

Union County Healthy Communities Coalition

Working for Healthy Communities where we live, work and play



La Grande Community Garden, photo by Shaun Daniel

2011 Community Health aNd Group Evaluation (CHANGE) summary Report

CHD





Working for a Healthy Community

We are lucky enough to live in Union County, Oregon. Many people live here because of the natural beauty, close community, and rural way of life. We take pride in the many family farms and ranches in this area, many of which have been part of this landscape for over a century. We produce food for the state, nation and world! We value

active operating the 3,369 acre Mount Emily Recreation Area as well as city parks in every incorporated community in Union County.

On the flip side there are 487,584 acres of land in agricultural production but not everyone has enough to eat, and only about 1/3 of people get enough fruits and vegetables. Whether because of time, access

to transportation, or any other reason many people don't get enough exercise, even though we are surrounded by beautiful recreation areas. And there are people in our community who suffer from diseases such as emphysema even though they've never smoked. As a result our health as a community is declining.

Where we live, work, learn, and play affects



our health. It is important that individuals are empowered to make the decisions that will improve their health, but it is equally important that as a community we work to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to make these decisions.

The Local Impact

In Union County

- 785 of every 100,000 deaths is from a chronic disease
- Treating chronic disease accounts for 3/4 of all healthcare spending
- Nearly 2/3 of adults in Union County are overweight or obese
- Only 19% of 8th graders eat enough fruits and vegetables

Why care about chronic disease in Union County? Because it is killing us. Between 2000 and 2004 785 of every 100,000 deaths where from a chronic disease including: heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and tobacco related disease

Overall, roughly 3/4 of all healthcare costs are used to treat chronic disease! (Kaiser Family Foundation). Each of these diseases is associated with behaviors such as using tobacco, not eating healthy foods, not exercising, or not effectively managing an existing chronic disease. In Union County 40% of adults are considered overweight and 21% obese. 20% of the adult population smokes cigarettes, and only 22% of adults and 19% of 8th graders eat enough fruits and vegetables which puts our community at greater risk for chronic disease.

What can we do?

“Communities are working to change the places and organizations that touch people’s lives every day—schools, work sites, health care sites, and other community settings—to turn the tide on the national epidemic of chronic diseases”

-CDC

This is a call to action! As a community we can help prevent chronic disease and ensure people have the tools to effectively manage existing conditions. We can do this by supporting policies and building an environment that increases opportunities to eat healthy food, be physically active and enjoy tobacco free environments where we live, learn, work, and play.

In order to help local communities be more effective in preventing chronic disease the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed the Community Health aNd Group Evaluation or (CHANGE) tool. CHANGE helps communities take a snap shot of policies and environments that impact community health and prioritize findings to develop a community action plan.

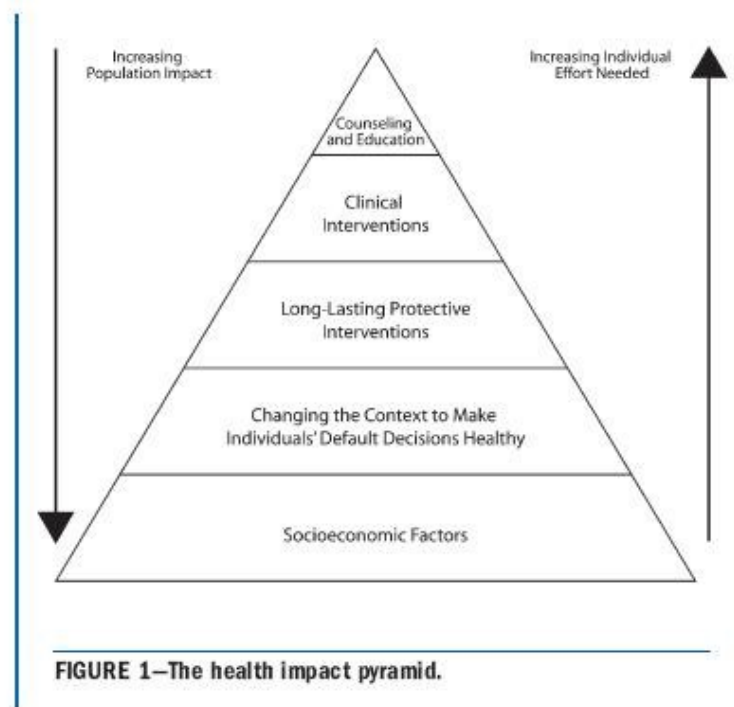
The CHANGE tool focuses specifically on “Policy and Environmental Change”. These types of strategies are geared towards addressing the root causes of problems. Most people know that it is better for their health to eat fruits and vegetables, exercise, and not smoke. Despite this the rates of the diseases associated with these behaviors have increased significantly over the 20 years. In Oregon the rate of adult obesity has increased from close to 12% in 1995 to 23% in 2009. That’s more that double! And this trend is mirrored in every state and every county in the country. What has changed? Are we all getting lazier? While this may be partially the case recent research indicates that there are barriers to healthy eating, physical activity, and living tobacco

free that simply were not there twenty years ago.

In order to help communities improve health and prevent chronic disease the state of Oregon has worked with local public health agencies to implement the CHANGE Initiative. In Union County the Center for Human Development has been working with community partners to form a coalition, review existing information, and determine what assets as well as opportunities exist in our community. As part of the assessment we gathered information from a variety of sources and interviewed people from throughout the community.

The assessment was broken into five sectors: Schools, Healthcare, Community Institutions and Organizations, Community at Large, and Worksites. Following is some more information about how the assessment was completed and a brief summary of the findings from each sector as well as recommendations for how to build a healthier community and reduce the burden of chronic disease in Union County.

As a note, there are several places in this report where readers are referred to other websites. We used a url shortener to save space. The web addresses listed are case sensitive.



The Health Impact Pyramid (right) was designed to illustrate the effectiveness of different public health strategies.

The CHANGE tool

To what extent does the community institution/organization:	Policy Response #	Environment Response
1. Promote stairwell use (e.g., make stairs appealing, post motivational signs near stairs to encourage physical activity)?		
2. Provide a safe area outside (e.g., through lighting, signage, crime watch) to walk or be physically active?		
3. Designate a walking path on or near building property?		
4. Encourage non-motorized commutes (e.g., active transportation such as walk or bike) to the facility?		
5. Enhance access to public transportation (e.g., bus stops, light rail stops, van pool services, subway stations) within <u>reasonable walking distance</u> ?		
6. Provide access to onsite fitness center, gymnasium, or physical activity classes?		
7. Provide a changing room or locker room with showers?		
8. Provide bicycle parking (e.g., bike rack, shelter) for patrons?		
9. Provide access to a broad range of competitive and noncompetitive physical activities that help to develop the skills needed to participate in lifetime physical activities?		
10. Provide opportunity for unstructured play or leisure-time physical activity?		
11. Prohibit using <u>physical activity</u> as a punishment?		
12. Restrict <u>screen time</u> to less than 2 hours per day for children over 2 years of age?		
13. Provide direct support (e.g., money, land, pavilion, recreational facilities, sponsorship, advertising) for supporting community-wide physical activity opportunities (e.g., sports teams, walking clubs)?		
COLUMN TOTAL:	0	0
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SCORE:	0.00%	0.00%

This is an example of what the CHANGE tool looks like and the types of questions that are included. You can download the complete assessment tool at : <http://1.usa.gov/IFkFJG>

Response #	Policy	Environment
1	Not identified as problem	Elements not in place
2	Problem identification/gaining agenda status	Few elements in place
3	Policy formulation and adoption	Some elements are in place
4	Policy implementation	Most elements are in place
5	Policy evaluation and enforcement	All elements in place
99	Not applicable	Not applicable

How the CHANGE Tool was Completed

The opposite page is an example of the types of questions included in the CHANGE tool. Each question is answered on a scale from 1 to 5 and a description of what each number means is on the bottom of the opposite page.

In order to complete the CHANGE tool the Union County Healthy Communities Coalition interviewed over 25

community members including representatives from city government, businesses, and other leaders in our community. We complimented these interviews by reviewing existing sources for data such as the US Census and previous community coalitions. We also took a tour of the valley and photographed things that we thought increased access to healthy

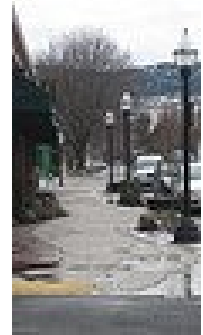
environments or were potential barriers. The La Grande portion of this tour was done using public transportation!

You can see several of the photos we took in this report. To see pictures, or to submit your own go to our flickr page at:

<http://bit.ly/lp2a4j>

Or the CHD facebook page at:

<http://on.fb.me/lMqeGx>



Interesting features in sidewalks make people more likely to walk

Community Profile

Part of completing the CHANGE assessment involved looking at existing information about the health of our community. Following are some of the reports that we used to complement the CHANGE assessment. All numbers apply to Union County

From the Oregon Hunger Task Force
<http://bit.ly/inXHxE>

Population and Geography

- 2009 Population: 23,685

Economic Indicators

- Unemployment rate (July 2010): 9.5%
- Homeless children (2010): 128

Seniors in poverty (65+): 7.2%

Children in poverty (18 & under): 26.2%

Union poverty rate 2008: 37.3%

Statewide poverty rate: 13.5%

SNAP participation rate: 67%

Senior SNAP

participation: 26%

From the Community Health Rankings:

<http://bit.ly/kBq4g2>

County Health Ranking: 11 of 36

- Access to healthy food: 43%, state average: 62%
- Access to recreational facilities: 8, state average: 12
- Primary care providers 809:1, state average 739:1

Union County is ranked 11th out of 36 Oregon counties in overall health and healthy behaviors.

Schools

The Healthy Communities Coalition used existing information and interviewed teachers as well as administrators to assess what policies and environmental strategies were being used to promote the health of students and prevent chronic disease.

Gladly, schools are doing a lot to help children develop healthy habits during this very formative period in their lives. Multiple assessments have recognized schools as leading in creating a healthy environment

School districts assessed have specific policies on the amount of physical activity required during the day, the types of foods offered as part of the national school lunch and school breakfast program, district wellness policies and offer some type of age appropriate health education, physical activity, and tobacco curriculum.

Nutrition: all schools have a salad bar so that students are able to access fresh fruits and vegetables with every meal. Multiple schools have a school

garden. Studies indicate that students involved in growing and preparing fresh fruits and vegetables are more likely to choose to eat them. A number of schools also ensure the freshness of a product by purchasing from a local producer. Many schools have made progress by removing soda and other vending machines.

All school districts in Union County are tobacco free 24/7. This is an excellent way to use policy to limit tobacco use as well as exposure, not just for students while at school but also for families who use to school grounds for recreation after school hours.

Recommendations:

- Adopt policies specifying that only healthy foods be sold during the school day
- Support school gardens and purchasing locally produced food.
- Ensure teachers have the training necessary to teach health and PE
- Adopt a policy

ensuring that there is a healthy option at all events on school property

- Develop joint use agreement so that gyms can be available on evenings and weekends

all schools in Union County have a salad bar so that students are able to access fresh fruits and vegetables with every meal



At the North Powder school garden kids learn both how to grow vegetables and how to appreciate them. Many of the vegetables grown in the school garden are used in the school lunch program—both during the school year and over the summer.

Community Institutions and Organizations



Having attractively displayed fruits and vegetables make people more likely to buy (and eat) them

Community based organizations are “critical in connecting community residents to wellness opportunities, streamlining access to healthcare services”
 - Resources Guide for Community and Faith Based Organizations

The La Grande Community Garden is a partnership between two community organizations— Eastern Oregon University and Oregon Rural Action. Community gardens help people who live in apartments access more fruits and vegetables by growing there own. Contact info@oregonrural.org if you are interested in having a plot

Assessing community institutions and organizations relied on key stakeholder interviews.

Assets: The CHANGE assessment found that there were many strong community institutions and organizations, especially faith based organizations. Many of these organizations have resources and support physical activity. Additionally, many had worked to support a tobacco free environment. Several organizations also support important hunger relief efforts such as the Neighbor to Neighbor Food Pantry and the

Friday Back pack Program.

Needs: Few of the organizations assessed had policies or environmental strategies for supporting healthy eating. Interviewees commented most events were pot-luck and there was often a large number of sweets and desserts. The large number of unhealthy options made it difficult for people to enjoy dessert in moderation. Organizations also rely on unhealthy foods for fundraisers. Additionally, some interviewees commented that there were many

members of the organization, especially older members, living with a chronic disease.

Recommendations:

- Build awareness throughout the broader community of the resources for physical activity that are available through community organizations.
- Encourage community members to bring healthy foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy products to pot lucks.
- Offer Chronic Disease Self Management Programs such as Living Well or Walk with Ease (see page 9 for more information about these programs) through existing community based institutions and organizations.
- Offer healthy foods at fundraisers and community meals



Community at Large

To assess the “Community at Large” the Healthy Communities Coalition met with policy makers in each of the seven municipalities in Union County, reviewed comprehensive as well as bike pedestrian plans for each community, took a walking tour of four communities, and took a bus tour of the City of La Grande.

Assets: Each community had a bike and pedestrian plan for improving opportunities for physical activity in the community. Multiple communities had made progress towards implementing those plans, despite budget cuts. Two communities were in the process of creating or expanding designated pedestrian paths.

Each community has a grocery store that offers some type of produce. The coalition was particularly impressed by the produce selection at the Union Market, as well as their use of locally grown produce. One community was involved with Bountiful Baskets which delivers produce to communities with limited access to fresh produce twice per month. Three communities had seasonal Farmers Markets and there is an active community garden in La Grande.

Each community supported tobacco free environments by enforcing the state ban on smoking in indoor public areas.

Needs: Several people have commented that they see few people walking either for

exercise or to just running errands.

The intersection in front of the Cove School is potentially dangerous for students walking or biking to school.

Interviewees commented that the cost of physical activity programs was often prohibitive.

There were no policies ensuring the legal grounds for Farmers Markets, Community Gardens, or breast feeding.

There was a lack of information and awareness of Chronic Disease Self Management Programs.

Recommendations:

- Develop walking groups in multiple communities

to help build a supportive environment for pedestrians and encourage participation in free physical activity opportunity.

- Use traffic calming strategies such as speed bumps to reduce speed of traffic around Cove School, continue applying for Safe Routes to School grant to improve intersection.
- Adopt model ordinance defining Community Gardens as a permitted use of land and promote new ordinance. Ensure that breastfeeding is permitted in public areas and that public buildings have safe, comfortable areas for breastfeeding

Healthcare

The CHANGE assessment interviewed health care providers as well as administrative personnel in health care organizations. This information was complimented by a recent study on access to health care completed by the Northeast Oregon Network (NEON).

Assets: Many providers were aware of resources in the community and actively referred. Most providers assess fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity, and tobacco use and encourage

patients to make healthier choices.

Recommendations

- Adopt specific policies on referring to community based resources for chronic disease prevention and management
- Ensure that providers understand the importance of healthy eating, physical activity and tobacco free environments and are able to counsel and refer patients effectively

- Develop standard policies for what is assessed during a routine visit and include tobacco exposure in addition to tobacco use.
- Encourage friends and family members to regularly receive preventative health screenings
- Educate yourself and your family members on the signs and symptoms of a stroke

Every community in Union County has a plan to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety!



Cross walks help keep pedestrians safe

Worksite Wellness



Farmers Markets and produce stands increase access to fresh, healthy food and support our local economy!

Many of us spend a majority of our waking hours at work and worksite policies can have a significant effect on our health. Having policies on things such as using flex time for physical activity help create an environment favorable for physical activity and helps make other changes, such as a walking group, more sustainable.

Assets: Worksites participating in the assessment offered health care, were on bus routes, and had covered bicycle parking. Some worksites surveyed were also tobacco free and had exercise equipment on site for employees to use, and most had organized some type of health promotion activity in the past

Recommendations

- Adopt wellness policies that include physical activity, healthy food, and tobacco free environments
- Recognize and promote worksites with the strongest wellness policies at community events
- For information on worksite wellness and model policies contact: dawn.e.robbins@state.or.us or visit <http://1.usa.gov/jKqRf>

Resources for CHANGE

Many of us spend a majority of our waking hours at work and worksite policies can have a significant effect on our health.



Damaged sidewalks can make walking unpleasant and unsafe.

To learn more about the types of policies and strategies that have been effective at reducing chronic disease or helping people manage there chronic disease with fewer costly medications check out these great websites:

Note: we shortened the web addresses to save space. The addresses listed are case sensitive.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention Healthy Communities Program. This website will give you both access to the CHANGE tool as well as tools for action: <http://1.usa.gov/mxMO>

Be National Policy and Legal Analysis Network provides model policies for preventing obesity including things like community gardens and land use planning. Are there model policies that you think would fit our community?

<http://bit.ly/mBqJDj>
Complete Streets take into account all users of our transportation system. Learn more, and read about communities putting Complete Streets principles into action; <http://bit.ly/mLzq1j>

Oregon Health Authority

Provides resources such as training and model policies to communities interested improving health.

<http://1.usa.gov/kUqNoE>

Living Well

This is an evidence based program that helps people learn to live with and manage there chronic disease in a group setting. Contact the Northeast Oregon Network:

<http://bit.ly/kIpCqu>

For information about Living Well in Northeast Oregon

Center for Human Development
2301 Cove Ave.
La Grande, OR 97850

Phone: 541-962-8822
Fax: 541-963-0520
E-mail: dmansveld@chdinc.org

www.chdinc.org

Working for Healthy Communities



CHD provides a variety of services to improve the health and well-being of Union County residents:

- Public Health Services
- WIC Nutrition Program
(Farm Direct checks and fruit & vegetable vouchers are accepted at the Farmers Market!)
- Environmental Health Services
- Substance Abuse Treatment Services
- Mental Health Services
- Prevention Services
- Home Visitation Services
- Veterans Services
- Developmental Disabilities

Community Partners

There are many great organizations working in Union County to use policy and environmental change to build a healthier community. Some of the partners who have helped complete this assessment and develop a plan include:

- UC Fit Kids—community coalition for the prevention of childhood obesity. <http://on.fb.me/lkQP4F>
- The Commission on Children and Families <http://bit.ly/mA2p0u>
- Oregon Rural Action <http://bit.ly/kxBsw8>
- Union County Safe Communities Coalition—contact Deanne at

the Center for Human Development for more information 541-962-8800

- Northeast Oregon Network (NEON) <http://bit.ly/kIpCqu>
- Oregon Rural Practice Based Research Network <http://www.ohsu.edu/orprn/>

There are groups and individuals throughout Union County, and Northeast Oregon working to increase access to healthy food, physical activity and tobacco free environments. Together we can build a healthier community!

If you are looking for more information about how you can help,

whether it's joining a coalition or working with your employer to make their campus tobacco free contact Deanne at dmansveld@chdinc.org or 541-962-8800 for information and resources.