

Foreword

Background

The Community Health Assessment (CHA) describes the health of the community by presenting information on the health status, community health needs, resources, and health services infrastructure. It includes a socio-demographic profile of the county and seeks to identify target populations that may be at increased risk of poor health outcomes. The CHA also assesses the larger community environment and how it relates to the health of individuals. New York State public health law requires all local health departments to produce a written community health assessment every six years with biennial updates.

Sources

The CHA is comprised of core indicators as determined by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) that assess the community in terms of leading causes of morbidity and mortality. The NYSDOH is largely the source of this data. Local core indicator data is compared with the region when ever possible, the rest of New York State and measured by the Healthy People 2010 goals. US Census data and information from other federal sources are also included. This data is supplemented by local data from agencies and organizations that assess the health and well being of their target populations.

Process

The CHA document provides an interpretation and analysis of the data. It is also a continuous, interactive local process with regular electronic updates of the information. This process allows for a continual scan of the local health environment for changes in conditions and emerging health issues which may result in local strategies. As the lead agency for the CHA, the Health Department seeks input from other organizations, consumers, and health care providers in identifying health issues and concerns and determining focus areas. In the CHA, the Health Department also identifies its priorities as reflected in the Municipal Public Health Services Plan (MPHSP) in safeguarding the public health that may not be as apparent to the community at large.

Purpose

The CHA may be used for a variety of purposes:

- Planning and evaluation of the progress of community and Health Department programs.
- Documenting the Health Department's fulfillment of legal and regulatory requirements.
- Cataloguing multiple health-related activities in the community, helping to meet a broad community-wide assurance role.
- Justifying budget appropriations and program development.
- Reporting on important health outcome measures.
- Providing technical assistance to other agencies.
- Needs assessment for categorical grants.
- Source of information for researchers and policymakers.