

A Healthier City

The environments in which people live, work, learn and play have a tremendous impact on their health. The quality of the local environment, meaning the condition of our land, air and water, is paramount to the health of Marion County's residents. Increases in air quality-related illnesses, health care costs or environmental degradation that future generations will pay for down the road only exacerbate some of the problems that exist today. And while the health of our natural resources, air and water are crucial to our region's resiliency, nothing is more vital to the long-term prosperity of our city and the security of its people than the physical and mental health of our population.

Human health stretches far beyond what medical service providers can offer. Human health is determined by a number of societal factors. Social determinants of health are the economic and social conditions – and their distribution among the population – that influence individual and group differences in health status. They are conditions outside of our genetics and medical care that influence our health. Housing, transportation, education,



employment and criminal justice systems – the policies that they create and uphold – impact one's health more than the health care industry. Making Indianapolis a more healthy community will require that we collectively address these social determinants by incorporating health as a consideration in all policy decisions. A healthy city is one that equitably meets the needs and recognizes the human rights of all its residents.

We must build a city that promotes access to nutritious food and active living. We must embrace a new attitude and accompanying policies that value the health and well-being of our residents and invests accordingly. We must decrease the burden of chronic disease, increase the number of children and adults at healthy weights, and improve the overall health of Marion County's residents.

The Bicentennial Plan joins efforts to make Indianapolis a healthier community. The Bicentennial Plan seeks to lay the foundation for additional work, locally and regionally, to answer the following questions:

NEIGHBORHOODS

How do we begin to reconnect work and public health with neighborhood and community development?

DISPARITIES

What policy and structural changes are needed to eliminate disparities in health, education, employment, income, housing, and the justice system?

FOOD SECURITY

What does it take to ensure that every resident has reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food and beverages, if and when the (for profit) market is not able or no longer able to make the math work in a particular neighborhood?

SAFETY

How does a healthier community contribute to a safer community?

NATURAL RESOURCES

How can we better protect, enhance and leverage our natural resources to support clean air, water and soil, which dramatically contribute to the health of our community?



CONNECTIONS

The following are examples of some of the connections that were made throughout the planning process.

MARION COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Marion County Public Health Department (MCPHD) convened a steering committee of providers, consumers and experts in the public health field to guide creation of a Community Health Assessment. The assessment compares the community health status of Marion County to urban peers and national standards, identifies important health trends and disparities, identifies significant causes of poor health, and prioritizes the identified issues by age group and for Marion County as a whole.

INDY FOOD COUNCIL

The Indy Food Council is working to create a food system that provides everyone with access to healthy and nutritious food and beverages, enhances ecology, and creates meaningful economic and civic opportunities. The Indy Food Council connects food system stakeholders, catalyzes ideas and advances initiatives to grow a sustainable food system that improves health and the overall quality of life for all.

COAL PLANT CONVERSION TO NATURAL GAS

In 2012, the EPA estimated that 88 percent of Marion County’s toxic industrial pollution resulted from Indianapolis Power and Light’s Harding Street electrical generating facility. In 2016, IPL will convert its Harding Street power plant from coal to natural gas. This conversion will have a dramatic and positive effect on human health, especially for those who suffer from chronic lung diseases, asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

TOP 10

Led by the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis, Top 10 is a coalition of community stakeholders working together to help metropolitan Indianapolis become one of the Top 10 healthiest communities in the U.S. by 2025. The plan has four areas of focus: increasing physical activity, improving nutrition, decreasing smoking and improving the built environment.

JUMPIN FOR HEALTHY KIDS

JumpIN for Healthy Kids is a community-wide initiative led by a broad group of business, civic, government and academic executives. Its goal is to reduce and prevent childhood obesity in Central Indiana by ensuring that children and their families have real opportunities to make healthy choices in healthy environments. Its target is to reduce the childhood obesity rate 12 percent by 2025. Its strategy is to stimulate new or existing initiatives throughout the community that strive to tackle the complex causes of childhood obesity and empower children and their families to access and eat healthier foods, increase physical activity and embrace other healthy habits.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

The Indiana Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is based on the federal program designed to make walking and bicycling to school safe and routine. SRTS seeks to establish healthy, active lifestyles at early ages and a stronger sense of community identity. It also recognizes that walking and bicycling are viable transportation alternatives for travel to and from school with significant benefits. Indiana’s SRTS program aims to reduce motor vehicle traffic, decrease fuel consumption for school trips, improve air quality and improve the health and social skills of students.

