

Umatilla County

Plan4Health Initiative



MEDIA RELEASE

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Umatilla County Plan4Health's Coalition of Community Partner Organizations Conducts Community Needs and Readiness Assessment and Prepares Action Plan To Address Priority Actions to Improve Health

In October of 2015, Umatilla County received a \$130,000 grant from the American Planning Association through its Plan4Health program to identify and implement community level interventions to combat two major determinants of chronic disease and obesity in the county--lack of physical activity and lack of access to nutritious foods. A 2013-15 Community Health Improvement Plan had identified adult obesity as the number one priority health problem in the county and chronic disease as the third most important health issue faced by county citizens.

The grant funding was designated to support activities to build the capacity of 25 local organizations and individuals to work together to improve the health of the community. An initial step in this process was to bring this community coalition together to undertake a comprehensive Community Needs and Readiness Assessment. Umatilla County had never conducted such an assessment as a means of focusing community partners on ways to address some of the underlying causes of major health problems in the community. The survey was designed to provide coalition and community members with baseline data on health conditions and an inventory of healthy living resources in the County. The assessment was intended to provide the coalition a clear vision as to how to move towards creating healthy change in the community.

The University of Oregon's Community Service Center (CSC) was engaged to work with the coalition to design and conduct the Community Needs and Readiness Assessment ([CNRA](#)). The county coalition

served as a channel for public involvement input into the survey and its results. The assessment employed a variety of data collection methods including a mail-home survey to registered voters, focus groups with vulnerable populations, and community outreach at public events.

The information gathered and the final report provides a comprehensive inventory of community level resources and existing programs capable of addressing the observed lack of physical exercise and access to nutritious foods in Umatilla County resulting in obesity (the 2015-16 Umatilla-Morrow Counties Community Health Assessment Report found 71% of Umatilla County adults were either overweight or obese) and chronic disease (the same Health Assessment Report reported 15% of Umatilla adults had been diagnosed with diabetes). The CNRA report also assessed health needs and gaps in services and identified opportunity areas where the coalition can maximize and leverage existing programs and funds. “County Staff placed a high emphasis on leveraging existing funds and programs rather than relying on new or outside revenue,” said Commissioner George Murdock. “This is another example of county serving public needs and exceeding benchmarks without impacting the county budget.”

UCo Plan4Health’s next step is to shift into the implementation phase, where they will begin to carry out the strategies recommended in the final report. The approach will continue to focus on strengthening existing resources and enhancing old partnerships.

Copies of the CNRA Final Report will be available at local libraries, Chambers of Commerce, and on our website. For more information on the project, or to read the full report, please visit www.ucoplan4health.wixsite.com/ucoplan4health, if you have questions about the project or final report, please submit those through the website or to health@umatillacounty.net.