BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE RECOMMENDED CORE DATA SET FOR INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND PRIORITIZATION

Indicators for Assessing Local Health Needs
Purpose

A key stage in community health improvement planning is the initial assessment of health needs. While it is an important and sometimes time-consuming stage, it should not be seen as an end in and of itself: the community health needs assessment is a springboard to action. Data and stakeholder input should be analyzed in order to identify opportunities for action. Enough data should be reviewed to identify those key opportunities.

The Recommended Core Data Set was created to meet the need for a set of community health assessment data that is both thorough and manageable. It is designed to:

- Present a focused set of indicators
- Use a framework that organizes the data as a whole and highlights opportunities for prevention
- Help local communities to identify the top areas they want to address
- Help local partners to meet organizational requirements
- Provide local data [Note: if data is available at a level smaller than a county, then it is provided; if a critical indicator is not available locally, then regional or statewide data is provided.]

Components of the Core Data Set

The Recommended Core Data Set consists of several documents:

- Introduction to the Core Data Set (this document)
- Recommended Core Data Set for Initial Assessment and Prioritization:
  - List of Recommended Measures
  - List of Optional Measures (dependent on the characteristics of the local community)
  - Template Worksheet for Local Data
  - Data Download Instructions
  - Graphics Instructions
- Instructions for Downloading the Communicable Disease Measure within the Core Data Set
- Template PowerPoint presentation
- Template Fact Sheets
- Compendium of Data for Action Planning and Evaluation (to drill down in more detail once top priority areas have been selected)

All of these documents can be found on www.wicommunityhealth.org (see Table of Resources under the Resources by Stage tab) or www.walhdab.org.

Framework for the Core Data Set

The Recommended Core Data Set is organized around a framework for describing what makes a community healthy. (See The Wisconsin Way.) This framework, developed by the CHIPP Infrastructure Improvement Project in collaboration with key stakeholders, provides an explanatory and visual model that incorporates the underlying determinants of health and the health focus areas in Healthiest Wisconsin 2020. This model builds on the best current research about contributors to health and so will help local communities to present a comprehensive picture of their community and to answer the questions: “How healthy are we?” and “How might we be healthier?”
Reviewing Data: Part of a Complete Community Health Improvement Process

Gathering and presenting data on the health of the community is one stage in the cycle of a community health improvement process. Not only is this activity best approached in that broader context, but this specific set of tools is best used in the context of the broader Wisconsin Guidebook on Improving the Health of Local Communities. The Guidebook lays out a set of checklists for each stage of the community health improvement process. It will be helpful to review the checklist on “Assess Needs and Resources” before using the Core Data Set tools, as that section provides the overall context for the Data Set and provides guidance on steps such as:

- Identifying the questions and data that are critical to your community
- Including input from the community at large
- Identifying community assets and resources
- Compiling and analyzing the information collected

Additional Data

Local communities may have access to additional data through community surveys, hospital reports, and other means. Those data can be used in combination with the Recommended Core Data Set.

- See also: Listening to the Community: A Guide to Primary Data Collection