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Community Health Improvement Plan Update

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Franklin County: Neighbors Helping Neighbors Live Healthy

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The Healthy Communities Initiative began in 2013 with a grant from the Kansas Health Foundation in response to the Community Health Improvement Plan developed in late 2012. The purpose of the effort is to reduce chronic disease by increasing physical activity, good nutrition and reducing tobacco use. The Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) developed a leadership team which then created two working groups: The Active Living planning group and the Food Policy Council. Funding received from the foundation is used to employ a coordinator for the project. Two University of Kansas graduate students in urban planning have served in this position: Sam Davis and Pearl Suphakarn.

In 2013 and early 2014, the efforts of the leadership team revolved around informing the public of this effort, attending trainings and recruiting work group members. With the help of the Ottawa Herald team a web page was developed that includes information on local activities and promotes health living: HealthyLivingFrCo.org. Other recruitment activities included distributing information at special fairs and events, including the Ottawa Sesquicentennial and the KOFO Home and Garden show. The Leadership Team with help from Tom Yahl of City of Ottawa Planning and Codes Department visited all city councils in the county during October 2014 to share the ideas of the team, recruit work group members and obtain local recommendations for action. These efforts have resulted in continued work group growth and planning progress.

Active Living Working Group

The leadership team considered the assets of Franklin County and the characteristics of the population to identify areas for strengthening. The biggest gap identified for the county was the lack of public recreational space and distance and access to spaces that do exist. The most obvious asset for active living was the rail trails dissecting the county and crossing in Ottawa. Training provided by the Kansas

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Health Foundation and the Public Health Law Center and research into trail use resulted in a decision to pursue a countywide plan for bicycle/pedestrian routes with the rail trails as the center point. There is evidence that supports policy and environmental design as reviewed in the Community Guide, a review of evidence-based programs and practices.ⁱ A successful plan created by Paris and Bourbon County, Kentuckyⁱⁱ served as a template for development of a Franklin County plan. Support for environmental design to increase physical activity is also found in research reviews by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Active Living Work Group has representatives from Williamsburg, Wellsville, Ottawa, Rantoul, and interest expressed from other communities as well as local cyclists. The group has held discussions with the State Wildlife and Parks representatives who oversee the Prairie Spirit trail and with Doug Walker, current Chair of the Kanza Rail Trail Conservancy for their insight and involvement in the plan development. Tom Yahl, an avid bicyclist and community planner, chairs this group. The draft plan will be presented to the city councils throughout Franklin County in March 2015.

Promotional activities to increase awareness and support are also being planned. In “Physical Activity” a report by the Task Force on Community Preventive Servicesⁱⁱⁱ community wide campaigns have shown effectiveness in increasing the percentage of active people by approximately 4%. The combination of media, promotional items, personal involvement, government involvement and events are being implemented to bring about safe, designated pedestrian/bicycle routes.

Food Policy Council

Increasing access to healthy foods for residents of Franklin County is the goal of the Food Policy Council (FPC). FPCs and other community coalitions have shown effectiveness in addressing policy that increases access and consumption of foods. “The effectiveness of community coalitions stems from the multiple perspectives, talents, and expertise that are brought together to work toward a common goal.”^{iv} The first effort of the group was to develop and promote a policy for organizations that stipulates the provision of healthy food options when sponsoring a meeting or event with food and drink. The policy also provides that sugar sweetened drinks not be provided by the organization. Three organizations have adopted this policy. The stipulation to not pay for sugar-sweetened drinks has caused the most resistance to policy adoption.

A survey is being conducted to determine if Franklin County businesses have nutrition or wellness policies and what they are. This survey will provide baseline information on wellness policies and possible support for policies by employers. This survey will also introduce employers to the work of the FPC.

ECKAN, the City of Ottawa, Frontier Extension, and the health department through promotion, policy and grant assistance have supported community garden development. Ottawa created a policy that extends water systems to gardens that give food back to local food pantries. Community gardens can provide a local source of fresh foods to those who cannot garden for themselves or for whom affordability is an issue.^v

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The FPC is reviewing other evidenced based option to promote within the county, including distribution systems. To help understand food availability in the county, a survey of quick shops was completed. It showed that about 50% of quick shops offer some form of fruits or vegetables at slightly higher prices than in a grocery store. With only two grocery stores in the county, both being within two blocks of one another, food access for rural residents and individuals living on the north side of Ottawa is limited. Additionally, the farmer's market is also within the same two or three blocks of South Ottawa. While not technically in "food deserts", many residents without reliable transportation may find it difficult to obtain fresh foods being as much as 20 miles from a grocery store.


ACCESS to CARE

The East Central Kansas Public Health Coalition and the Franklin County CHIP Team identified dental Health as a significant health issue in 2012. Since that time, the Franklin County Health Department and partners have worked to find care solutions for the community. In 2013, the ACCESS Advisory Team worked with the Health Partnership Clinic, Olathe, KS (HPC), to establish a new access point. The federal grant recipients for this effort have not been determined as of this date.

In January of this year, staff from the Elizabeth Layton Center and the health department worked with HPC to bring a dental outreach program to Franklin County. The first outreach clinic was held in the Franklin County Annex on January 8 and 9. Twenty-six adults were seen by HPC staff who provided a full dental screening, cleaning, filings and other work as appropriate. Patients needing care beyond the mobile clinic's capacity were scheduled on another day at the Olathe site or arrangements made with other providers for dental work such as root canals. The clinic offers services on a sliding fee scale, accepts all insured and uninsured patients. The health department assisted with scheduling and location details. The next clinic is scheduled for February 20th in the annex and the health department is again scheduling the appointments and assisting patients with the required paperwork. The HPC outreach team hopes to make this clinic a monthly event.

ⁱ Guide to Community Preventive Services. Environmental and policy approaches to increase physical activity: community-scale urban design land use policies. www.thecommunityguide.org/pa/environmental-policy/communitypolicies.html. Last updated: 01/14/2015.

ⁱⁱ Pioneering Healthier Communities (2011) [Draft Paris-Bourbon County Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan](http://www.parisbourbonYMCA.org/media/file/Draft_Plan_Web_Versionb.pdf). www.parisbourbonYMCA.org/media/file/Draft_Plan_Web_Versionb.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Task Force on Community Preventive Services. [Physical activity](#).  [PDF - 302 kB] In : Zaza S, Briss PA, Harris KW, eds. The Guide to Community Preventive Services: What Works to Promote Health? Atlanta (GA): Oxford University Press;2005:80-113.

^{iv} Keener, D., Goodman, K., Lowry, A., Zaro, S., & Kettel Khan, L. (2009). Recommended community strategies and measurements to prevent obesity in the United States: Implementation and measurement guide. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, p63.

^v Ibid