Who we are

The Polis Center at IUPUI conducts community health needs assessments (CHNAs) to inform community health improvement planning and population health management.

We are expert at using place-based information to advance the understanding of community health issues. Through our CHNA consultation services, we build the capacity of hospital systems, public health agencies, and nonprofits to improve the health of Indiana communities.

We work with numerous partners in the health field and transform the knowledge generated by academics and communities into improved and sustainable processes for understanding and affecting community health.

Key partners include the Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health, the Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute, and the Bowen Center for Health Workforce Research & Policy.

We can help assess your community's health needs and priorities, design solutions, and evaluate community health programs.

For more information, contact:

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The Polis Center
We bring things into perspective.

Building Healthy Communities

Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs)

A hospital, public health agency, or any other organization that wants to develop an effective strategy for community health improvement must first identify the priority health issues of its community. This is done through a **community health needs assessment (CHNA).**

There are numerous benefits to conducting a CHNA:
• It offers a better understanding of the different groups of people living in the community.
• It identifies a community's primary health concerns and the people and organizations with whom to collaborate in order to address those issues.
• It positions an organization to plan community health improvement activities more effectively.

Our Process

We begin the CHNA process by meeting with your organization to understand the organizational culture, structure, and values that are to drive the CHNA. Next, we use a variety of local, state, and national data sources to identify and measure the size and seriousness of the health needs in the geographic areas of interest.

It is then critical to ask health care providers, social service providers, and the broader community which of the identified health needs are of most concern to them. We do this using a combination of web surveys, phone surveys, key informant interviews, and/ or community focus groups as most appropriate for your organization.

By reaching out to community stakeholders, we identify vulnerable populations and the unmet health and social service needs of those populations.

In analyzing hard data and incorporating community input, we determine the top priority health issues in your community, such as drug abuse, mental health, obesity, diabetes, healthcare access, or maternal and child health.

We also examine best practices to identify evidence-based health interventions to address the identified community health issues. Finally, we apply a method for ranking health issues that takes into account not only the size and seriousness of the problem but also the local availability and effectiveness of potential interventions.

The report of our findings from this well-documented process provides robust evidence to support your selection of community health priorities and development of an associated implementation strategy.

More than just a report

By going through the process, you get more than a report.
• You get community partners that are invested in addressing the identified issues.
• A formal assessment helps guide community health improvement activities into what the community believes it needs most and where a difference can be made.
• It keeps the most pressing issues in focus.

Many community health problems are interrelated. Social factors, such as transportation, food security, job training, and health insurance, impact access to and the success of health interventions. As such, getting our assistance to determine where to focus your community health improvement efforts can be extremely valuable.

A formal assessment demonstrates your organization's commitment to cultivating partners both inside and outside the community. These partners can help you identify ways to intervene, which is critical to your organization's long-term success.