



# FLAGLER COUNTY Community Health Assessment 2011 - 2012

## Executive Summary

Flagler County, Florida is a vibrant, growing collection of communities with shared characteristics, assets, and challenges. Striving for optimal health for the residents of these communities is a lofty, but important pursuit, and one that will help ensure that Flagler County thrives for generations to come.

A community health assessment considers a wide array of specific health factors and outcomes, while engaging the community and planning for long-term community health improvement efforts. The MAPP (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships) model was utilized to structure Flagler County's assessment. The process began with mobilization of community partners and continued with four distinct assessments, strategic planning built on the findings from those assessments, and finally launched the action cycle that will work to carry out the recommendations.

In the **Community Health Status Assessment**, a demographic and socioeconomic profile of Flagler County is presented. The overall population in the county has boomed in the last decade, and is comprised more heavily of older residents (age 65 and up) than most counties in the state. Unemployment rates skyrocketed with the national economic crisis, and have caused hardship for many residents who struggle with limited incomes, home foreclosures, and barriers to accessing health care services. Chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and stroke and risk factors such as overweight/obesity, hypertension, and smoking were identified as areas of need. Disparities in health outcomes by race are evident in some of these chronic diseases and risks, as well as in the health of babies born to Flagler residents. Suicide rates are elevated and some sexually transmitted diseases are on the rise.

The **Local Public Health System Assessment** considered all the services and supports that are provided within the system to promote the health of individuals and communities. This assessment was conducted in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which provided a standardized assessment tool and analysis of the results. The Essential Public Health Services (ESPH) that were identified as highest priority for Flagler County are: ESPH 7 – linking people to personal health services and assuring the provision of care when otherwise unavailable; ESPH 3 – informing, educating, and empowering people about personal health; and ESPH 4 – mobilizing community partnerships.

*The Flagler County Community Health Assessment is a culmination of data collection and analysis, focus groups and key leader interviews, community survey and community partner input. The true test of this assessment will be the change brought as a result of the time and expertise invested. Comprehensive community health assessment followed by health improvement planning is the foundation for healthier Flagler County.*

*The health of a community is complex and no single agency has the resources or authority to improve community health. Reaching effective change requires bringing diverse players together as a united front to tackle very challenging and complex issues. I am confident this assessment will be the springboard to action we need to improve the health and well being of the people of Flagler County.*

*Patrick Johnson, RN-C, MPA  
Administrator, Flagler County Health Department*

Flagler County Health Department and Florida Department of Health sponsored the Flagler County Community Health Assessment. The Final Report and this Executive Summary can be accessed online at [www.neflcounts.org](http://www.neflcounts.org). Click on Initiative Centers, then Flagler Partnership for Community Health.

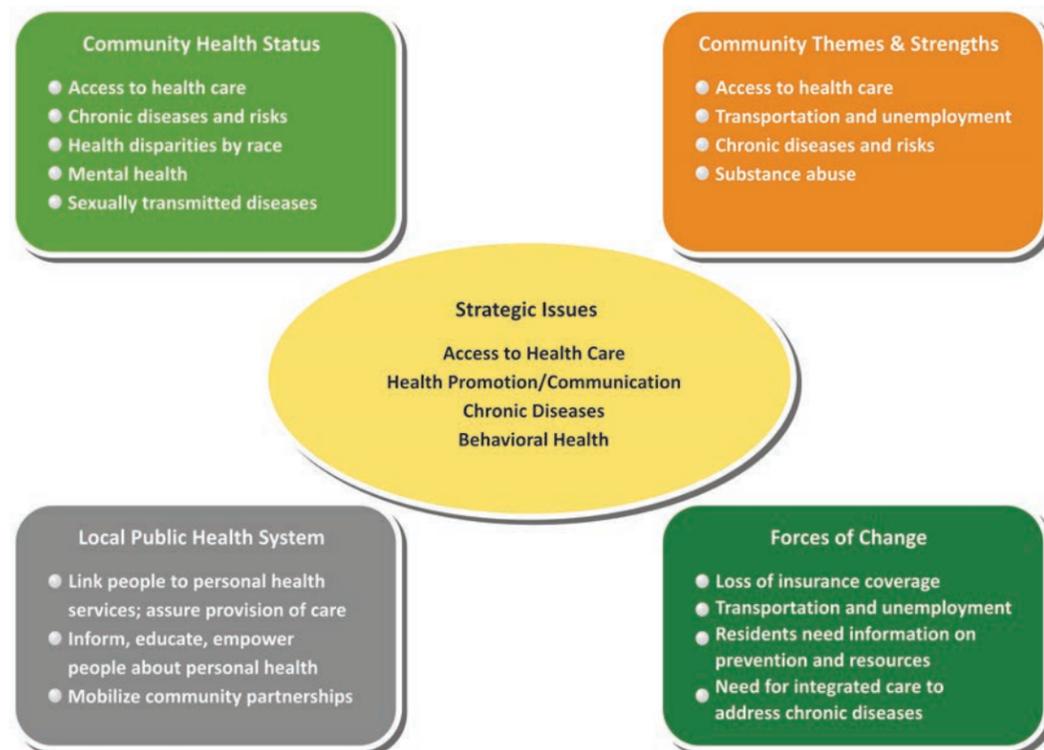




The **Community Themes and Strengths Assessment** gathered input from the community to understand perceptions and priorities of residents. Access to health care was deemed a major issue, with lack of transportation and high employment seen as important barriers that need to be addressed. Community leaders were interviewed to gauge support for potential solutions. The overwhelming majority support investment in a new community health center, with plans already underway for such a facility in Bunnell. Chronic diseases (e.g. cancer, diabetes) and their associated risk factors (e.g. overweight/obesity) were prioritized highly during this assessment. Finally, substance abuse (alcohol and drugs) was noted to be of great concern to the community.

Finally, the **Forces of Change Assessment** took inventory of the forces that are currently impacting community health (or are likely to do so in the future). Through a group process, the major forces were identified to be residents' loss of insurance coverage, lack of transportation and employment, residents' lack of awareness of existing resources, and the need for integrated health care to address chronic diseases.

These results were used to determine the overarching strategic health issues to be the focus of the local public health system's plan to improve community health over the next several years. A **strategic planning process** produced the following strategic issues: access to health care, health promotion/ communication, chronic diseases, and behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse).



The **Flagler Community Health Action Plan** was developed to address these issues, setting in motion the course of action through 2015. An abbreviated plan is presented here; the full plan can be found on page 95 of the report.

**Strategic Issue 1: Access to Health Care**

Goal: Improve access to health care for uninsured and underinsured residents by addressing the key modifiable barriers identified through the community health assessment.

| Objective   | Strategy   | Lead Entity                           |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| Increase the proportion of lower income residents who have access to health care providers. | Establish a Community Health Center (CHC)/Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Bunnell.   | Flagler Community Health Center       |
| Reduce impact of health-related transportation barriers.                                    | Incorporate into CHC/FQHC planning enhancements to the built environment that promote wellness, walkability and close coordination with transportation entities. | Health Planning Council of NE Florida |

**Strategic Issue 2: Chronic Diseases**

Goal: Reduce the incidence and prevalence of chronic diseases such as cancer, stroke, and diabetes by reducing select risk factors such as smoking, overweight/obesity, and hypertension through culturally relevant health promotion and disease management activities.

| Objective   | Strategy  | Lead Entity                          |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Reduce tobacco use among youth and pregnant women specifically, and adults overall. | Expand the Flagler County Tobacco-Free Partnership to raise awareness, facilitate cessation, and prevent initiation of tobacco use. | Flagler County Health Department     |
| Reduce prevalence of overweight/obesity and hypertension.                           | Develop community partnerships that promote healthy lifestyles through health education and promotion activities.                   | Flagler County Health Department     |
|   | Pursue long-term plan of establishing chronic disease management program through Flagler CHC or other entity.                       | St. Johns River Rural Health Network |

**Strategic Issue 3: Behavioral Health: Substance Abuse and Mental Health**

Goal: Improve overall behavioral health of Flagler County residents by reducing substance abuse and improving mental health and wellness.

| Objective  | Strategy   | Lead Entity  |
|--|--|--|
| Increase access to behavioral health services and prevention messages. | Integrate behavioral health prevention and treatment services into primary care settings through community partnerships and health promotion activities.                                   | Stewart Marchman Act                                   |
| Reduce substance use and abuse among youth and adults.                 | Collaborate with partners that reach youth and adult audiences to provide health education and outreach to raise awareness of substance abuse prevalence, risks, and prevention resources. | Flagler County Health Department/ Stewart Marchman Act |