challenges are in our way that make it difficult to achieve our goal?

- * Stigma associated with mental health.
- * Access –
 - Insurance coverage (services and prescriptions).
 - Transportation to appointments.
 - Language barrier (availability of bi-lingual staff, uncomfortable sharing feelings through interpreter).
 - Availability of providers.
 - Turnover of staff – having to rebuild trust.
- * Education –
 - Knowledge of resources.
 - Knowledge of funding.
 - Knowledge of mental health.
 - Not recognizing symptoms.
 - Lack of coping / social skills.
- * Self-medicating.
- * Patient compliance with care plan.
- * Denial.
- * Isolation (rural communities).
- * Unsafe neighborhoods.

Question 3

What can we do to overcome these barriers?

- * Education
 - Better understanding of mental health – reducing the stigma.

- Mental Health First Aid.
- Question, Persuade & Refer training.
- Stress vs. mental illness.
- Start with the young, teaching good coping mechanisms.
- Advocacy & outreach.
- * Coordinate care
 - Connect patients to resources.
 - Standardize screenings in physician's office.
 - Improve collaboration.
- * Providers
 - Culturally competent providers.
 - More providers.
- * Improve transportation.

Oral Health

Goal: Lebanon County will have affordable and accessible dental care among all populations. The importance of preventative care and regular utilization of services will be common among all residents, including our most vulnerable populations.

Question 1

We met our goals because:

- * More county residents visit a dentist each year.
- * More county residents have dental insurance or access to free/reduced care (sliding scale).
- * Reduction in cavities and restorative care.
- * Preventive care in the schools.
- * Reduction in emergency room visits for abscesses/infections.

Question 2

What barriers or challenges are in our way that make it difficult to achieve our goal?

Access Issues -

- Lack of insurance.
- Expense even with insurance.
- Not enough dentists or dental support staff.
- Transportation to appointments.
- Language barriers / health literacy.
- Limited appointment hours – having to take time off work / childcare.
- * Education –
 - Why dental care is important.
 - Awareness of oral health affecting overall health.
 - Relationship of oral health to tobacco use, diabetes care, heart disease.
- * Patient compliance / missed appointments.
- * Dental phobia / Fear.
- * Lack of Time
- * Substandard / poor care.

Question 3

What can we do to overcome these barriers?

- * Access –
 - Attract more dentists to the area.
 - More clinics with free or sliding scale, community pricing for Plain population.
 - Mobile clinics.
 - Dental integration (schools, churches, employers) – medical/dental coordinated care.

- Have employers encourage dental coverage by offering insurance premium savings to employees.
- Provide employees paid time off by employer twice/year to visit dentist.
- Transportation for vulnerable populations. Churches assist with transportation needs.
- Hire more bilingual staff / better understanding of cultures/ more translation services.
- Expand clinic hours.
- Dental offices offering payment plans and accepting more insurance plans.
- Seek grant money to improve access.

*Education

- Start within the schools.
- Emphasize the value.

* Collaboration among social service agencies.

Opioids / Heroin

Goal: Lebanon County will be a community that values the prevention and treatment of opioid addiction. Residents will be aware of available services and understand the importance of addiction treatment.

Question 1

We met our goals because:

- * Reduced overdose deaths. (No fatal drug overdoses reported during the year).
- * Reduced overdose occurrences (ER visits, first responder calls).
- * Enhanced community education.
 - Publications & resources.
 - Continued public forums.
 - 2-1-1.
- * Increased pill take-back programs.

Question 2

What barriers or challenges are in our way that make it difficult to achieve our goal?

- * Balancing Criminalization and supportive justice.
- * Understanding addiction / underlying causes – how drugs get into community.
- * Easily accessible drugs.
- * Stigma barrier to treatment.
- * Prescribe wisely (need & dosage).
- * Lack of cost-effective treatment programs.
- * Lack of understanding how to respond to emergencies.
- * Funding.
- * Communication fragmented.
 - Involvement of various agencies and government.
- * Chronic Pain.

Question 3

What can we do to overcome these barriers?

- * Access.
 - Take comprehensive approach to treatment.
 - Create more accessible, less costly treatment programs.
 - Improve access to existing services.
- * Prevention/ Awareness.
 - Understand underlying factors.
 - Teen town hall in schools / workplaces.
 - Continue awareness efforts.

- Higher level of government funding with increased awareness.
- * More people involved in task force.
- * Medical providers prescribe fewer opioids.