

Forces of Change Assessment

Cumberland County Comprehensive Community Health Coalition, 2/12/08
Cumberland County Coordinating Council for Public Health, 3/21/08

Local	Threats Posed	Opportunities Created
Redesign of local public health infrastructure	Challenging transition period, territorialism and division of services	Increased public health employment, more localized services that may be tailored to community, accessibility to services improve
Potential widening of I-295	Adding to built infrastructure, over reliance on oil, loss of green space	Better flow of traffic, opportunity to expand on pedestrian and biking routes
Closure of Naval Air Station Brunswick	Impact on economy in surrounding area, loss of health services (Parkview Hospital's maternity ward closed 3/1/08)	Empty space that could be used for providing health services.

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State	Threats Posed	Opportunities Created
School consolidation	Loss of jobs, fewer health classes, no walking to school, elective programs get cut, fewer extracurricular activities	Increase funds and health programs
Increasing prescription drug abuse	Substance use, crime, violence, and death increase.	Coming together to identify solutions, recognition as a social problem, framing crime differently
Banning smoking in cars	Retaliation, lack of freedom for smokers, slippery slope	Raise awareness regarding harmful effects of secondhand smoke, reduce diseases related to smoking
Budget cuts	Reduction in services (especially preventive services), loss of jobs	Promoting efficiency, cutting waste, more resourceful, increase collaboration, promotes volunteerism
High rates of Lyme disease	Increased number of cases of Lyme disease	Public education and awareness
Imminent loss of federal Downeaster funding	Risk loss of rail service, lose access to health services, increased isolation	Time to have public discussion on the future of rail service, secure a commitment from the state to fund rail and other public transit
Jail consolidation	Overcrowding, increased risk of infectious disease spread	Focus on treatment due to money saved
Gas tax and tolls reserved exclusively for roads	Overreliance on oil, lack of mobility for the young, old, and poor, loss of walkable communities	Opportunity to rally public health forces to change state laws
Lack of dental services	Poor oral health outcomes	Change rules allowing increased scope of practice for those working in oral health
Creation of pharmacy school at UNE and linkage between MMC and Tufts Medical School	Cost of private school	Increase number of practitioners in the state
Increased number of immigrants	Increased cost for translators, increase in school enrollment	Diversity to state and workforce
Aging population	Aging workforce, more caretakers needed, younger people leaving Maine	Streamline coordination of services

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Lack of public transportation	Increased isolation, lack of access to health services, increased oil consumption	Need for mobile clinics and virtual health services
Lack of routine restaurant inspections	Increase in foodborne diseases, negative economic impact, loss of tourism	Impetus to reform the current situation

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National	Threats Posed	Opportunities Created
Presidential election	Negative changes in foreign relations, social policies, and health care (depending upon victor)	Positive changes in foreign relations, social policies, and health care (depending upon victor)
Increasing numbers of incarcerated women	Increase in substance use among women	Alternatives to incarceration, new partnerships
GMO crops	Threats to other species and crops, unknown consequences of consumption	Allegedly better for environment due to fewer pesticides, feed more people
No money for fragile populations in need	Safety net eroded, unmet needs increases	More community collaborations, forces creativity
Increasing cost of healthcare	Untreated subpopulations	Forces flexibility in solutions, demands global response, creativity in work schedules
Over reliance on the automobile	Sedentary society, over reliance on oil, pollution	Increases trade, more accessibility
Consolidation of food supply	Reliance on processed and trucked-in food, less likely to go to local markets, destabilizes local producers, local money leaving economy	More people can access organic food, accessibility of seasonal food and venues, more CSAs, more farmers' markets, raising awareness, new market for local markets
Servicemen/women returning from Iraq	High healthcare needs, lack of infrastructure (mental health issues, prison), transitioning back to civilian life	Increase funding/awareness for behavioral health services and veteran services
Built environment that discourages alternative forms of transportation	Loss of green space, lack of attention to alternative forms of transportation, sedentary lifestyle, isolation	Foster a sense of community, saves time
Increased amounts of medications and hormones in drinking water	Public's lack of faith in drinking water, various health risks	Opportunity to take steps to improve water quality
Identification of connection of mercury to autism and other diseases	Increased risk for autism	Opportunity to ensure vaccines and dental work are free of mercury

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Increased reliance on processed foods	Decreased nutrition, increase in related chronic and mental health issues, decrease in reliance on local food making, increase in land use erosion	Opportunity to create systems that reverse trends, including community kitchens
Rising fuel costs	Limits access to rural health, food, and medication, increase in costs of food and other goods, having to choose between health/nutrition and gas	Need to consolidate services at single site
Rules changing around Medicare and Medicaid	Loss of eligibility, increased reliance on emergency departments for primary care	Money saved put to chronic disease prevention
Decrease in public health funds	Tighter restrictions on its use	Streamlining services
Lack of mental health services, including treatment and case management	Less medication compliance, increased homelessness, substance use, and incarceration	Increased awareness of issues, reduced stigma

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Global	Threats Posed	Opportunities Created
Weakening economy	Environmental degradation, cuts in public health services, unemployment growth, more healthcare problems	Supportive community, people reinvent themselves, less gluttony, increased awareness of economical issues
Climate change	Negative health impacts, dramatic weather patterns, food scarcity/loss of crops, reduction in quality of life	People start to become more aware, prioritize community/youth engagement, change in environmental policy, US signs Kyoto agreement, energy alternatives
Obesity epidemic	Sedentary society, poor health habits as a child that carry into adulthood, health expenditures, loss of quality of life/productivity	Coming together to identify solution, schools to encourage healthy habits early in life
Increasing use of technology	Decrease in social skills development, spiritual disconnect, increase in isolation, alcoholism, obesity, and mental health conditions	Mass dissemination of information, improve methods for messaging, quick distribution of information
Increasing mobility of trade	Increases spread of disease, destabilizes local market providers and farmers, decrease value of the dollar	Improvement of living standards
Emerging infectious diseases, especially influenza	Increased morbidity and mortality, need for vaccines and treatment, economic impact	Spurs medical and technological advancements, development of all hazards preparedness plans