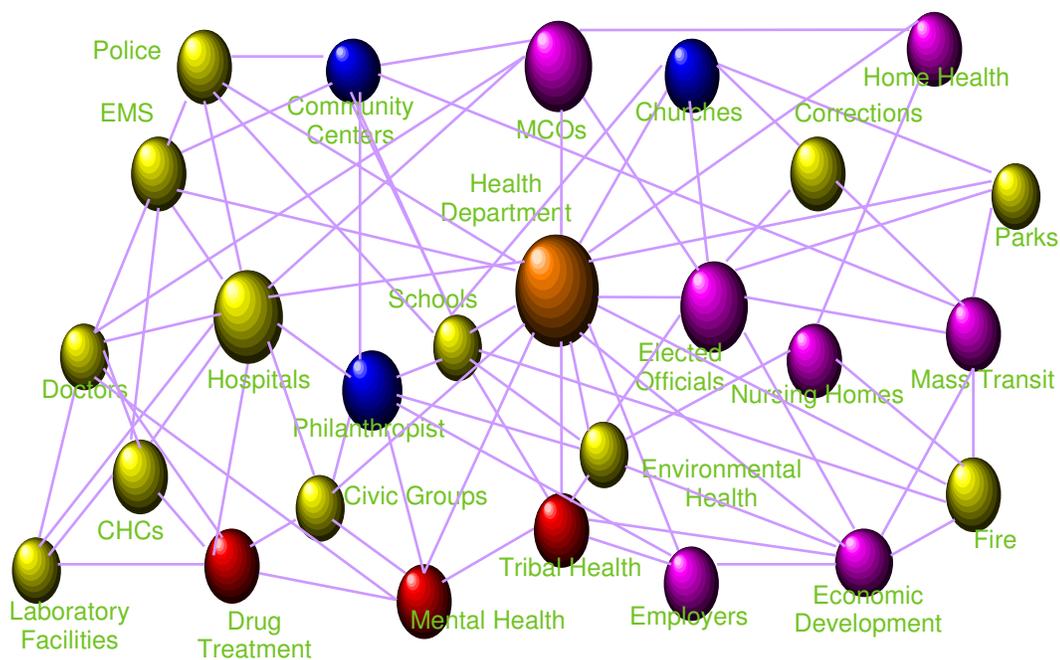


# The Local Public Health System Assessment

## Breakout Results for Community Partners in Health



**Polk County, Florida**

**October, 2005**



**U.S. Centers for Disease Control**



## **The Local Public Health System Assessment (LPHSA) 2005**

### ***Purpose***

The LPHSA Assessment is first of four major assessments utilized in the MAPP process. The LPHSA is an initiative first established by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1998. At that time, the Polk County Health Department was one of a few counties in Florida which participated in the pilot instrument in 1999. Collaborative partners for LPHSA development and implementation nationally include the CDC, as well as the American Public Health Association, and the National Association of County and City Health Officials. Other collaborative partners include the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, the National Association of Local Boards of Health, and the Public Health Foundation. The LPHSA was conducted again in 2005 by the Polk County Health Department.

### ***Goal***

This assessment highlights the CDC's Ten Essential Public Health Services, which provide standards for quality in public health. The LPHSA centers around four concepts. First, the assessment highlights the Ten Essential Public Health Services identified by the CDC and other national public health entities, as being a necessary foundation for public health activity. The standards provide an optimal level of performance. Each performance standard represents the "gold standard" or "best-practice" in that area. The standards are intended to support a continual process of quality improvement for local health system partners.

The Ten Essential Public Health Services include:

1. Monitor Health Status to Identify Community Health Problems
2. Diagnose and Investigate Health Problems and Health Hazards in the Community
3. Inform, Educate, and Empower People about Health Issues
4. Mobilize Community Partnerships to Identify and Solve Health Problems
5. Develop Policies and Plans that Support Individual and Community Health Efforts
6. Enforce Laws and Regulations that Protect Health and Ensure Safety
7. Link People to Needed Personal Health Services and Assure the Provision of Health Care when Otherwise Unavailable
8. Assure a Competent Public and Personal Health Care Workforce
9. Evaluate Effectiveness, Accessibility, and Quality of Personal and Population-Based Health Services
10. Research for New Insights and Innovative Solutions to Health Problems

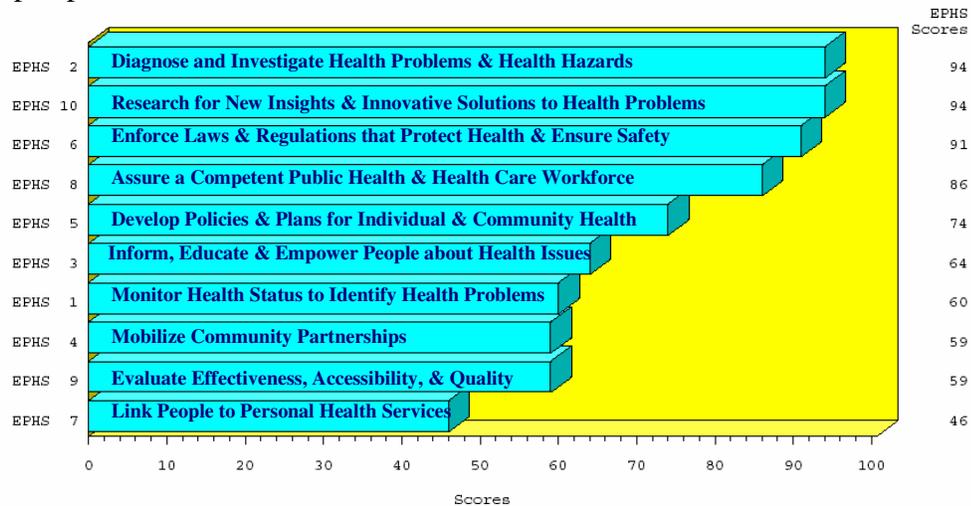
### ***Method***

In order to complete the LPHSA, the Polk County Health Department convened several meetings during the month of June, 2005. The meetings included health system partners and were called in order to collaborate and develop a collective response. Participants included representatives from organizations that contribute to the delivery of health services in Polk County, including the local public health agency, hospitals, social service providers, environmental organizations, and many others. During several community meetings which were offered either in person or via conference call, participants were provided with a brief overview of the Essential Public Health Services, and the purpose

of completing the assessment. The groups met four times during a 30-day period, during which they discussed the assessment and formulated collaborative answers. A facilitator was present during each of the meetings to keep the discussion moving, as well as to assist with timely completion of the entire instrument. Interactive discussion was encouraged. Materials were distributed to the participants in advance to assist with reading and evaluation of the Ten Essential Services. Data was recorded by the Polk County Health Department and submitted electronically to the CDC for evaluation and results. The results were provided to the Polk County Health Department in late July, 2005. The results herein are presented in aggregate, meaning no one entity which participated is identified in the results. Each potential area for improvement is then provided according to the Ten Essential Public Health Services. It is anticipated that this assessment will be conducted again in 2009/2010, during which time these benchmarks for improvement provided here can be measured again to gauge progress in community health systems-wide.

**Results**

Chart 1 highlights the summary scores for each of the ten essential services. This visual provides a snapshot of the overall status of the assessment results. The information provided above presents detailed recommendations and opportunities provided by the CDC for our community’s consideration as we move forward with health planning from a systems perspective.



**Score Detail**

Each of the individual scores include subscales which provide detailed information about each component of the Essential Public Health Service. The highlights are presented in their entirety.

## **ESSENTIAL SERVICE #1: MONITOR HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY**

### ***Best Practices in Essential Service #1 are identified as:***

- Conduct community health assessment to identify public health risks and inform public health planning.
- Review available health data to determine most prevalent health problem afflicting community.
- Identify groups of people who might have a greater chance of becoming ill because of where they live or work, because of social economic situations, or because they have behaviors that can cause health problems.
- Develop community health profile to educate community and community leaders about public health promotion.
- Establish website to provide community information about persistent health problems within community and how to prevent these problems.

### ***Our Local Public Health System Strengths in this area were:***

- Our community does an excellent job of monitoring the health status of Polk County residents.
- We are in compliance in terms of maintaining our population health registries and use information from these registries to guide practice.
- Our community has access to geo-coded health data, and uses computer-generated graphics to identify trends and compare data.

***According to the LPHSA our community met this standard, but indicated the following areas as partially met.***

### ***Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:***

- By conducting a regular community-wide health assessment.
- By identifying groups most in need.
- By developing a population-based Community Health Profile which is maintained and updated on a regular basis. This profile would include data about community health; community demographics; community socioeconomic characteristics; health resource availability; quality of life data; behavioral risk factors; environmental health indicators; social and mental health data; maternal and child health data; death, illness and injury data; communicable disease data, and sentinel events data.
- The local public health system would promote community-wide use of this health assessment and community health profile data for systems-wide strategic planning for health improvement.

**ESSENTIAL SERVICE #2: DIAGNOSE AND INVESTIGATE COMMUNITY HEALTH PROBLEMS AND HAZARDS IN THE COMMUNITY**

***Best Practices in Essential Service #2 are identified as:***

- Investigate food borne outbreaks.
- Communicate serious health threats to community in timely manner.
- Develop emergency response plans for public health emergencies.
- Respond to public health emergencies including disease outbreaks or terrorism.
- Ensure access to laboratory with capacity for sampling.

***Our Local Public Health System Strengths in this area were:***

- Local Public Health System partners are very active in diagnosing and investigating health problems.
- The agency partners are active in identification and surveillance of health threats.
- Our community plans appropriately for public health emergencies and disasters.
- Our community is collaborative in its approach to investigating and responding to public health emergencies and disasters, and has procedures to alert communities about health threats and disease outbreaks.
- Our community has access to laboratory support for investigation of health threats, as well as epidemiologists and statisticians.

***According to the LPHSA our community met this standard.***

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE #3: INFORM, EDUCATE AND EMPOWER

### ***Best Practices in Essential Service #3 are identified as:***

- Provide health information that is easy for people to get and understand.
- Develop and provide community with information on seasonal and ongoing public health issues including influenza and West Nile Virus prevention, cancer and obesity prevention, and bioterrorism preparedness.
- Provide health promotion activities like cholesterol screening, blood pressure screening, and flu clinics.
- Support legislation that will improve the community's health, such as clean indoor air legislation.

### ***Our Local Public Health System Strengths in this area were:***

- Public health partners provide community residents with information on seasonal and ongoing public health issues, such as flu and blood-borne illnesses and prevention. The agency partners also target specific illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease.
- The agencies sponsor health education programs.
- The local public health system provides information on the status of the community's health to public and policy leaders.
- The local public health system uses various media to communicate health information.

***According to the LPHSA our community met this standard, but indicated the following areas as substantially met, and partially met.***

### ***Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:***

- By providing additional health education, in particular to diverse groups, targeting health disparities within specific health populations.
- By identifying groups most in need in terms of health education efforts.
- By assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of health education activities.
- By assessing community-wide health promotion activities which emphasize collaboration among system partners.

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE #4: MOBILIZE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

### ***Best Practices in Essential Service #4 are identified as:***

- Convene other health organizations (e.g., hospital) within community to develop community-wide health improvement plan.
- Coordinate agreements between other community health organizations to determine specific roles and responsibilities toward improving community's health.

### ***Our Local Public Health System Strengths in this area were:***

- Organizations participating in the local public health system have a process for identifying key constituents, and encourage these constituents in improving community health.
- The local public health system has established a broad-based community health improvement committee. This was identified as including the Citizens Health Care Oversight Committee, as well as the Polk County Health Care Alliance in addition to other community-based groups.

***According to the LPHSA our community met this standard, but indicated the following areas as substantially met, and partially met.***

### ***Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:***

- By increasing and expanding community partnerships to include businesses, diverse groups, and citizens.
- By creating and maintaining a current directory of organizations that comprise the local public health system.
- By assessing the effectiveness of community partnerships.
- By using communications strategies (such as Social Marketing) to strengthen community partnerships and system linkages.

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE #5: POLICY DEVELOPMENT

### ***Best Practices in Essential Service #5 are identified as:***

- Advocate for policies that will improve public health, such as clean indoor air law.
- Testify at public hearings in support of legislation that will improve public health.

### ***Our Local Public Health System Strengths in this area were:***

- Our local public health system includes a local government public health entity, which was identified as the Polk County Health Department. This public health entity is aligned with the state public health system.
- Our local public health system partners contribute to the development of public health policies, and review these policies on an as-needed basis.
- Public health system partners have developed and implemented strategies to address community health objectives.

***According to the LPHSA our community met this standard, but indicated the following areas as substantially met, and partially met.***

### ***Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:***

- By assuring participation of stakeholders in implementation of a community health improvement plan.
- By advocating for the development of prevention and protection policies in terms of public health policy development.
- By establishing a community health improvement process.
- By ensuring that each organizational within the local public health system conducts a strategic planning process, and that each entity reviews its organizational strategic plan.
- By ensuring that the governmental public health entity conducts strategic planning activities.

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE #6: ENFORCE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

### ***Best Practices in Essential Service #6 are identified as:***

- Enforce public health code.
- Protect drinking water supplies.
- Conduct timely inspections (i.e., restaurants, tattoo parlors, campgrounds, day care)
- Conduct timely environmental inspections (i.e. septic systems, pools, lead abatement)
- Follow up on hazardous environmental exposures and preventable injuries.
- Serve quarantine/isolation order to individual infected with infectious diseases such as Tuberculosis, SARS, or Smallpox.
- Assist in revising outdated public health laws and development of proposed public health legislation.

### ***Our Local Public Health System Strengths in this area were:***

- Our local public health system scored extremely high in identifying public health issues addressed through laws, regulations and ordinances, as well as having access to current compilation of laws, regulations and ordinances.
- Our local public health system also scored extremely high as it participated in the development or modification of laws, regulations or ordinances, as well as provided technical assistance to legislative, regulatory or advocacy groups.

***According to the LPHSA our community met this standard, but indicated the following areas as substantially met.***

### ***Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:***

- By ensuring enforcement activities are conducted in a timely manner.
- By increasing authority to enforce public health laws, regulations, or ordinances.

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE #7: LINK PEOPLE TO HEALTH SERVICES

### ***Best Practices in Essential Service #7 are identified as:***

- Establish and maintain referral network for provision of personal health services to ensure that people who cannot afford health care get the care they need.
- Distribute mass quantities of antibiotics or vaccines in event of widespread disease outbreak (e.g., pandemic flu) or bioterror-related attack (i.e., smallpox or anthrax)
- Identify and locate underserved populations such as low-income families, minorities, and the uninsured.
- Provide culturally and language appropriate materials so that special groups of people can be linked with preventive services.

### ***According to the LPHSA our community DID NOT meet this standard, and indicated that potential areas for improvement might be focused on:***

- Identifying the personal health service needs of the population.
- Defining personal health service needs for all areas.
- Assessing the extent personal health services are being provided.
- Identifying the personal health services of populations who encounter barriers to personal health services.
- Assuring linkage to people to personal health services.
- Providing outreach and linkage services for the community.
- Creating initiative to enroll eligible beneficiaries in state Medicaid or medical assistance programs.
- Assuring the coordinated delivery of personal health services.
- Conducting an analysis of age-specific participation in preventive services.

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE #8: ASSURE A COMPETENT WORKFORCE

***Best Practices in Essential Service #8 are identified as:***

- Fund professional development and opportunities for staff.
- Test emergency response plan during mock event to evaluate performance.

***According to the LPHSA our community met this standard, but indicated the following areas as substantially met.***

***Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:***

- By providing additional opportunities for continuing education, training and mentoring.
- By providing opportunities for health care personnel to develop core public health competencies.
- By encouraging Public Health Leadership Development via accredited educational institutions.
- By developing community leadership through expanding mentoring opportunities.

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE #9: EVALUATE QUALITY

### ***Best Practices in Essential Service #9 are identified as:***

- Monitor trends in disease rates to assess effectiveness of disease prevention activities.
- Monitor trends in risk factors (i.e., unprotected sex, drinking-and-driving, smoking) to assess effectiveness of health promotion activities.
- Evaluate effectiveness of public health programs and services.

***According to the LPHSA our community substantially met and partially met this standard, and indicated the following areas for improvement opportunities.***

### ***Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:***

- By regularly assessing and evaluating population-based health care services.
- By assessing community satisfaction with population-based health services.
- By identifying gaps in the provision of population-based health services.
- By using the results of these evaluations in the development of strategic and operational plans.
- By evaluating specific personal health care services in the community against established criteria.
- By using information technology to assure quality of personal health services.
- By conducting an evaluation of the Local Public Health System every three to five years.
- By using results from the evaluation process to guide community health improvements.

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE #10: RESEARCH FOR NEW INSIGHTS

***Best Practices in Essential Service #10 are identified as:***

- Monitor rapidly changing disease prevention research and health promotion research
- Revise practices in order to remain current with recommended practices resulting from evidence-based research.

***According to the LPHSA our community met this standard. There was one area emphasized for possible improvement.***

***Our Local Public Health System has an opportunity to improve:***

- By evaluating research activities in epidemiological, policy and service research activities.

### ***Implications***

All entities that contribute to the health and well-being of the community, including public, private and voluntary, as well as individuals and formal and informal associations, impact the community health system. Use of the results of this assessment can strengthen connections among system partners. Collaborative discussion surrounding the results and potential areas for improvement can also increase awareness of the interconnectedness of community health activities. The goal is for agencies, with the use of these results, to identify strengths and weaknesses of the local health system that can be addressed through specific improvement efforts, both as individual entities, as well as community health partners.