

ALLEGANY COUNTY UNITED WAY HEALTH IMPACT COUNCIL

STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

VISION: Provide people of all ages with the opportunities to live healthy, secure, independent, and meaningful lives.

The Allegany County United Way (ACUW) and the Allegany County United Way Health Impact Council are committed to advancing the common good and creating opportunities for a better life for all by focusing on community-level changes that can and will improve people’s lives. The ACUW and the Health Impact Council plan to improve health outcomes by mobilizing the public sector, private sector, and individuals around the systems that impact individuals’ health. A comprehensive approach to health is needed to help people begin and sustain healthy lives. As the World Health Organization’s Constitution states, “Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

The Health Impact Council, with the approval of the Allegany County United Way Board of Directors, has identified the following five focus areas that will drive its health impact agenda:

1. Safe Home and Community
2. Healthy Beginning
3. Healthy Eating and Physical Activity
4. Supporting Healthy Choices
5. Access to Health Care

Individuals and families experience a number of personal and structural obstacles to achieving healthy lives. These obstacles fall into three broad categories:

- Lack of quality education and training
- Lack of awareness of existing/surrounding resources
- Lack of access to supports and services

The evidence-based strategies and approaches in each of the five focus areas contained in this document are designed to address these obstacles.

If the Allegany County United Way and the Allegany County United Way Health Impact Council are to make meaningful progress toward the community impact goals, it must think beyond the traditional avenues and identify community-level system changes that will help reach and impact a greater percentage of Allegany County residents. It is important to note that this is a dynamic process and as the work moves forward, the ACUW and the Health Impact Council expect to identify additional strategies that will be well suited to assist in the achievement of the income impact vision.

Contained within this document are advocacy and public policy approaches. The ACUW and the Health Impact Council realize that advocacy is naturally embedded in the strategies and approaches; however, there are some advocacy approaches that stand-alone. These approaches are noted and will be the responsibility of the Allegany County United Way and the Health Impact Council to execute; therefore they will not be open for funding.

FOCUS AREA

SAFE HOME AND COMMUNITY

Intended Result: Homes will be free from physical hazards and communities will support individual health, and safety.

Indicator: There will be a decrease in unintentional accidents that happen in the home reported.

Strategy 1: Improve the safety of homes

Result: People live in safe homes

- Increase knowledge of fall prevention and other home safety issues and provide connection to appropriate supports and services.
- Develop and administer home evaluation (audit) for age-appropriate and health-appropriate safety needs and provide connection to appropriate supports and services.

Strategy 2: Improve livability of homes

Result: People remain in safe homes longer

- Evaluate support needs of individual and/or families and connect to appropriate support and services.
- Increase availability and use of formal and informal (safety net) supports (e.g. meals, transportation, health care support, caregiver support).

Strategy 3: Support individuals and families to reduce domestic violence

Result: Domestic violence is reduced

- Facilitate domestic support systems and positive social connections within the community
- Improve and increase parenting skills and knowledge of child development supports through parent-child centers and home visitation programs with trained personnel.
- Increase public awareness about reducing domestic violence and provide connection to appropriate supports and services.

Advocacy

- Advocate for policies within child welfare systems that are focused on prevention of violence.

Strategy 4: Improve the physical environment of neighborhoods.

Result: Improved physical environment of neighborhoods and greater access to needed transportation

- Support community-building activities and capacity building of neighborhood organizations to rehabilitate vacant or dangerous spaces.
- Improve and promote transportation to access job opportunities, healthful food, and health-promoting opportunities

FOCUS AREA

HEALTHY BEGINNING

Intended Result: More Allegany County children will have a healthy start in life.

Indicator: Increase in the number of well baby visits and checkups performed by medical personnel in the first six years of life.

Strategy 1: Increase the number of children who live in homes that are free from environmental hazards (e.g. tobacco smoke, mold, and lead).

Result: More Allegany County children will have better health results on screenings that test for pollutants such as lead poisoning.

- Minimize primary or secondary tobacco exposure and alcohol and other drug use through targeted education and outreach efforts.
- Increase knowledge and awareness among housing providers, owners, and tenants about the dangers of unsafe and unhealthy housing and about their rights and responsibilities and connect to services that mitigate identified issues.

Advocacy

- Improve and enforce current federal, state, and local housing codes and guidelines.

Strategy 2: Strengthen health provider-patient relationships

Result: More Allegany County families will be connected to a health care provider

- Connect mothers and children with a *medical home base* by:
 1. Facilitating enrollment in health coverage and identifying and connecting a primary care provider who accepts that coverage.
 2. Linking key health care organizations and community agencies to provide a more seamless screening, enrolling and assignment to a medical home.
- Encourage medical homes to use visits as an opportunity to provide risk assessment and education to women of childbearing age.
- Increase the number of health care providers with a focus on women's health.
- Implement age, gender, and income sensitive strategies that will increase the likelihood that residents will seek appropriate care and treatment.

The Allegany County United Way Success by Six Initiative Committee developed the following Strategy 1 components of the Healthy Beginning Focus Area. It is just one part of the Committee's extensive strategic plan, a plan that includes age appropriate literacy, early learning forums, communications, the Born Learning Campaign, health, dental health, marketing and public awareness. All of these areas focus on ages 0-6. Strategy 1 (shaded area) of Healthy Beginning is currently not available through this funding avenue. For more information on the Success by Six Initiative, please contact the Allegany County United Way office.

Strategy 3: Increase use of preventive care for mothers and children

Result: More Allegany County mothers and children will have improved health due to the utilization of available preventative health options

- Increase access to primary, dental, gynecological and obstetrical care through increased access to and utilization of public health programs,
- Improve patient education on preventive health.
- Build supportive relationships among new mothers during pregnancy and postpartum through targeted group connections and facilitated networking.
- Increase understanding of health coverage, how to obtain and how to use it.
- Support public policy initiatives to improve parent education, including home visitation program.

FOCUS AREA

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Intended Results: More Allegany County residents will experience better health by following a nutritious diet and increasing regular physical activity.

Indicator: A percentage decrease in the reported cases of obesity and the resulting symptoms.

Strategy 1: Increase access to nutritious foods.

Result: The health of Allegany County residents will improve due to a healthier and better balanced diet.

- Increase year-round utilization of free and reduced lunch.
- Increase availability and affordability of nutritious foods, i.e., food banks and soup kitchens.
- Increase and promote community gardens, i.e., summer day care or recreation gardens.

Strategy 2: Increase the opportunities for physical exercise, recreation, and play.

Result: The health of the residents of Allegany County will improve due to better physical conditioning

- Improve access to safe places to exercise and play through community and rural planning.
- Promote walking and biking by securing safe routes to work and/or school.
- Increase physical activity in after-school (and day care) programs
- Increase the amount of time spent on healthful activities by increasing the use by community members of school and other education buildings and grounds outside of school hours.

Strategy 3: Increase the knowledge of healthy food, exercise options, and good health programs.

Result: The health of Allegany County residents will improve with a knowledgeable, balanced approach towards healthy eating and physical activity

- Increase awareness of impact of healthy eating on life-long dental health
- Increase workplace-based health improvement programs.
- Improve and implement school wellness policies that include behavior-focused nutrition education integrated into the curriculum.

Advocacy

- Advocate to medical and dental professionals to routinely counsel and educate patients about the benefits of adopting and maintaining a healthy diet and regular physical activity.

FOCUS AREA

SUPPORTING HEALTHY CHOICES

Intended Results: More Allegany County residents will increase their health and wellness by making healthy choices.

Indicator: A percentage increase in the score of the Allegany County health report card that measures health issues.

Strategy 1: Nurture young people are potential and provide them with the skills to build assets that create positive change.

Result: The young people of Allegany County will feel a strong connection to their community

- Provide opportunities for young people to improve their interpersonal skills (e.g. problem-solving, conflict resolution, self-control, communications, negotiation, etc.).
- Increase opportunities for children and youth to volunteer and help others.

Strategy 2: Help families and neighborhood members develop strong, long-term, positive relationships with children and adolescents.

Result: The residents of Allegany County will develop a culture that reinforces positive behavior

- Facilitate family support systems and positive social connections within the community.
- Increase the knowledge and practice of effective family communications, developmentally appropriate discipline, and other family management skills.
- Increase opportunities for mentoring and positive relationships with adults.
- Provide professional development and support for school staff, community members and family members to enable them to meet the diverse cognitive, emotional, and social needs of children and adolescents.

Strategy 3: Help neighborhoods leverage financial, media, and policy resources in support of positive behaviors.

Result: Allegany County will promote a culture that will assist in decreasing risky behaviors

- Raise awareness about the risks of unhealthy behaviors through targeted and community campaigns.
- Change public attitude regarding the acceptance of risky behaviors.

FOCUS AREA

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Intended Results: More Allegany County residents will experience better health results due to increase access of necessary health services, including those for preventive, mental, dental, pharmaceutical and vision.

Indicator: Percentage increase in the utilization of health care insurance coverage within Allegany County.

Strategy 1: Link clients to appropriate health coverage.

Result: More Allegany County residence will have appropriate health coverage

- Assist eligible patients with enrollment in appropriate health care coverage (including mental and dental health) programs and community-based alternatives, including community health centers.

Strategy 2: Link clients to health care service.

Result: Single Point of Access

- Link key health care organizations and community agencies to provide more seamless enrollment of and access to healthcare services.
- Improve access to care by working with schools and community partners to strengthen school-based health programs and services.
- Simplify the enrollment and renewal process for publicly funded health care programs, including programs such as free and reduced lunch.
- Increase transportation to healthcare services.
- Localize service delivery by supporting mobile clinics, school-based health centers, and workplace health centers.
- Expand patient-centered practices in healthcare to meet identified needs including paperwork that align with literacy and language skills.
- Increase access to affordable dental care.

DOCUMENTS UTILIZED IN THIS PROCESS

- 2009 Risk and Protective Survey
- Allegany County United Way Community Needs Assessment
- Allegany County United Way Community Needs Refresher
- Allegany County Community Report Card
- Allegany County Community Health Assessment 2005-2011
- Allegany County Community Health Assessment 2010-2013
- Community Partnership on Aging Strategic Plan