



PERSPECTIVE

All tax-exempt, not-for-profit hospitals are required to conduct a community health needs assessment on a three-year cycle and make the results publicly available.

The Affordable Care Act of 2010 created an opportunity for hospitals and public health agencies to accelerate community health improvement by conducting triennial community health needs assessments and adopting related implementation plans, including strategies that address significant health needs.

Despite the United States spending more than any other nation on healthcare, life expectancy has been declining since 2014, as noted by data from years 2014 – 2017. Declining life expectancy has been fueled by a sharp increase in deaths among the working-age population. There has been a 6% increase in death rates among people 25-64 and a mortality increase nearing 25% among young adults 25-44. This is most pronounced in the “Rust Belt” states and in Appalachia.

If spending more money on healthcare is not getting the United States the gains it needs in population health, perhaps it’s time to revisit what really creates health. Evidence demonstrates that the health of an individual and that of a community is 36% influenced by individual behavior, 24% social circumstances, 22% genetics and biology, 11% medical care and 7% physical environment. Without a broader view of health and what determines it, people in the United States are likely to continue to die at younger and younger average ages.

The value of periodic community needs assessments is that they provide an opportunity to bring together the broader public health community to look not only at the most significant health challenges, but to collectively appreciate the complexity of health. This is an important affirmation that health is much more than medical care.

Although Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center serves patients from multiple counties, more than 50% of its inpatient and outpatient business comes from Knox County. Thus, the assessment and its findings are limited to Knox County.

ASSESSMENT PARTNERS

The 2020 Community Health Needs Assessment was a collaborative effort with the Knox County Health Department taking the lead role in facilitation, data collection and analysis. All Knox County hospitals including East Tennessee Children’s Hospital, Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center, Parkwest Medical Center, Tennova Healthcare, and the University of Tennessee Medical Center were collaborators. These partners and numerous representatives of other public health agencies began the assessment process in 2018 and convened over a period of two years to complete the community health needs assessment. The process was interrupted for most of 2020 months while the health department and community partners focused on COVID-19 in the county.

Knox County Health Department Assessment Staff

The Knox County Health Department is uniquely qualified to lead the assessment process. Using the national MAPP model (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships) a health improvement planning resource of the National Association of County and City Health Officials, staff consulted with local hospitals and government agencies to build upon the previous health assessments successes. The assessment Team Members include:

Martha Buchanan, MD, Senior Director and Public Health Officer

Katharine Killen, Chief Strategy Officer

Angela Allred

Liliana Burbano Bonilla

Sarah Hall, MPH

Charity Menefee, MA

Becky Meyer, MPH, CIC

Michelle Moyers

Mark Prather, PhD

R. Daniel Proctor

Erin Read

Roberta Sturm, MPH

Jennifer Valentine, MSN, RN

Alicia Verlinde, MPH

Kelsey Wilson

Research Partners

The research partners’ purpose was to provide expertise on survey design, focus group facilitation, data collection, data sources, and analysis.

University of Tennessee – Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (UT-SWORPS)

Knox County Health Department

Tennessee Department of Public Health, Nashville, Tennessee

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT – A REVIEW OF DATA



The assessment process, findings, data and references are available in a printable format.

Go to: <https://www.knoxcounty.org/health/cha.php>

PRIORITIES FOR 2021 – 2023

The assessment findings focused on 10 priorities including:

- Access to Health Care
- Active and Healthy Living
- Chronic Disease
- Environmental Health
- Infectious Disease
- Injury and Violence
- Maternal and Child Health
- Mental Health
- Sexual Health
- Substance Use and Misuse

The Community Health Council for Knox County will meet early in 2021 to narrow this list down to the top 3 - 4 priorities and these will become the basis for the hospital's Implementation Plan.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT PARTICIPANTS

Covenant Health's member hospitals in Knox County, Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center and Parkwest Medical Center, are very grateful for the continued leadership of the Knox County Health Department and the Community Health Council for taking the lead in the ongoing assessment activity for Knox County, Tennessee. Additionally, a special thank you to each partner agency which contributed time, expertise and resources in this robust assessment effort. Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center and Parkwest Medical Center will develop an Implementation Plan that will continue to support the most significant findings of this assessment.