

2013-2017

Public Health Improvement Plan

Bent County, Colorado

Bent County Public Health
3/31/2014

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Acknowledgements

Bent County Public Health has partnered with the Colorado School of Public Health (CSPH) for the purposes of completing a Community Health Assessment. This particular project is but one component of the assessment process. This project was executed by Master of Public Health students Amber Chandler-Gabay and Latashia Warren, under the guidance of CSPH faculty Dr. Holly Wolf and teaching assistant Molly Gutilla.

The Bent County Public Health Improvement Plan is a collaborative effort of many organizations and providers in the community committed to improving the health of our residents. We would like to thank our partners and residents for their input, expertise and support. The following individuals and organizations have participated in the development of this plan and will play a key role in its implementation.

- Bent County Board of Health
- Bent County Commissioners
- Bent County Department of Social Services
- Bent County Health Care Advisory Board
- Child Development Services
- Las Animas Family Practice
- Las Animas School District
- McClave School District
- Southeast Health Group
- Valley Wide Health Systems

Executive Summary

Bent County Public Health and partners present a thorough community based plan for improving the health of Bent County residents. The Public Health Improvement Plan (PHIP), a two year process, involved substantial and significant input from community members and partners alike. The PHIP will be used by residents, community organizations, and leaders to facilitate positive and measurable change in Bent County.

The process to create the PHIP started after Colorado passed the 2008 Public Health Reauthorization Act. It involved gathering data, evaluating the current capacity of the public health system, and prioritizing action. This process was undertaken in consideration of other community efforts working to improve the lives and health of Bent County residents and visitors.

The Colorado School of Public Health and Bent County Public Health partnered to identify key health concerns in the community. Initial health concerns identified by county partners were: substance abuse, tobacco use, obesity, and adolescent sexual health. Graduate students from the university took on two projects to assist in identifying the health concerns in Bent County. The first project consisted of a team conducting community engagement activities, utilizing nominal groups and key informant interviews to lend the voice of the community as to what they believed were the key health concerns in Bent County. The second project involved a team of graduate students reviewing secondary data regarding 80 health indicators and a prioritization process to narrow health concerns and issues. A comparison of the secondary data and the community engagement information allowed for further narrowing of health concerns in Bent County.

After examining Bent County's data and conducting a structured prioritization process, the Health Advisory Board of Bent County identified one priority for enhanced focus over the next five years: Obesity.

The following document outlines information relating specifically to Bent County and the priority issue, and what the community will do to address this priority over the next five years. For this priority issue, goals, objectives, activities and participating community organizations are detailed. The strategies and approaches were selected based on their proven ability to impact change.

It will take the entire community as well as each individual to make a difference and create a healthy community for Bent County residents to live, learn and play. No single organization has the resources necessary to improve the significant issues outlined in this plan. As such, this plan represents the coordinated efforts of a communitywide movement.

Multiple agencies, organizations, and individuals were involved in work teams and committees that ensured the success of the community health assessment and creation of the PHIP. The goal is to capitalize on available resources and coordinate efforts to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our public and environmental health initiatives.

For more information or to become involved, contact Bent County Public Health at 719-456-0517.

Bent County Overview

Bent County, established in 1874, is located in southeast Colorado, 38 miles from the Kansas border and 80 miles from the New Mexico border. The county is 1,541 square miles with geography of bluffs, mesas, and canyons in the south and rolling plains in the north. Bent County is part of the Arkansas River valley and has a population of 6,250. Bent County includes the towns of Hasty, Las Animas and McClave all of which is considered rural.

Demographics

The demographics of Bent County residents and for the state of Colorado are shown in the Table 1.

| | Bent County | Colorado |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| <i>Gender</i> | | |
| Male | 64.5% | 50.1% |
| Female | 35.5% | 49.9% |
| <i>Age (years)</i> | | |
| 0-19 | 18.3% | 27.0% |
| 20-44 | 38.9% | 35.1% |
| 45-64 | 29.0% | 26.6% |
| 65 and older | 13.8% | 11.3% |
| <i>Race & Ethnicity</i> | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 59.6% | 70.8% |
| White, Hispanic | 28.0% | 18.9% |
| Black | 7.8% | 5.0% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 1.2% | 3.5% |
| American Indian/Native Alaskan | 3.4% | 1.9% |

Education, Income and Employment

Bent County has a high school completion rate of 90%, which is higher than the Colorado average of 77.3% and the Healthy People 2020 goal of 82.4% (Colorado Department of Education, 2011). Yet only 11.3% of Bent County residents age 25 years and older have an associate's or bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 44.2% for the state as a whole (The American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2007-2011).

The median household income in Bent County is \$35,522 per year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Over 30% of Bent County residents live below poverty level, compared to 13.4% for all Coloradans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). As of 2011, an estimated 32% of children under the age of 18 years in Bent County were living below the federal poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). The unemployment rate in Bent County is 9.8% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011).

For a detailed description and health assessment of Bent County's population, please refer to the Community Health Assessment; Identifying Key Health Concerns an Analysis of Secondary Data.

Process for Developing the Public Health Improvement Plan

This Bent County Public Health Improvement Plan is the result of a community-wide health assessment, capacity assessment and prioritization process that was led by Bent County Public Health. It was developed in partnership with a variety of organizations and key informants that impact the public health of Bent County residents. This PHIP was developed using the process and guidelines outlined in the 2009 Colorado Public Health Improvement Plan, the Public Health Act of 2008 and the Colorado Health Assessment and Planning System (CHAPS).

Prioritization Process

Public health priority areas were selected in partnership with the Bent County Health Advisory Board and key informants within Bent County. Data on the health and environment of Bent County was shared with participants and a facilitated discussion and scoring process was used to systematically determine which issues should have a more intense focus over the next five years. The following criteria were considered in selecting public health priority areas:

- Significance to public health (magnitude/severity)
 - Impacts a high number or percentage of residents
 - Contributes to health disparities
- Ability to impact the issue (feasibility)
 - Strategies exist that can be implemented locally to produce the desired outcome
 - There is community support and political will for change
- Capacity to address the issue (feasibility)
 - A local organization prepared to take the lead on the issue
 - Sufficient resources (funding, staff, expertise) are available or obtainable

At the end of the advisory board meeting, results from the prioritization process were immediately available and presented to the board members and county partners. The Hanlon Method was a great asset to this prioritization process. In examining each group of findings, the health concerns that overlap include: health care access, substance use, mental health, and overweight/obesity. It was apparent that was a great overlap between the community engagement and secondary data analysis.

Process for developing goals and strategies and gathering input

Internal and external stakeholders participated in the public health improvement planning process. These participants included people who were needed to create and support measurable action plans for Bent County's priority area.

Meetings were held to identify the factors contributing to the issue, discuss and select strategies to implement in the community and to create action steps that are linked to the goals and objectives, measurable outcomes, individuals leading and participating in implementation and how and when the steps will be evaluated. The Bent County Health Advisory Board also considered recommendations from the Colorado School of Public Health. Community partners that participated in this process included:

Bent County Board of Health, Bent County Commissioners, Bent County Department of Social Services, Child Development Services, Las Animas Family Practice, Las Animas School District, McClave School District, Southeast Health Group, and ValleyWide Health Systems.

Local Community Health Assessment

Our approach to identifying the key health concerns in Bent County involved two methods – 1) community engagement activities, utilizing nominal groups and key information interviews to lend the voice of the community as to the perceived health concerns in Bent County; and 2) reviewing secondary data regarding 80 health indicators pertaining to a project of Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

With assistance from the Colorado School of Public Health, data was collected from Key Informant Interview (KII) and Nominal Group Process (NGP) regarding the top ten strengths and assets in Bent County. Of these top ten strengths and assets ranked by point score, those that were most frequently mentioned were Committed Leaders, Strong Health Department, Community Partnerships, Health Facilities, Willingness to Work Together/Teamwork, Strong Health Care Coordination, Available Space for Recreational Facilities, and Fort Lyon Medical Facility.

The seven Key Informant Interview participants gave Bent County an average rank of 3.57 as a healthy place to live. Most comments about what makes Bent County a healthy place to live were related to environment. For example, KI's identified the stress free environment, lack of congestion, great weather, low pollution and low crime as elements that make Bent County a healthy community. Active health organizations such as LiveWell and Bent County Public Health were also listed as making Bent County a healthy place to live. KI's responses to what makes Bent County an unhealthy place to live also centered on environmental factors like the current drought and lack of recreational facilities and parks. Economic issues such as job loss and lack of funding along with a lack of access to medical services and facilities were also mentioned as making Bent County an unhealthy place to live.

The biggest health concern across KI's was a lack of medical care in Bent County. Some commented more specifically on the community's difficulties in retaining a physician. Further concerns included drug and alcohol abuse, nutrition, and obesity.

Key Informants felt that physical activity and opportunities for exercise such as physical education, recess and recreation centers fell under healthy behaviors that impact children. Good eating habits were another healthy behavior that interviewees listed as impacting children. Similarly, KI's mentioned physical inactivity and poor nutrition as unhealthy behaviors that greatly impact children. Comments related to technology that promotes physical inactivity, snacking, and unhealthy eating habits at home came up throughout the interviews when discussing unhealthy behaviors in children.

Most KIs responded that the lack of physical activity was the unhealthy behavior that most impacted adults. Respondents also mentioned unhealthy eating and substance use as unhealthy behaviors impacting adults in Bent County.

The two different methods of engagement activities resulted in a number of similar findings. Of note, both KIIs and NGP results shared the primary health concern of health care access with Difficult to See PCP in Timely Manner as the top health concern from the nominal groups and lack of medical care in Bent as the biggest health across the key informant interviews. Additionally, concerns about drug and alcohol abuse, poverty and the economy, a lack of recreation facilities and parks, and healthy food access and nutrition were all top health concerns from the NGP and brought up in multiple KIIs. Similar thoughts on the strengths and assets in Bent County were also brought up through both data collection methods with Strong Health Department and Community Partnerships highly valued in the NGP and Bent County Public Health and organizations like LiveWell mentioned by various KIIs.

The secondary data process team of CSPH started with 80 health indicators collected from Bent County. The data utilized was provided and analyzed by personnel from CDPHE and CSPH and was subject to various rounds of prioritization. During the first round of prioritization, the data was categorized by rates, numbers, and percentages to ensure accuracy and to narrow the list of 80 health indicators to a more manageable list. The second round of the process served to compile one master list of selected health indicators. The third and final round of prioritization grouped the 23 health indicators from round two into seven general health concern categories.

In comparing the health concerns from the community engagement activities and the secondary data analysis, the health concerns that overlap include: health care access, substance use, mental health, and overweight/obesity.

Goals and Strategies for Improving Community Health

The following action plans detail the initial steps that will be taken by Bent County Public Health and its partners over the next 5 years in each of the chosen priority areas. Implementation of the strategies listed in the action plan will require the continued involvement of community stakeholders in order to be successful. Further identification and implementation of strategies will require ongoing partnerships to address each priority area and set measurable goals.

Priority 1: Obesity Prevention

Individuals who are overweight and obesity have an increased risk of other chronic diseases. Obesity and overweight are concerns within Bent County and are included as one of Colorado's Ten Winnable Battles. In Bent County, 45.5% of adults get physical activity (30+ minutes of moderate activity 5+ days/week or 20+ minutes of vigorous activity 3+ days/week) in Bent. However, 29.4% of adults were physically inactive in Bent County. Nearly 2 in 5 adults (37.2%) in Bent are obese compared to 19.8% in Colorado. In Bent County, 78.9% of adults are overweight or obese compared to Colorado (56.2%) and this difference was statistically different. We have included strategies that will address obesity prevention in school aged children and obesity reduction for adults. Success in both areas will be dependent upon maintaining existing partnerships while nurturing new relations in the community. Bent County can continue to promote healthy eating and physical activity through existing programs.

Goals:

1. Increase community opportunities for physical activity.
2. Reduce/prevent obesity among school aged children and youth in Bent County.

Goal 1: Increase community opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating.

Goal 1 Objective:

- A. By 12/31/14, identify and support local partners that provide obesity prevention activities.

| Strategy | Proposed Action | Target Date | Organization Responsible | Monitoring/Evaluation |
|---|--|----------------------|--|---|
| Identify, assist, and support the obesity prevention efforts of community partners. | Support the development and implementation of the Bent County Recreation League. | 12/31/14, Ongoing | BCPH Staff, Bent County Recreation Coordinator | Documentation of activities and Bent County residents impacted. |
| | Maintain BCPH involvement on Early Childhood Council Advisory Team. | Ongoing | BCPH Staff, ECC Team | Meeting participation |
| | Support and promote the operations of the local Community Garden | Ongoing | Las Animas School District, BCPH Staff | Documentation of Bent County residents impacted. |

Goal 2: Reduce/prevent obesity among school aged children and youth in Bent County.

Goal 2 Objective:

- A. By 06/30/16, plan and implement Healthy Eaters, Lifelong Movers (HELM) in Bent County elementary schools.

| Strategy | Proposed Action | Target Date | Organization Responsible | Monitoring/Evaluation |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Implement evidence based policy changes to increase student access to healthy foods and physical activity. | Coordinate HELM planning and implementation in the Las Animas and McClave School District elementary schools. | June 2015, June 2016, Ongoing | Colorado School of Public Health Staff, Las Animas School District, McClave School District, BCPH Staff | Documentation of planning process and ten facilitator meetings along with implementation activities. |

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation for this plan shall occur as detailed in the project plans for each of the priority areas. Each priority area shall be assessed for achievement of objectives, emerging needs, and areas of continued improvement and/or expansion. As new data emerges, this data will be analyzed as part of that annual review. Emerging health needs may require the re-alignment of resources. Adaptability will be necessary to ensure positive impact on the health of Bent County residents. In the fifth year of this five-year plan, Bent County Public Health will conduct a comprehensive community health assessment, to ensure that new areas of need are identified and considered for prioritization in the subsequent five-year plan.

Coordination with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and other Public Health System partners

This plan was developed through the Colorado Health Assessment and Planning System (CHAPS), a structured system based on best practices and lessons learned through implementation of Colorado's Public Health Act of 2008. Bent County's priority of obesity prevention also aligns with the obesity priority of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's 10 Winnable Battles.

Financial resources available to meet identified public health needs and to meet requirements for the provision of core public health services

Bent County constantly seeks ways to develop and sustain funding sources for core public health services and innovative programming. Bent County Public Health understands the importance of prevention and education in health care. As a multi-faceted agency that encompasses a wide variety of programs and services, Bent County Public Health strives to ensure that all programs are effective in reach and compliments services already in place provided either by Bent County Public Health or by other community partners.

Overall, Bent County Public Health has a moderate capacity to deliver the core public health services; administration and governance, vital records, assessment and planning, communicable disease prevention, emergency preparedness and response, environmental health, and prevention and promotion.