

Roadmap to a *Healthier Douglas County*

Recognizing that the social and economic vitality of a community depends on the well-being of the community's residents, a group of community organizations joined together in 2011 to:

- Conduct a community health assessment to create a shared understanding of the community's most significant health issues.

- Use information from the health assessment to identify and prioritize policy, system and environmental changes to improve health in the community.

The result is a community health plan, "Roadmap to a Healthier Douglas County," addressing the community's top five health priorities described below.



Health Priorities in Douglas County



Access to Healthy Foods

■ **Problem** — Contemporary diets are filled with high levels of fat, sodium, sugar and other elements that contribute to poor health and not enough healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, lean protein and whole grains. In Douglas County, only 1 in 5 residents eat the recommended five daily servings of fruits and vegetables.

✓ **Solutions** — Make healthy foods more available in public venues, workplaces, preschools, schools and before- and after-school settings, and in places such as food pantries that serve low-income families.



Mental Health

■ **Problem** — People do not get mental health exams, like physical health, because of cost and the stigma attached. Yet, 1 in 5 Americans has a diagnosable mental condition and these conditions are often treatable with proper identification.

✓ **Solutions** — Improve awareness of services, enhance integration of primary care and mental health services, and reduce stigma associated with having and seeking care for mental illness.

Access to Health Services

■ **Problem** — Many people face barriers when trying to access health care services. The cost of care and availability of health insurance is one of the most significant factors. In 2011, nearly 1 in 5 Douglas County residents did not have insurance.

✓ **Solutions** — Improve awareness of available services, promote use of basic preventive services, expand services that help people navigate the health system, and promote expanded service hours and other patient-centered approaches in primary care practices.



Steering Committee Members



Health Priorities in Douglas County



Physical activity

■ **Problem** — We have become a sedentary society. One in 4 Kansans do not participate in any form of physical exercise although it improves mood and energy levels, helps control weight, and reduces risk of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, depression, some cancers, and many other diseases.

✓ **Solutions** — Ensure opportunities for kids to be physically active in schools, child care facilities and before- and after-school settings, encourage opportunities for physical activity in the workplace, and make it easier for residents to travel to everyday destinations by foot, bicycle and wheelchair.



Poverty and jobs

■ **Problem** — Social and economic conditions have profound impacts on people's health. In Douglas County, median household incomes are, on average, lower than those in Kansas and the United States. During the past 12 months, 17 percent of Douglas County residents had incomes below the federal poverty level. Five percent of residents, ages 25 and older, have not earned a high school diploma.

✓ **Solutions** — Enhance partnerships among schools and community colleges to prepare residents for good paying jobs, enhance employer and community supports for services residents need in order to obtain and retain jobs, and develop sustainable employment opportunities.



Let's join together on a journey to better health

To be successful we must work together as a community. Here are some ways you can help advance health in our community:

■ Adopt the Community Health Plan as a guiding document for policymaking.

■ Adopt policies to ensure healthy foods and beverages are available to staff and visitors who use vending machines, concessions, catered foods and other food offerings in public spaces.

■ Ensure healthy "built environment" concepts such as Complete Streets are integrated into community- and street-scale urban design and land use policies, transportation planning, and

other community design efforts. Use evidence-based design guidelines in these efforts.

■ Support collaborative efforts to ensure access to preventive health care services (for both mental health and physical health) for all residents.

■ Work with education and other partners to ensure that local training and workforce development programs are preparing residents for employment that enables them to care for their families.

For more information: visit ldchealth.org or contact the Community Health program at 843-3060 or communityhealth@ldchealth.org

