



● CENTER FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH ●

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT IN MINNESOTA

The goal of a **community health assessment**¹ is to identify, quantify and describe **community health** issues and to characterize community assets that may help meet needs and improve health. In **Minnesota**, several community sectors engage in assessing a community’s health. These sectors include, but are not limited to, **Health Plans, Non-Profit Hospitals and Public Health Agencies**.

WHY COLLABORATION IS IMPORTANT

Recent changes to the requirements or guidelines that define how these assessments should be conducted necessitate better understanding and collaboration between sectors in order to reduce duplication of effort. The **Center for Community Health (CCH)**, a public/private initiative for health improvement in the seven-county metropolitan area of Minnesota, brings partners together to discuss the key components of hospital-health system, health plan and local public health requirements related to community health assessment. One of the **Center’s** initial goals is to assure general understanding about key assessment components as well as identify intersections and opportunities for streamlining community health assessments across these sectors.

HOW COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT FITS INTO THE BIGGER PICTURE

Community Health Assessment is typically the first stage of a multi-step process which includes assessment, prioritizing, planning, implementation and evaluation. Improved **coordination** and **collaboration** between Minnesota’s Health Plans, Hospitals-Health Systems and Public Health during the assessment, prioritization and planning stages will result in better use of community and organizational resources. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has described a similar desired state² for multiple stakeholders that unifies community health improvement efforts.



WHY COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT IS IMPORTANT

Hospitals & Health Systems The community health needs assessment is an important tool for hospitals in meeting their mission. The assessment allows hospitals to utilize available public health data as well as their own data to identify the needs of the community and direct their community benefit activities to address those needs. As a result of the passage of the Affordable Care Act and accompanying IRS requirements, completion of a community health needs assessment is required of **non-profit hospitals** every three years.

Public Health Assessment is a foundational activity of public health and is a basis for setting priorities, planning, developing programs, seeking funding, and changing policy. Community health assessments in public health describe the health of the population, identify areas for improvement, identify contributing factors that impact health outcomes, and identify community assets and resources that can be mobilized to improve population health. These assessments provide the general public and policy leaders with information on the health of the population and the broad range of factors that impact its health. **Public health** assessment activities have recently been influenced by the Public Health Accreditation Board’s³ voluntary Standards and Measures document which serves as the official guide for public health department accreditation. Community health assessment requirements are outlined in Standard 1.1.

¹ **Community Health Assessment** and **Community Health Needs Assessment** are used interchangeably throughout this document with both referring to the systematic collection of data and information to be used in the development of strategies to address a community’s health.

² Center for Disease Control (CDC) www.cdc.gov/policy/ohsc/docs/currentanddesired_frameworks.pdf

³ Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) www.phaboard.org

Health Plans Local public health community health assessments, Minnesota public health goals and health plans’ own data analyses are used to determine health plan priority areas. **Health Plans** are required by the State to collaborate with local public health departments on public health goals. In 2010, Minnesota allowed the health plans to submit one collaboration plan for its seven health plans. Priority areas become the focus of collaborative health improvement efforts. The collaboration plan has evolved from a report to a working document that can be used by stakeholders for collaboration and public health improvement.

WHAT ARE THE COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT TASKS BY SECTOR

	HEALTH PLANS*	HOSPITALS & HEALTH SYSTEMS	PUBLIC HEALTH
FREQUENCY	Every 5 years	Every 3 years	At least every 5 years
REQUIREMENT	Minn. Stat. 62Q.075	Affordable Care Act	Minn. Stat. 145A
REPORTING	To MDH	To IRS, Form 990 Schedule H	To MDH
AVAILABILITY OF COLLABORATIVE PROCESS MODELS OR TOOLKITS		ACHI Toolkit, Catholic Hospital Association Assessing Community Health Needs	Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP)
TASKS THAT ARE COMMON ACROSS SECTORS	Describe target population/audience		
	Develop an assessment plan		
	Partner with other community sectors		
	Review primary and secondary data		
	Collect quantitative and qualitative data		
	Analyze all data		
	Seek community input		
	Describe causes that contribute to the identified health issues		
	Describe existence and extent of health disparities		
	Describe community assets and resources available to address priority health issues		
	Inform partners and community organizations about the assessment		
	Communicate findings to the public		
	Monitor and update findings on an ongoing basis		

*Although individual health plans do the tasks listed under community health assessment for their organizations, it is not a requirement of the collaboration plan. Health plans work with local public health and hospitals on community health assessments through collaborative projects.

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Minnesota Council of Health Plans Collaboration Plan](http://www.mnhealthplans.org/tools/documents/20091223CollaborationPlan.pdf)

www.mnhealthplans.org/tools/documents/20091223CollaborationPlan.pdf

[Minnesota Department of Health Local Public Health Assessment and Planning](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/opi/pm/lphap)

www.health.state.mn.us/divs/opi/pm/lphap

[Minnesota Hospital Association Community Health Needs Assessment](http://www.mnhospitals.org/data-reporting/mandatory-reporting/community-health-needs-assessment)

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