Community Health
Improvement Plan

> "A healthy Nashville has a culture of well-being, where all people have the opportunity and support to thrive and prosper."
>
> -Healthy Nashville Leadership Council
>
> *Vision Statement*

Background

The evolving nature of health threats requires us to constantly update our responses. A hundred years ago Americans were most likely to die of pneumonia or the flu. Now most of us are felled by chronic diseases linked not to a germ, but to the places and the ways we live.

Aligning an entire community's responses to meet these more subtle but equally dangerous threats cannot be done effectively in isolation. It requires a collective appreciation of the problem, and a community-wide embrace of the solutions.

In Nashville the planning body for improving the community's health is the Healthy Nashville Leadership Council (HNLC). The 18-member Council is appointed by the mayor and charged with assessing the health status and quality of life for Davidson County residents, the health delivery systems available to them, and the forces that push our health for either the better or the worse.

To improve our health we first have to know what it looks like now. The Council's Community Health Assessment does that, establishing the current baseline for Nashville's health. The big questions then are, where do we want to go, and how do we get there? In 2014 the Council completed a Community Health Improvement Plan designed to answer both. Thousands of Nashvillians offered their insights and expertise to guide their community to a more healthful place. And it is for the community to respond. Everyone can help.

Based on its Community Health Assessment, the Council identified three priorities for Nashville to pursue on its way to this vision. The Community Health Improvement Plan provides the roadmap.

Roadmap: Three Priority Issues

1. Advance Health Equity

2. Support Mental and Emotional Health

3. Maximize Built Environment to Improve Health

Healthy Nashville

1 Advance Health Equity

Health Equity is the attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Health Equity means all people have a fair chance to lead healthy lives .

The assessment shows that good health is not distributed equitably in Nashville. Health is profoundly shaped by social factors, including a person's address, education, income, and the effects of historical discrimination. Nashville will succeed in improving its health only if it can improve health equity.

Goals and Strategies:

- Develop better systems to give all people a fair chance to be as healthy as they can be

- Ensure a strategic focus on communities at greatest risk for health inequities

- Strategies will focus on cultural understanding among service providers, communication and education about health and health equity, integrating considerations of health and health equity into decision-making at all levels, and identifying and promoting policies that improve economic and health equity.

2 Support Mental and Emotional Health

Mental and emotional instability can destroy individuals and dissolve families. It can show up as anger or violence or neglect. Children can be victims of their own poor mental and emotional state, or of the poor mental or emotional health of the adults in their lives.

The data making this a priority issue for Nashville include the prevalence of substance abuse, mental illness, crime and child maltreatment.

Decreased emotional health can lead to suicide or sickness. It can decrease educational attainment, with negative consequences that last a lifetime. Among the barriers to accessing help are stigmatization of mental and emotional issues and the limited supply of and access to quality mental health services, both of which are linked to limited funding.

Goals and Strategies:

- Individuals and families need enough support to maintain mental and emotional well-being. The community can promote positive parenting and violence free homes.

- Community-driven strategies focus on decreasing the stigma associated with mental illness, increasing access to services, and understanding and addressing the profound role Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can have on behavior and physical health through a person's lifetime.

3 Maximize the Built and Natural Environments to Support Health

The CDC defines ``built environment'' as the physical parts of where we live and work _ our homes, offices, streets, open spaces and other infrastructure. One of the greatest health impacts of the built environment is on physical activity, including the availability of parks and greenways, sidewalks, bikeways and other active transportation options, or the barriers to them.

There is much data from the community assessment supporting maximizing built and natural environments as a priority issue.

Access to active transportation and recreation is a key indicator of a healthy community. Waste management, zoning and land use all play a role in the livability and healthfulness of a community.

Goals and Strategies:

- Make it easier for people to be active, whether for recreation or transportation

- Improve and protect the quality of air, land and water

- Monitor the environmental impact of developments on vulnerable populations

- Education and awareness on the positive effects active transportation can have on the health of people and their environment