

Chapter Seven: Community Health

- 7.1 Introduction**
- 7.2 Vision**
- 7.3 Background**
- 7.4 Community Health and Comprehensive Planning**
- 7.5 Cowley County Needs Assessment (2012)**
- 7.6 Community Health Needs Assessment (2013)**
- 7.7 The Importance of the Health Care Sector to the Economy of Cowley County (2010)**
- 7.8 Goals and Actions**

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive planning originated in this country primarily out of a need to protect the health of citizens from such threats as urban congestion, unsafe housing and inadequate sanitation. Eliminating disease, overcrowding and incompatible uses were goals worthy of addressing through planning efforts. As time passed, and comprehensive planning evolved, infrastructure and other issues became its focus and health issues were relegated to public health officials. In recent years, subjects that affect the health of citizens have come full circle with the realization the built environment is critical to good health, as are public policies regarding land use and development. While congestion may not be an issue in Arkansas City, access to health providers, access to parks and open space, transportation, access to groceries, and an opportunity for exercise, are all parts of comprehensive planning that can improve health factors for citizens of Arkansas City.

Health starts where we live, work, learn and play. Our surroundings have a profound impact on our overall health, from exposure to toxins to the ability to safely walk or ride a bicycle. The built environment of our communities and neighborhoods plays an important role in providing opportunities for residents to live long, healthy lives. For example, people who live in walkable neighborhoods tend to get more physical activity, and those who live near supermarkets are more likely to eat healthy foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

7.2 VISION

The City will act by influencing the built environment and setting policy regarding City programs and services to enhance the lives and health of Arkansas City residents. Reducing obesity levels, increasing participation in wellness activities, increasing public education of healthy lifestyle choices, reducing dependence on emergency room care

as primary care, and creating good transportation links for walking and biking are recognized means of achieving this vision.

7.3 BACKGROUND

Health Care Services

Arkansas City is home to South Central Kansas Medical Center, which is located at 6401 Patterson Parkway. This new facility was opened in 2011, but the history of the institution dates back to 1905 when it was begun as Mercy Hospital. The facility sits on a large acreage, creating opportunity for expansion and development of a medical campus over time.

The new facility is a single-story building, with over 60,000 square foot of space to meet patient needs for emergency care, with 17 private patient rooms, 5 semi-private rooms, a negative pressure isolation room, and 4 intensive care beds. In addition, there is an obstetrics wing with family birthing suites, with a total of six beds available. There are two operating rooms, two treatment suites for outpatient/inpatient surgery, as well as radiology and laboratory areas. The Center provides a number of vital services for the community from diabetes support and education, physical therapy, to respiratory therapy and more.

The land and buildings of the Medical Center are owned by the Public Building Commission created by the City. Financing for such came via a 10-year 1/2¢ citywide sales tax which commenced in 2009. The land and buildings are leased to the South Central Kansas Health Foundation. The city manager and a city commissioner are ex officio members of the Foundation's board of directors.

Mental Health

Mental health services are provided by the Cowley County Mental Health & Counseling Center, located at Strother Field, 22214 D Street, Winfield. The organization is quasi-governmental, as it is run by a local board of directors, but funded with governmental funds as well as private donations and grants. The Center is licensed and has been providing psychiatric and substance abuse services for nearly forty-five years to Arkansas City residents and the region. Their staff has grown over the years, but now exceeds 90 persons, including licensed clinicians. The location in Strother Field, a mid-point, between Winfield and Arkansas City was selected to efficiently serve the regions clients with a new building that was constructed in 2007, with additional leased space nearby.

Services provided to the children, adults, couples and families include medication services, alcohol and substance abuse evaluation and treatment, emergency and crisis resources and intervention, and a large variety of support services through Children/Adult Community Based Services programs. CCMHCC also offers a day-school, cooperating with six regional school districts for this intensive day-treatment service. The area is also fortunate that the organization is home to the Transitions Foster Home Program, the only remaining foster care program sponsored by a community mental health center in Kansas. The Center also partners with Sumner County for the Children Crisis House in Winfield.

Statement of the City-Cowley County Health Department

Public health practice can be characterized as a multi-disciplinary approach that includes physicians, nurses, epidemiologists, dieticians, health educators and other professionals who assess common health measures to improve community health and the quality of life by providing interventions and promotion of healthy behaviors.

Local health departments provide a broad range of services including: disease surveillance and investigation, immunizations, emergency preparedness, maternal and infant health programs, health promotion and prevention programs, and environmental health services including child care facility inspections.

The 10 essential services of public health are: (1) monitor the health of the community; (2) diagnose and investigate health problems; (3) inform, educate and empower people; (4) mobilize community partnerships; (5) develop policies; (6) enforce laws and regulations; (7) link to and provide health services; (8) assure a competent workforce; (9) evaluate quality; and (10) research for new insights.

In 1946 the Cowley County Board of County Commissioners and the Governing Bodies of the cities of Arkansas City and Winfield created the joint City-Cowley County Health Department governed by a local Board of Health. The Department **vision** is to be a well financed organization capable of implementing its mission on behalf of the communities it serves; that services are delivered by a highly functioning team that serves as a lightning rod or advocate for public health awareness and change through continued assessment and addressing of community health needs; and that the Department is recognized as a valued partner in public health policy development.

The **mission** of the Department is to prevent disease and disability, protect the public health, and promote community health through the teaching of healthy lifestyles. This provision of public health service is focused on population based, community driven interventions. The local health agency provides some individual services as a safety net for those who would not otherwise receive care. The services rendered by the Department are preventative interventions that have been proven to have a direct impact on decreasing the medical costs associated with acute and chronic diseases.

7.4 COMMUNITY HEALTH AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Introduction. The built environment -- where we live, work, learn, and play -- impacts our health. The following paragraphs summarize the interplay between the subjects of this Plan and community health.

Healthy Food. Eating healthy foods lowers the risk of becoming overweight or obese, key risk factors for chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

Peoples' eating choices are strongly influenced by the food options available to them. For example, living near stores that sell healthy foods influences health. The closer one lives to a grocery store, the easier it is to obtain fresh fruits and vegetables. Proximity to healthy food is associated with greater consumption of healthy food, and with decreased rates of obesity. Living near sources of unhealthy food can lead to an increased risk for obesity and chronic diseases. When fast food restaurants and convenience stores are more abundant, closer, and cheaper than grocery stores and produce stands, people are less likely and less able to maintain a healthful diet.



Local food production and direct sales increase options for accessing healthy food. Creating new opportunities for farmers markets and produce stands are ways to expand access to healthy food.

Housing. There are three housing-related factors that relate directly to community health. These are housing that is unaffordable, unhealthy, or inadequate.

- Unaffordable Housing. When unaffordable housing is the only choice available, people are forced to make trade-offs that are associated with poor health, obesity and other chronic diseases. When too large a percentage of income goes to cover rent or mortgages, residents may be unable to afford medical care for themselves or their families. Similarly, they may have to rely on inexpensive foods that contribute to obesity, live in over-crowded conditions that may spread infectious diseases, or suffer from poor mental health. Traditionally, housing is considered affordable if the cost of rent and utilities does not exceed 30% of gross household income.
- Inadequate Housing. *Inadequate housing* is housing that is structurally deficient, or having problems such as frayed wiring, lack of plumbing, or narrow stairs without a protective banister.
- Unhealthy Housing. *Unhealthy housing* is housing of an age or condition that results in problems such as pest-infested carpeting, indoor mold, or flaking lead paint.

Residents need access to affordable housing that offers the benefits of stability and reduced stress, which translate into reduced risk for chronic disease. Housing should not place an undue financial burden on residents that limits or eliminates resources

devoted to self-care and the care of their families. Health is promoted when housing is located near parks, healthy foods, and walkable destinations.

Transportation and Land Use. Creating new opportunities to be active as part of daily life can help in reducing obesity, and "active transportation" such as walking and cycling offers opportunities for exercise. Like all forms of transportation, the ability to benefit from active transportation is intimately tied to the arrangement of land uses in the community and the transportation infrastructure.

Built environments that provide opportunities for physical activity lower the risk of obesity. Neighborhoods with walkable destinations allow residents to get physical activity as part of their everyday routine. Density and a mix of land uses promote active transportation by bringing destinations closer together. For example, a mix of land uses can result in destinations such as restaurants and retail shops to be within walking distance of residents. Buildings that come right up to the sidewalk with ground-level windows and entrances encourage walking, as do amenities such as street trees, benches, and lighting. Streets are more comfortable for pedestrians when blocks, buildings, or vegetation provide a sense of enclosure. A well-connected street network makes bicycling and walking easier and safer. Auto-dependent development reinforces sedentary lifestyles, and spending time driving is associated with a higher likelihood of obesity.



The availability of primary care has a role in preserving good health and preventing illnesses and hospitalizations. Health care facility locations that allow people to use active transportation have the added health benefit of promoting physical activity.

Economic Development. Higher incomes are associated with better health. Income is a proven predictor of overall health, and each step up the economic ladder equates to better health. This is indicative not only of better access to health care, but also a greater capacity to engage in healthy behaviors. Employment influences chronic stress and income. Frequent or long-term stress takes a toll on health, and employment is a major influence on stress.

Compact, walkable development that creates vibrant neighborhoods can attract companies and skilled workers than can increase economic opportunity.

Citizens benefit from access to high quality, primary, secondary and higher education and stable employment opportunities that offer living wages. Providing these opportunities requires the community to attract highly skilled workers and create vibrant, attractive places to live, work, and play. A strong local economy helps create opportunities for education and employment.

Parks and Recreation. Being physically active reduces the risk of many diseases and improves wellbeing. Access to parks increases the likelihood of physical activity. The number of parks nearby, their size, and their features or amenities can all influence the amount of physical activity people achieve. People who live close to parks are more likely to use them and be physically active. Multi-use trails help people meet physical activity needs for both recreation and transportation purposes. Physical activity in parks is affected by park safety and maintenance. Investments in parks are maximized when people feel safe and comfortable using them for exercise.



Contact with nature can also reduce stress and have positive impacts on mental health. Contact with nature can decrease symptoms of attention deficit disorder. Parks and open space are a way for residents to make contact with nature, and also offer a public gathering space to interact with neighbors and others in the community.

Safety and Social Connections. Neighborhoods can undermine a sense of safety if they have characteristics such as narrow sidewalks, dead-end streets and alleys, high speed limits, or the absence of crosswalks. People who perceive their neighborhood as unsafe are less likely to go for walks or use public parks. Adverse health outcomes associated with lack of safety include obesity, chronic stress, heart disease, and poor mental health.

A high degree of social cohesion is a strong predictor of lower rates of violence. Among middle school youth, positive connections to school and social groups is associated with better mental health, less risk of smoking, less risk of marijuana use, and higher graduation rates. In adults, strong social connections can help reduce stress, assist in coping, improve access to material support such as transportation or information, and improve mental health. Social connections are influenced by features of the built environment that provide opportunities for interaction, such as parks, shops, or front porches. The lack of a social network is associated with higher rates of morbidity and mortality, depression, and cognitive decline. Community centers, parks, libraries and other meeting places provide a social space separate from home and work, and play an important role in enhancing social connectedness and a sense of community.

7.5 COWLEY COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires tax-exempt hospitals to complete a Community Health Needs Assessment every three years. The law requires

the Assessment include input from persons having public health knowledge or expertise along with persons representing the broad interest of the community. The Assessment is to identify community needs and adopt a strategy to address those needs.

Following is an excerpt from the Executive Summary of the "Cowley County Community Health Needs Assessment," published in January 2013. The full report is available at the City-Cowley County Health Department's website:

Priority #1: Promote health, wellness, and chronic disease prevention.

- Emphasize health education from cradle to grave.
- Focus on youth, teaching healthy lifestyle behaviors that can be carried throughout life, *e.g.* hygiene, nutrition, exercise, etc.
- Help adults achieve healthier lifestyle, *e.g.* weight loss, tobacco cessation, responsible alcohol use.
- Work to prevent cancer and other chronic disease incidence through lifestyle education and modification, and promotion of appropriate screening practices.
- Increase awareness and use of existing local services and providers thereby reducing health spending leakages.
- Work with existing local institutions, *e.g.* school district, local governments, etc. to collaborate with health and wellness education.

Priority #2: Enhance access to health service providers.

- Health service provider recruitment and retention is a key component.
- Issues of affordability affect access. Direct those eligible and in need toward available resources and assistance.
- Enhance communication and collaboration across health service providers to ensure more complete case management.
- Support options for access to care for the medically underserved.

7.6 COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT - THE RAY & ASSOCIATES REPORT (2012)

The City-Cowley County Health Department, working in concert with other public and private sector entities and individuals, secured a federal Community Health Center Planning Grant in 2011. That grant was used to conduct an assessment of whether the need for affordable health care in Cowley County justified seeking federal funds for a community health center.

The Assessment produced significant data on many aspects of health care providers and the health care needs, met and unmet, in the County. The full report, published in

August 2012, can be accessed at the City-Cowley County Health Department's website. Brief excerpts follow:

The purpose of this needs assessment is to explore health needs, identify barriers to health care access and determine if there is a community desire for additional primary health services in Cowley County, Kansas. This project was funded by a Community Health Center Planning Grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) with the goal of supporting the development of community health centers (CHCs). This needs assessment, a component of the planning grant, was sponsored by the Cowley County Access to Health Care Steering Committee.

The Health Care Access initiative began in Cowley County as an interest group with ties to the Health Strategies component of "Vision 20/20," Cowley County's strategic planning document.

The Steering Committee consists of members of medical, educational, governmental and business organizations, as well as representatives from the community. Ray & Associates, LLC, was engaged to conduct a needs assessment to determine whether the need for affordable health care is significant enough to warrant applying for federal funds for a CHC in Cowley County.

The local provider community is comprised as follows:

- Arkansas City
 - Arkansas City Clinic: six Physicians, three Physician Assistants
 - Summit Clinic: two Physicians
 - City-Cowley County Health Department – Arkansas City Office
 - Dentists: seven independent practitioners
 - K&D Pharmacy
 - Dillons – Arkansas City Pharmacy
 - Graves Drug – Arkansas City
 - Taylor Drug
 - Walgreens
 - Wal-Mart Pharmacy

The City-Cowley County Health Department maintains two locations, one in Arkansas City and one in Winfield. The Health Department provides immunizations, HIV/STD counseling, family planning, WIC (Women, Infant and Children) Supplemental Nutrition Program, healthy child assessments and Healthy Start newborn home visits. The Health Department actively promotes car seat fitting, chronic disease reduction and prevention, communicable disease control, tobacco cessation, nutrition education and environmental health.

Summary

An analysis of medical, dental and behavioral health services in Cowley County reveals a provider community working to offer a safety net of services. However, the high rates of uninsured and underinsured residents make it difficult for private providers to meet these healthcare needs, while maintaining financial integrity of their practices. Thus, many individuals are unable to access care. Community health centers (CHCs) are available to individuals who can drive to Wichita, Kansas; however, there is no centralized location for residents of Cowley County to receive affordable health care based on a sliding fee scale.

County residents are clearly interested in the development of a CHC locally. The community effort to investigate the efficacy of a CHC has included individuals within the community who are uninsured or underinsured, as well as providers, hospital administrators and many other community organizations and local businesses.

This needs assessment has documented that Cowley County has higher than average rates of health care needs, particularly for chronic conditions, and lower than average levels of personal resources to manage these conditions, such as income and health insurance. According to residents, major barriers to accessing health care services are primarily related to out-of-pocket costs (*e.g.*, high deductibles, inadequate or no insurance and unpaid bills) and appointment availability (wait times and difficulty taking time off during business hours).

Additionally, community members regard emergency rooms as a source of regular primary health care. Research respondents expressed interest in having more of the following services locally: affordable primary care, dental, vision, obstetrics, pediatrics, health education and assistance finding appropriate services and completing forms. In sum, these findings demonstrate support for a CHC in Cowley County, as there is evidence of unmet health care needs, care access barriers, community desire for affordable services and a willingness to pay for them.

7.7 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HEALTH CARE SECTOR TO THE ECONOMY OF COWLEY COUNTY

In December 2010 Kansas Rural Health Works published its report on the "Kansas Rural Health Options Project." Following are excerpts from the introduction and summary of that report:

The Economics of Rural Health Care

The organization and delivery of health care services have undergone rapid evolution in recent years. For many Americans, the cost of services and access to care are important issues. This certainly is true in many rural areas where communities have struggled to maintain affordable, quality health care systems. As economic forces and technical advances continue to change health care, it is more important than ever for rural community leaders and health care providers to work together to ensure affordable, sustainable health care systems.

The Economic Contribution of the Health Care Sector In Cowley County, Kansas

The rapidly changing delivery of health services in rural counties has the potential to greatly impact the availability of health care services in the future. These changes include:

- Insufficient Medicare and Medicaid payments to hospitals and providers may force a reduction in the provision of health care services.
- Although Kansas rural health networks are already fairly strong, creation of provider networks may substantially change the delivery of, and access to, local health care services.
- Use of telemedicine could increase access to primary, consultative and specialty health care services at the county level.
- Development of critical access hospitals could help health care services remain in rural counties. Kansas currently has over 80 critical access hospitals.

As a result, the health care sector can have a large impact on the local economy. All of these changes make it imperative that decision makers in Cowley County become proactive in maintaining high quality local health care services.

Health care facilities such as hospitals and nursing homes provide jobs and income to people in the community. As these employees spend their income in the community, a ripple spreads throughout the economy, creating additional jobs and income in other economic sectors.

Summary and Conclusions

The Health Services sector of Cowley County, Kansas, plays a large role in the area's economy. Health Services represents one of the largest employers in the area and also serves as one of the largest contributors to income. Additionally, the health sector has indirect impacts on the local economy, creating additional jobs and income in other sectors. The health sector also contributes substantially to retail sales in the region.

While the estimates of economic impact are themselves substantial, they are only a partial accounting of the benefits to the county. Health care industries in rural counties help to preserve the population base, invigorating the communities and school systems. Similarly, many hospitals and nursing care facilities have active community outreach programs that enhance community services and the quality of life for community residents.

A vigorous and sustainable health care system is essential not only for the health and welfare of community residents, but to enhance economic opportunity as well. Health-related sectors are among the fastest growing in economy. Given demographic trends, this growth is likely to continue. The attraction and retention of new business and retirees also depends on access to adequate health care services.

The strategic health planning process helps local communities identify their health care needs; examine the social, economic, and political realities affecting the local delivery of health care; determine what is wanted and what realistically can be achieved to meet their identified health care needs; and develop and mobilize an action plan based on their analysis and planning.

For the strategic health planning process to be most effective, it must be based in the community and driven by the community. This process is about local people solving local problems. The local hospital and health care providers should have input into the decision-making and should support and trust the outcomes, but the community must provide the energy and commitment.

7.8 GOALS AND ACTIONS

Goal	Support Efforts to Improve Access to Health Services.
Goal	Encourage a Positive View of Mental and Behavioral Health that Will Encourage Citizens to Respond to Their Mental Health Needs.
Goal	Increase the Opportunities for Physical Activities for Citizens of All Ages and Abilities.
Goal	Encourage Easy Access to Healthy Foods.
Goal	Promote Healthy Transportation.
Goal	Continue Working with the City's Partners to Create a Stronger Local Economy.

GOAL SUPPORT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

The City should support the work of the City-Cowley County Health Department and others towards assuring a health care system providing timely, accessible and affordable preventive and primary care services.

Action:

1. Improve the public's awareness of available health services.
2. Encourage higher rates of utilization of basic preventative care.
3. Encourage providers to offer services at times, and days, that allow people to utilize health care services.
4. Support the fulfillment of the recommendation of the "Community Health Needs Assessment" for the establishment of a community health center to serve Cowley County.
5. Encourage and support Cowley First in its efforts, alongside the South Central Kansas Medical Center and William Newton Memorial Hospital, to study ways to achieve the most cost-effective provision of comprehensive health services to residents of Cowley County.

GOAL: ENCOURAGE A POSITIVE VIEW OF MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH THAT WILL ENCOURAGE CITIZENS TO RESPOND TO THEIR MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

Action:

1. Improve the public's awareness of the availability of mental health services.
2. Encourage mental health providers and primary care providers to implement programs to reduce the stigma of mental illness.
3. Avoid the inappropriate incarceration of persons with mental health issues, and encourage Cowley County to do the same.

GOAL: INCREASE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES FOR CITIZENS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

Action:

1. Maintain and enhance parks and recreation facilities and services consistent with the goals and actions in Chapter 5.
2. Increase access to parks, recreation and open space.
3. Provide recreation opportunities for residents of all ages, abilities and economic and cultural backgrounds.
4. Provide recreation facilities and services needed by various population groups, such as specific age groups or people with special physical requirements.
5. Whenever possible, consider the impact of public infrastructure decisions, and private development requiring City approval, upon the ability of citizens to walk or bike to their destinations, including parks.
6. Encourage public and private schools, and child care providers, to provide ample opportunities for physical activity.
7. Establish areas for physical activity at City offices, and encourage similar actions by other employers.

GOAL: ENCOURAGE EASY ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS

Action:

1. Encourage the location of food retailers throughout the community
2. Support and promote farmers markets, produce stands and community gardens.
3. Consider creating a land use category for urban agriculture, distinguishing it from rural agriculture.
4. Encourage healthy foods in city-owned facilities and at City-sponsored events.

GOAL: PROMOTE HEALTHY TRANSPORTATION

Action:

1. Increase the City's walking and bikeway network.
2. Increase sidewalk connectivity and safe crossings.

3. Implement traffic calming on neighborhood streets where appropriate.

GOAL: CONTINUE WORKING WITH THE CITY'S PARTNERS TO CREATE A STRONGER LOCAL ECONOMY

Action:

1. Mitigate the health impacts of poverty by encouraging employment opportunities for those in poverty.
2. When recruiting businesses, place significance on businesses that provide living wage jobs.
3. Help educational institutions provide students with the support needed for educational success.
4. Work with educational institutions and businesses to connect educational achievement with employment opportunities in the community.