



Report to the Community

Highlighting Accomplishments 2005 – 2011

Identifying Priorities 2012 – 2016

Mission

Healthy Marathon County is a community catalyst to improve the health of Marathon County residents through individual, organizational, and community involvement.

Vision

Marathon County will be the healthiest county in the state of Wisconsin.

Purpose

Healthy Marathon County (HMC) is a partnership of community organizations working together to make a healthier community. HMC serves as the oversight board for Marathon County's Community Health Improvement Process. State statute requires a health assessment and plan be completed every five years. The most recent health assessment was released in 2006 and identified the following health priorities in Marathon County: Obesity, prenatal care, health care for the elderly, alcohol misuse, tobacco, suicide and mental health, and cost of health care. Action teams were established to focus on each priority. This publication highlights a number of their accomplishments.

Healthy Marathon County Action Team Accomplishments

Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL)

- M** To create a culture of healthy eating and active living in Marathon County.
- V** To create a culture where the social norm is: physical activity engineered into the daily routine, appropriate portion sizes, and recommended fruit and vegetable consumption.

Accomplishment Highlights:

HEAL built partnerships leading to innovative programs that have touched the community in multiple ways.

- **Policy Level** – Supported the Wausau and DC Everest School Districts in decreasing access to sugar sweetened beverages at school.
- **Community** – Partnered with municipal planning committees to plan the infrastructure for bike and pedestrian paths.
- **Organizations** – Collaborated with state and local municipal agencies to develop the Footprints to Health Neighborhood Project.
- **Family and Individual** – Implemented healthy lifestyle programs such as “Family Fun Night” and “Walk to School Day.”
- **Food Share at the Wausau Farmers Market** – In 2011 it became possible for FoodShare clients to use their FoodShare benefits at the Wausau Farmers Market.

Healthy Babies

- M** To engage the community to promote healthy babies and healthy families in Marathon County.

Accomplishment Highlights:

- **“Cribs for Kids”** – Babies are provided with a safe place to sleep and parents with education on safe sleep practices.
- **Perinatal Mood Disorders** – A community forum titled “You Can’t Tell by Looking” was held for health care providers. A pilot program that identified, evaluated, and referred clients with symptoms of postpartum depression for counseling at the client’s home was coordinated.
- **Prenatal Care** – Outreach materials for the 18 – 24 year old population on the importance of prenatal care were made available throughout the community.

Central Wisconsin Tobacco Free Coalition

- M** To reduce tobacco-related death and disability through education and advocacy, creating a community environment that encourages tobacco free living.

Accomplishment Highlights:

- The Central Wisconsin Tobacco Free Coalition was formed in 2010 when the Marathon County Tobacco Free Coalition joined with Wood and Portage counties. Until then the Marathon County Tobacco Free Coalition took the lead in reducing tobacco use.
- **Smoke Free Air**
 - The City of Wausau passed a smoke-free restaurant ordinance in 2005.
 - The Village of Weston passed the most comprehensive smoke-free worksite ordinance in the State of Wisconsin in 2009 and implemented it on July 5, 2010.
 - Marathon County buildings and grounds became smoke-free in 2009.
 - The State of Wisconsin passed a state wide smoke-free air law which took effect on July 5, 2010. Many local municipalities adopted the law to make it more enforceable.

Concerns About The Cost of Healthcare (CATCH)

- M** Identify and understand the issues that are associated with the concerns about the cost of health care along with their implications, and to use this information to help develop strategies for addressing these concerns among the stakeholders in Marathon County.
- V** Marathon County residents make informed decisions that optimize their health care investments.

Accomplishment Highlights:

- **Community Forums** – Learning opportunities that educated community members on the cost of health care, the health care reform law, and its effect on individuals and businesses were sponsored in 2009 and 2011.
- **Resources** – Educational tools to assist community members in understanding health care benefits and options, health care economics, and what can be done to control individual health care costs were developed.



Partnership for Healthy Aging

- M** Partnership for Healthy Aging is a community collaboration that utilizes best practices, focusing on healthy aging by maintaining and enhancing health and well being through environmental strategies.
- V** We will support and enhance healthy aging in Marathon County, thereby promoting independence in the home and community.

Accomplishment Highlights:

Falls prevention

- Identifying best practice strategies related to falls prevention was made possible by the Tri-County Safe Steps Project Grant.
- A wide range of programs related to falls prevention and healthy living are available.
- Increased collaboration with medical systems has made physicians aware of the resources related to falls prevention. Increased patient referrals to community programs have resulted.

Medication Safety Bags

- Identified as a risk factor related to falls, this program on medication management teaches individuals the importance of organizing their medications in medication safety bags. Additionally, having medications in the safety bag makes them more assessable in emergency situations.

Prevent Suicide Marathon County

- M** To reduce the number of suicides that take place in Marathon County each year.
- V** Community awareness and education will promote early detection of suicidal behavior, thus help may be attained and death prevented.

Accomplishment Highlights:

- Prevention education** – Garrett Lee Smith Grant funding allowed for suicide prevention intervention in 13 Marathon County school districts.
- Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)** – Over 2,000 Marathon County residents were trained to recognize the signs of suicide and how to respond to prevent suicide.
- Out of the Darkness Walk** – A national suicide awareness event was held in Wausau in 2011.

Marathon County Alcohol and Other Drug Partnership Council

- M** To eliminate the misuse of alcohol and other drugs in Marathon County through widespread community collaboration, environmental change, cultural change, and education.
- V** Community attitudes and behaviors promote responsible and legal use of alcohol and other substances.

Accomplishment Highlights:

- Collaboration** – The Marathon County Alcohol and Other Drug Partnership Council developed a new structure in 2009 after merging with Building Responsible Alcohol Values and Options (BRAVO) and the Alcohol Steering Committee to join together over 150 individuals and multiple community organizations.
- Policy** – Partnerships with local policy makers and law enforcement have resulted in improved processes for awarding and renewing alcohol licenses, and implementing the Social Host Ordinance has limited youth access to alcohol.
- Responsible Beverage Server (RBS) training** – Servers of alcohol are better equipped to do their jobs responsibly as a result of revisions made to the RBS training. These were the result of a workgroup representing Northcentral Technical College, the Marathon County Tavern League, law enforcement agencies, and the Marathon County Alcohol and Other Drug Partnership Council.
- Alcohol misuse is seen as a common issue** – Identified as the top health priority in Marathon County, all seven Healthy Marathon County Action Teams addressed the issue of alcohol misuse in their work plans.



“Creating healthy communities where people live long and have a high quality of life will require the combined efforts of private and public partners. The 2012 – 2016 health priorities show us where to focus our resources so we can achieve our vision – to be the healthiest county in Wisconsin. Working together will enable us to achieve this.”

- Joan Theurer, Health Officer – Marathon County

Marathon County Health Priorities 2012 – 2016

As a result of the 2011 Marathon County Health Assessment, the following health priorities have been established for our community for 2012 – 2016:

- Alcohol Misuse
- Tobacco Use
- Overweight/Obesity
- Oral Health Care
- Access and Affordability of Health Care

In determining the health priorities for 2012 – 2016, representatives from the Healthy Marathon County Board and members of the Marathon County Board of Health reviewed the 15 health indicators from the LIFE in Marathon County 2011 – 2013 Health and Wellness section. Health priorities were selected based on the following criteria:

- The number of people affected
- The seriousness of impact on the communities
- Whether there are effective interventions to address the problem
- If an impact can be made in the next 3 – 4 years
- The community supports change and community resources are available to address the problem
- The problem was identified as a top challenge by the LIFE in Marathon County Health and Wellness Subcommittee

Goal: The Healthiest County in the State

Three of the five identified health priorities have been a focus of work for Healthy Marathon County since 2003. Creating the kind of changes needed to be the healthiest county in the state requires change in the health culture, community norms, and public policy and ultimately influencing choices made by families and institutions. Advancing this level of change takes years and even decades. While progress has been made in reducing the use of tobacco, raising the awareness of alcohol misuse, and creating environments that support healthy eating and active living, more work is needed to achieve the goal of being the healthiest county in the State of Wisconsin.

The debate on whether health care is a right or a privilege continues to play out at a national and state level. As a community, concern has been raised on how access to oral health care can be improved, particularly for low income individuals and families. Marathon County is fortunate to be rich in health care resources. Leveraging our assets will be necessary in order to address the affordability of oral health as well as health care in our community.

As it moves forward to address the new top five health priorities, Healthy Marathon County should not lose sight of the successes of each of the current action teams. Efforts to build upon the achievements of the Healthy Babies, Healthy Aging, and Suicide Prevention Action Teams should continue. Resources will be necessary to maintain the current efforts in raising healthy babies, reducing the impact of falls among older adults, and for everyone to attain optimal mental health.

Making the Work Possible - Funders

Healthy Marathon County Funding Partners have provided \$165,000 to support collaborative action plans that address the health priorities. Funding partners from 2007 – 2010 include:

- Judd S. Alexander Foundation
- Foundation of Saint Clare's Hospital
- Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin
- Aspirus Health Foundation
- Marshfield Clinic

In addition, individual action teams secured funding from state and federal government and local and state foundations for specific projects addressing health priorities.



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