



Empower more people to take responsibility for maintaining their health

Issue Brief

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Inside this issue:

Positive Impact of Maintaining Health	1
Impacts of Health neglect	1
Healthy Polk's Planning Initiative Empowering more people to take responsibility for maintaining their health	2
Community Gaps	3
What the Experts Say	3
Assets	4
Priority Timeline for 2012-2013	5
Priority Timeline for 2013-2020	5
Save the Date/ References	6

Positive Impact of Maintaining Health

Maintaining healthy lives is one of the most important things that people can do. Studies show that when people are healthy they tend to be happier.

According to the study Economic and Health determinants of Happiness, Self-described "healthy" people are 20 percent happier than average, while "unhealthy" people are 8.25 percent less happy.

Being healthy has many benefits that go beyond happiness. People who maintain their health have been shown to be less likely to have chronic diseases such as Diabetes and Heart Disease.

People who maintain their health have also been shown to live longer more productive lives.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle will:

- Increase happiness
- Reduce chance of chronic disease
- Provide more life opportunities
- Reduce Anxiety and Stress

"Living healthy is different for everyone so approachable programs that motivate people and get them excited about healthy living are important."

-Del Konopka, RN, MS, Education Coordinator, Mercy Medical Center Accountable Care Organization



Impact of Health Neglect

People who neglect to take care of their health often experience a wide range of health problems. Studies show that decrease in healthy living has been associated to increase in chronic disease.

According to the CDC 133 million Americans live with at least one chronic condition. These chronic conditions account for 75 % of federal health care spending. Recent Gallup Health Studies have shown that adults

that classified themselves as leading healthy lives had 37 % lower disease burden costs than those who classified themselves as unhealthy. The annual difference between the two was \$1,834.

According to Iowa's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 18.7 % of people stated that their health was excellent, 37.3 % of people said their health was very good, 32.4% regarded their health as just good and 11.5 percent rated their health as poor.

Adults whose Health was "struggling" or "suffering" were 64 % more likely than adults with "thriving" Health to have one or more new chronic conditions diagnosed in the past year -

Gallup Health Poll

Healthy Polk's Planning Initiative

Healthy Polk is a movement of individuals, businesses and community organizations focused on improving the quality of life and health status of people who live, work and play in Polk County.

In developing the Healthy Polk 2020 community health plan, input was collected from over 2,300 community members through community conversations, an online survey and phone interviews. The process was finalized in February 2009 when 150 Polk County residents attended a Healthy Polk Community Caucus and chose 10 health priorities for our community. (The full list of priorities is available at www.healthypolk.org).

8 Empower more people to take responsibility for maintaining their health.

Healthy Polk Health Empowerment Planning Experts

Seventeen health experts, identified by their peers, gathered three times over two months, beginning June 6, 2011. The experts included:

- **Brian Bickel**, Powell Chemical Dependency Center, University of Iowa School of Social Work
- **Del Konopka**, Mercy Clinics' Education Coordinator
- **Dorenda Walters**, Director of Human Resources & Business Strategy, Des Moines Water Works
- **Ed Barnes**, Executive Director, Willkie House
- **Franny Medeiros**, Polk County Health Department
- **Jacquie Easley McGhee**, Director, Community and Diversity Services, Mercy Medical Center
- **Sharon Miller**, Director of Education, Planned Parenthood of the Heartland
- **Teresa Bomhoff**, 2011 Iowa Mental Health Planning Council Chair
- **Tim O'Neil**, Director of Employee Health, Meredith
- **Julie Hibben**, Iowa Department of Health
- **Karen Stiles**, Des Moines Area Community College Business Resources
- **Linda Lemons**, Private consultant, retired from Broadlawns, works with AMOS
- **Marcia Roth**, Assistant Professor of Nursing, Grand View University
- **Paula Secker**, Shakti Yoga Shop
- **Rebecca Lang**, Professor of Health and Physical Education, Grand View University
- **Rhonda Chittenden**, Executive Director, Eyes Open Iowa
- **Troy Vincent**, President, Live Healthy America

"People need to come together to make this happen. We need to package our message and take an in-your-face approach. We need to make being healthy the cool and in-thing to do and work together to gain momentum for social support of healthy living in this community."

-Dorenda Walters, Retired Director of Human Resources and Business Strategy at Des Moines Water Works

Community Gaps

Gap 1: *People feel overwhelmed when they think about health.*

Gap 2: *People don't understand the integrated dimensions of health.*

Gap 3: *Resources for all dimensions of health are inadequate.*

Gap 4: *Neighborhoods and communities are not empowered to support and promote health*

Experts identified that there are several distinct gaps that exist in the community that keep people from maintaining their health. The lack of understanding as to what health is and how to remain healthy are believed to play major roles in unhealthy behavior. Experts believe a lack of social support for healthy living is a barrier that many people find extremely hard to overcome. Lack of community resources that encompass the full spectrum of health further add to reasons why people are not empowered to maintain their health. Once the experts had identified the gaps they proposed a set of initiatives to address these gaps.

What would it look Like?

-People would encourage friends and family to live healthy lifestyles

-Healthy living would be the default choice

-People would enjoy discussing their health and do so more often in their communities



What the experts say this priority means

Beginning with the work and the leadership of the Polk County Health Department this expert team envisions a ripple effect throughout Healthy Polk 2020 and the Polk County community. In the next eight years, this team has set a goal to see 10 % (42,000) Polk County citizens take steps to enhance their health. In order for this goal to become a reality there must be a shift from a health message that is often overwhelming, guilt and shame ridden, and focused on weight reduction and exercise, to a message of empowerment focusing on a holistic view of health.

The following are categories of community assets the experts believed are essential to empowering people to maintain their health:

- Culture
- Lifelong learning
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Safety
- Sexuality
- Spiritual health

“The lack of social support in the family and community is a major barrier to people maintaining their own health.”

-Dorenda Walters, Retired Director of Human Resources and Business Strategy at Des Moines Water Works



Community Assets

African American Leadership Forum	Family to Family	Naturally Slim
Altoona Campus	Free Clinics of Iowa	Neighborhood Associations
AMOS—A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy	Friends of the Des Moines Botanical Center	Neighborhood Finance Corporation
Ankeny Art Center	Grandview University	North Polk Community Schools
Ankeny School District	Habitat for Humanity	Partnership for Better Health
Art teachers	Harmony Yoga + Wellness	Passageway Clubhouse
Better Choices, Better Health	Head Start	Pleasant Hill Parks and Recreation
Blank Children's Hospital	Health Literacy Iowa	Polk Co. legislators
Blue Zones Project	Holmes Murphy	Polk County Extension Services
Broadlawns Medical Center	Hope Ministries	Polk County Health Services
Cabinet Well Workplace	Hospice of Central Iowa	Powell Chemical dependency center
Center for Advocacy & Outreach, Blank Children's Hospital	HyVee Inc.	Primary Health Care, Inc.
Central Place	IDPH contractors for substance abuse	Primary Health Care, Inc.
Children and Family Urban Ministries (CFUM)	IDPH contractors for substance abuse	Salvation Army
Chrysalis Foundation	I'll Make Me a World	Shakti Yoga Shop
Common Thread	InnerProsperity.com	Sixth Avenue Corridor
Community Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention subcontractors	Interfaith Hospitality Network	STD Outreach programs/clinic
Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines	Iowa Acupuncture Clinic	Steps to Wellness, A Guide to Implementing Physical Activity
Community Impact Health	Iowa Acupuncture Clinic	Telligen (formerly Iowa Foundation of Medical Care)
Corinthian Baptist Church	Iowa Chapter of American Heart Association	U of Iowa School of Social Work
Des Moines Art Center	Iowa Department of Human Rights	United Way
Des Moines Health Center,	Iowa Dept. of Public Health	United Way of Central Iowa
Des Moines Meditation Group	Iowa Healthiest State Initiative	Universal Unitarian Church
Des Moines Parks and Rec	Iowa Homeless Youth Center	University Wellness Program
Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center	Iowa Hospice	University of Iowa School of Social Work
Des Moines Public Libraries	Iowa Hospital Association	Urbandale Community Schools
Des Moines University	Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation	VisionWholistic.com
Diabetic Clinic	Iowa Sports Foundation	Visiting Nurse Services
DMARC	Islamic Center of Des Moines	Well Community Committee
Dowling High School	Johnston Public Schools Community Education	Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
Dr. Raygene Curry	La Clinica	Wellmark Foundation
Employee and Family Resources	LGBT Center of Central Iowa	Wellness Council of Iowa
Employee and Family Resources Eyes Open Iowa	Live Healthy America	West Des Moines Community Schools
Employee Wellness Program	Lutheran Social Services	Women's Wellness programs
Evelyn Davis Learning Academy	Mercy Clinics	YMCA
Eyerly Ball	Mercy College of Health Sciences	YMCA of Greater Des Moines Healthy Living Center
Family Health Center, Broadlawns	Mercy Hospital	Young Moms Program (YWRC)
	Mercy Hospital	Youth Emergency Services and Shelter (YESS)
	Meredith Corporation	Youth Ministries
	Meredith Publishing	
	Mid-Iowa Health Foundation	
	NAMI	

Empowering People to maintain their Health Priorities Timeline for 2012-2013

Thirty-one individuals participated in the community gathering. After a short get-acquainted period, the stakeholders were led through a process to prioritize the proposed initiatives. After thoughtful discussion it was decided that 2 initiatives would be advanced.

Projects Launched

1) Develop a set of materials, including bullet points, and an elevator speech, so that champions can easily talk about this priority of Healthy Polk 2020, including the holistic nature of health.

2) Work with churches, workplaces, local ethnic grocery stores, and health facilities. Provide incentives for them to develop and promote in-person and on-line ways for members to stay connected and share information and support.

Empowering People to maintain their Health Priorities Timeline for 2012- 2020



Develop a community culture that supports people in developing positive attitudes about maintaining and improving all aspects of health

Optimize and increase resources for all dimensions of health, and ensure that such resources are equitably distributed and available.

Develop a comprehensive and intensive campaign to educate and promote the concepts of health enhancement.

Work with neighborhoods and communities to establish networks that support and promote the overall health of their citizens.

SAVE THE DATE

*Please join us for the next Re-Gathering
of the Stakeholders in Empowering
people to take responsibility for
maintaining their health!*

November 2 at 8:00 AM

River Place, 2309 Euclid Ave, Room 1A

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Reference Sources for Issue Brief

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Iowa Department of Health

<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/brfss/common/pdf/2010BRFSSAnnual.pdf>

Gallup Health Poll Study

<http://www.fightchronicdisease.org/node/322>

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Healthy Polk 2020 Process Outcome Report

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Healthy Polk 2020

www.healthypolk.org

JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

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