

COMMUNITY IMPACT

About Community Impact

In many areas of high health risk, the chances of improving the health of the population are greatly improved when organizations work together to create integrated systems, and/or to give the same message in a variety of venues across the community. The Health District is making a long-term commitment to devote time and resources to work with other entities to organize comprehensive community based approaches around selected top priority health issues.

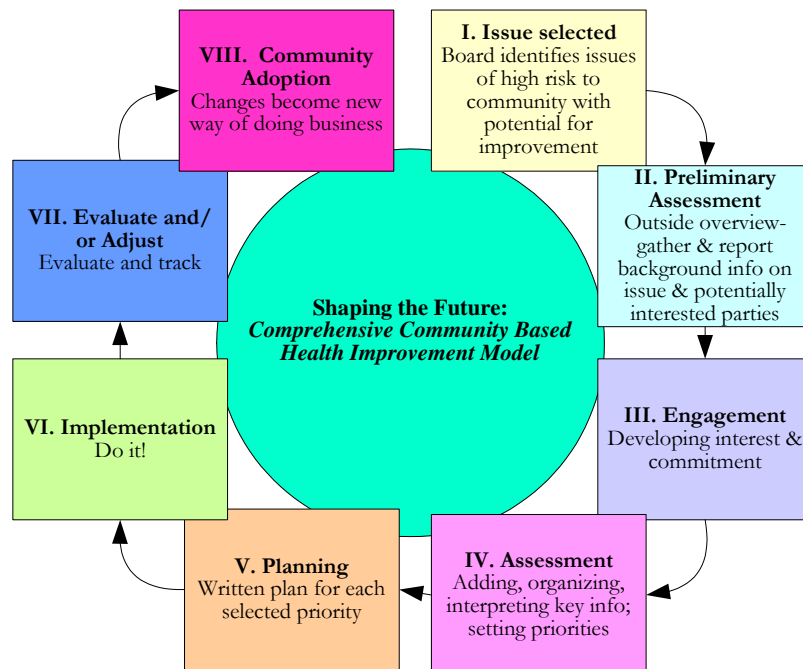
The *Community Impact Team* (CIT) was set up in 2000 to organize the Health District's efforts to make long-term, systemic changes in those areas that are most likely to significantly improve the health of the community. Their efforts fall into four categories:

1. Organizing comprehensive community based approaches to decrease locally targeted health risks known to contribute high health burdens
2. Supporting system-wide improvements
3. Tracking and advocating for passage of relevant legislation.
4. Raising funds to augment existing resources

SHAPING THE FUTURE:

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY BASED HEALTH IMPROVEMENT MODEL

Research and our experience indicate that in order to have significant impact on many of the targeted risk factors that are contributing large disease burdens to our community, we needed to develop effective community-wide approaches. The Community Impact team developed and utilizes the following model for community-based health improvement:



Internship Opportunities

Internship opportunities are available in the project areas described below. An internship experience could be limited to one particular project area, or be structured to allow for involvement in a combination of the areas.

- Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Partnership - The Partnership is a collaborative effort between consumers and providers. Its members are dedicated to making long-lasting systemic change in how we address the needs of those with mental illness or substance abuse problems. The vision is to develop a continuum of mental health and substance abuse services, which will achieve our maximum potential for meeting community needs, and promote a healthier community through healthier individuals and families.

The Health District is leading the community through a long-term strategic, systems change effort. Our role is to help the Partnership Steering Committee identify, define and understand problems. The Steering Committee then provides a charge to a subcommittee whose membership is built around the specific problem to be addressed (assuring the right stakeholders are part of the solution). Health District staff facilitates the work of the subcommittees, helping them to develop a vision, search for solutions, develop implementation plans, and develop a plan for sustainability.

The Partnership approach to systems change includes 12 distinct strategies clustered into five broad areas:

1. Assure Adequate Connections to Services
 2. Maximize Capacity for Diagnosis, Prescriptions and Treatment
 3. Create and Re-create Essential Services
 4. Improve Information Sharing
 5. Policy Changes
- Oral Health Initiative - In the last couple of years, the growing demand combined with limited services has become an increasing problem for consumers and providers, and both are frustrated with a situation that appears to be headed towards crisis. The problems for those who are not able to afford the full cost of dental care are varied. They range from not knowing where to go for assistance, to not being able to afford even a sliding scale fee for the best long-term solution (for example, saving a tooth that needs extensive work instead of pulling it), to facing a long waiting list -- or no options at all -- for those who need routine, non-emergency care.

To address these issues, the Health District will embark on a new Community Oral Health Services Expansion Initiative in 2007. The initiative will follow the CIT model for working with the community to shape a different future. In essence, neutral staff would use a community organizing model to develop, if there is adequate community interest, a community based partnership to work on long-term solutions to our oral health challenges.

The primary goal of this initiative is to expand access to basic dental health care for those with low incomes who live in (northern) Larimer County. Through this effort, we will also determine whether it is possible to create sustainable ways to effectively work with high-risk populations to both prevent and provide early intervention for oral health problems.

The process will involve engaging community stakeholders to:

- Explore current delivery of oral health services to populations who have lower incomes and are without insurance benefits
- Understand the extent of the oral health needs in our community
- Review best practices for improving access, and

- Develop and implement sustainable strategies for increased access to oral health care.
- Legislation/Policy Tracking and Advocacy - Legislation and policies that have a significant impact on the health of members of our community are constantly being developed and discussed. The Community Impact Team has been tracking and analyzing health and district-related legislation for the board of directors since 2000. The Policy Coordinator and staff develop analyses, primers and white papers on key issues for the board's consideration. When directed, staff will advocate for the board's positions at the local, state and national levels.
- Resource Development - It is the goal of the Health District of Northern Larimer County to seek external funds to supplement, expand and enhance services and programs consistent with the organization's priorities and in compliance with its policies and procedures. The Resource Development Program promotes the mission and goals of the Health District through the pursuit, cultivation, acquisition and management of external resources from foundations, corporations, local, state and federal government. The Resource Development staff is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the Health District's resource development and grants management activities by providing proposal development services to staff and administrators, and by acting as a liaison with current and potential external funding sources. The program staff also works with community agencies to increase grant funding to the community for projects that fit within the mission of the Health District.

Supervision

Interns are directly supervised by the Director of the Community Impact Team. The intern and the Coordinator will jointly develop an internship work plan and meet on a regular basis to discuss the internship. They will also work closely with other members of the Community Impact Team as appropriate given the particular internship objectives. Program coordinators will also be involved in the provision of day-to-day task supervision when the intern is working on specific projects. An intern may also have the opportunity to work closely with other Health District program staff and sometimes with collaborating community groups.

Who is a good match for a Community Impact placement?

Generally, someone seeking a Community Impact intern placement should be engaged in a master's level program in public health, public policy, social work and other health and human service fields. Individuals should have a strong interest in macro level (community) interventions, have the ability to handle multifaceted tasks and changing priorities, and ability to develop and maintain professional working relationships with contacts, the public and coworkers.