

Stark County Community Health Improvement Plan



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Community Health Needs Assessment Process

The CHNA process includes: collecting, updating and analyzing data; prioritizing the data to identify priority health needs; developing a community Health Improvement Plan with strategies to address the needs identified; implementing the strategies; evaluating the results, and distributing a report to community members and organizations within Stark County. To date the following have been completed:

- ◆ [Stark County Indicators Report 2010](#) - consists of annual health indicators data available through secondary data sources.
- ◆ [2011 Stark County Collaborative Poll](#) - is a randomized telephone survey used to gather primary health data directly from residents.
- ◆ [2011 Stark County Health Needs Assessment](#) - includes an analysis of data from the 2010 Indicators Report, the Stark Poll and the 2009-2010 Ohio Youth Survey and identifies the top five health needs for Stark County.

Assessment Findings and Health Needs Identified

The Assessment Report identified the following health related issues as the top five health needs for Stark County:

1. Access to Health Insurance Coverage and Health Care
2. Obesity and Healthy Lifestyle Choices
3. Prescription Drug Misuse
4. Mental Health Wellness
5. Access to Dental Care

A Health Improvement Summit was held on November 17, 2011, bringing together over 60 representatives from healthcare, social service, non profit organizations, public health, education, local business and government leaders, and community volunteers to discuss the assessment findings and to vote on three health issues to address for the County.

The three health priority areas that were voted as the most important for Stark County were:

- 1. Obesity and Healthy Lifestyle Choices**
- 2. Access to Health Insurance Coverage and Health Care**
- 3. Mental Health Wellness**

Community Health Improvement Plan

A community health improvement plan is a long-term effort to address health problems on the basis of the results of assessment activities. An improvement plan is critical for developing policies and defining actions to target efforts that promote health. Stark County's Health Improvement Plan is a guide to improve the health of the community by addressing specific strategies and activities for each of the top three health needs identified. The results of this community collaboration included significant involvement by key community members of the public health system.

During the first half of 2012, these professional and community members worked to develop the following Plan for the County. Thank you for the support of many agencies and individuals who helped develop this framework for the community. These agencies and individuals are committed to working collaboratively to impact the health of Stark County residents.

- ◆ **Access Health Stark County**
Barb Blevins
- ◆ **Alliance Community Hospital**
Bill James
- ◆ **Alliance Farmers' Market**
Ginny Daniel, Meg Mundy
- ◆ **American Cancer Society**
Ten Gall
- ◆ **Aultman Hospital**
Jason Blevins, Mike Dewitt, Sharla Elton
- ◆ **Aultcare**
Abbey Roach, Cyndia Newburn
- ◆ **Canton City Health Department**
Dana Hale, Diane Thompson, Jim Adams
- ◆ **Child & Adolescent Behavioral Health**
Mike Johnson
- ◆ **Community Volunteers**
Bill Franks, Kellie Johnson, MD,
Merle Kinsey
- ◆ **Employers Health**
Steve Burger
- ◆ **Mental Health & Recovery Services Board of Stark County**
Jackie Pollard, John Aller, Michelle Boone,
Paula Mastroianni, Patti Fetzer
- ◆ **Mercy Medical Center**—Kathy Wise, Sister
Carolyn Capuano, Janet Boiarski
- ◆ **North Canton Medical Foundation**
John Humphrey, MD, Julie Elkins
- ◆ **Pegasus Farm**
Carol Lichtenwalter
- ◆ **Prescription Assistance Network**
Carol Risaliti
- ◆ **Sisters of Charity Foundation**
Jean Van Ness
- ◆ **Stark County Health Department**
Kay Conley, Kelly Richendollar
- ◆ **Stark County Educational Services Center/
Help Me Grow**
Anju Mader, MD
- ◆ **Stark County Medical Society**
Kevin Metz
- ◆ **Stark Parks**
Bob Fonte, Nick Morris
- ◆ **The Ohio State University Extension**
Yvette Graham
- ◆ **United Way of Greater Stark County**
Kimberly Douce
- ◆ **Western Stark Free Clinic**
Gary Feagles
- ◆ **YMCA Central Stark County**
Michelle Aladich

Priority One

Obesity and Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Goal 1: Promote wellness and healthy lifestyle initiatives within each school district throughout Stark County.

2011 Stark County Health Needs Assessment

- ◆ The Stark Poll showed that a significant portion, 44.2% reported that they were somewhat or very overweight.
- ◆ According to the CDC, 34.1% of Stark County third graders were either overweight or obese in 2009-2010.
- ◆ The Ohio Youth Survey, indicated that 27% of the students who participated reported being overweight and 47% indicated they were trying to lose weight.

1st Phase Strategy: Increase awareness of model programs and resources to Stark County school districts and community partners.

Activities:

- ◆ Collaborate with the Stark County Educational Service Center (ESC), district administration and personnel to assess physical activity and nutrition programs, resources and wellness activities available to and being implemented by Stark County school districts. Develop a reporting mechanism to update the data regularly.
- ◆ Identify and research physical activity and nutrition programs and wellness activities targeting developmentally disabled, at risk youth and low income students, to enhance the knowledge of physical activity and nutrition.
- ◆ Create an online toolbox to promote the physical activity and nutrition programs, resources and wellness activities available to and being implemented by Stark County school districts.
- ◆ Implement a wellness seminar for Stark County school districts to share and discuss promising programs, concepts, ideas, resources, activities and the successful outcomes.



Obesity and Healthy Lifestyle Choices

2nd Phase Strategy: Incorporate and increase physical activity and nutrition programs and wellness activities throughout Stark County school districts.

Activities:

- ◆ Promote and recognize successful physical activity and nutrition programs, resources and wellness activities to all Stark County school districts and community partners through a media campaign.
- ◆ Encourage Stark County school districts to adopt a comprehensive school health model or policy.
- ◆ Identify and provide funding opportunities to Stark County schools through the online toolbox.



Recommendation: The sharing of school related information between Stark County school districts, community partners and the Obesity & Healthy Lifestyles Committee should be coordinated through one entity allowing communication to be uniform, consistent and accurate.

Responsible Organizations: Live Well Stark County Committee, ESC, Health Departments, OSU Extension Office, Stark County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Committee.

Obesity and Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Goal 2: Promote wellness and healthy lifestyle initiatives within Stark County worksites.

1st Phase Strategy: Increase outreach to Stark County worksites to promote wellness programs and policies.

Activities:

- ◆ Research and identify companies with wellness programs/policies. Identify methods to contact worksites within Stark County.
- ◆ Research wellness programs, policies, resources, ideas, concepts, initiatives, events and activities for the developmentally disabled population.
- ◆ Develop an inventory of model and popular programs, resources, ideas, concepts, initiatives, events and activities available to Stark County worksites.
- ◆ Implement a wellness seminar for Stark County worksites to share and discuss promising programs, concepts, ideas, resources, activities, initiatives, events and the successful outcomes.

Live Well Stark County

- ◆ The Live Well Stark County Coalition is a community partnership dedicated to improving the health and well-being of persons living in Stark County, Ohio.
- ◆ This group is the result of a merger between two county efforts - **ACHIEVE** (Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and EnVironmental Change) in 2008, and Healthy Lifestyles in 2010.
- ◆ Stark County was one of the first 10 communities nationwide to become an ACHIEVE Community. This effort provided resources to community partners to attend a national training so they could effectively work with targeted communities addressing worksite and community initiatives.
- ◆ The Healthy Lifestyles Committee was started through a grant from the University of Wisconsin through Cleveland State University to help identify priorities and identify funding to address the priorities in the area of nutrition, physical activity and tobacco use.
- ◆ Stark Parks was the primary contact for this committee and continues to chair this working group taking on the name **Live Well Stark County**.

Obesity and Healthy Lifestyle Choices

2nd Phase Strategy: Incorporate and increase wellness programs and policies within Stark County worksites.

Activities:

- ◆ Promote and recognize successful wellness programs, resources, ideas, concepts, initiatives, events and activities to Stark County worksites through a media campaign.
- ◆ Encourage Stark County worksites to adopt a model wellness policy or program.

Responsible Organizations: Live Well Stark County Committee, Stark Parks, Health Departments, Hospitals and Health Care Facilities, OSU Extension Office, Chambers of Commerce, Employers Health.

Live Well Stark County

Live Well Stark County's goal is:

To prevent heart attack, stroke, cancer, diabetes and other leading chronic disease-related causes of death or disability through a variety of "comprehensive policy, environmental, educational, programmatic, and, as appropriate, infrastructure" coordinated interventions to promote healthier lifestyles in Stark County, Ohio.

This Committee will focus on two main areas:

1. Development and implementation of the Stark County Health Improvement Plan in the area of nutrition and physical activity.
2. Promotion of healthy lifestyles in Stark County through the theme, "Live Well Stark County" in all sources of communication to encourage and support a unified effort for community-wide health transformation.

Obesity and Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Goal 3: Promote sustainable partnerships and programs for healthy lifestyles.

1st Phase Strategy: Increase awareness of opportunities for physical activity.

Activities:

- ◆ Collaborate with Stark Parks, recreation departments, work out facilities, YMCAs, city and area parks to assess the availability of and opportunities for physical activity within Stark County.
- ◆ Develop an inventory of physical activity programs, resources, ideas, initiatives, annual events and activities available to the community throughout Stark County.
- ◆ Promote physical activity programs, resources, ideas, initiatives, annual events and activities being implemented to the community through a media campaign.

2nd Phase Strategy: Increase access to and usage of physical activity opportunities.

Activities:

- ◆ Increase and promote the development of walkable communities, new playgrounds and parks, as well as, wheelchair accessibility to community stakeholders within Stark County.
- ◆ Identify financial support to improve low income and underserved populations access to available opportunities for physical activity.
- ◆ Research barriers prohibiting the usage of the available opportunities for physical activity specifically targeting low income and underserved populations.
- ◆ Promote access to and encourage the usage of the available physical activity programs, resources, ideas, initiatives, annual events, and activities through a media campaign.

Obesity and Healthy Lifestyle Choices



3rd Phase Strategy: Increase awareness of nutritious foods and healthy eating opportunities.

Activities:

- ◆ Collaborate with the Farmers Market Association, social service organizations, restaurant associations and convenient store owners to access the availability of nutritious foods and opportunities for healthy eating within Stark County.
- ◆ Develop an inventory of nutritious foods and healthy eating programs, resources, initiatives, events and activities available to the community throughout Stark County.
- ◆ Promote nutritious foods and healthy eating programs, resources, initiatives, events and activities being implemented to the community through a media campaign.



Obesity and Healthy Lifestyle Choices

4th Phase Strategy: Increase access to and usage of nutritious foods and healthy eating opportunities.

Activities:

- ◆ Encourage convenient store owners to increase the amount of fresh food offered to decrease the number of food deserts throughout Stark County.
- ◆ Encourage social service organizations to support, adopt and promote nutritional programs targeting low income and underserved populations.
- ◆ Promote access to and encourage the usage of the available nutritious foods and healthy eating programs, resources, ideas, initiatives, events and activities within Stark County to the community through a media campaign.
- ◆ Encourage more restaurants to provide nutritional information on menus.

What is a Food Desert?

It is an area defined as a *low-income census tract* where a substantial number or share of residents has *low access* to a supermarket or large grocery store:

To qualify as a "low-access community," at least 500 people and/or at least 33 percent of the census tract's population must reside more than one mile from a supermarket or large grocery store (for rural census tracts, the distance is more than 10 miles).*

There are five food deserts identified in Stark County; one in the city of Alliance and four in the city of Canton.

To locate Food Desert areas, go to:
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-desert-locator/about-the-locator.aspx>

*Cited from USDA.gov website

Recommendations: Work within the different sectors of the community to increase accountability for physical activity and healthy eating choices by addressing the following: knowledge, opportunities, motivation, utilization and sustainability. Develop and promote a map of Stark County listing the location, time/date of operation for all of the available opportunities for physical activity, nutritious foods and healthy eating throughout Stark County.

Responsible Organizations: Live Well Stark County Committee, social service organizations, Farmers Market Association, Health Departments, OSU Extension Office, Stark Parks, Stark County CHNA Advisory Committee.

Priority Two

Access to Health Insurance Coverage and Health Care

Goal 1: Promote and increase the usage of a primary care physician among Stark County residents regarding preventive health care and early interventions to identify chronic diseases.

1st Phase Strategy: Increase awareness of health care resources available within the community.

Activities:

- ◆ Promote, educate and encourage health care providers within Stark County to use the Stark County Health Care Resource Guide and 211 for medical information and patient referrals.
- ◆ Increase awareness of health screenings in the community through media networks and agency referrals and promote the usage of these screenings to high risk populations.

What is the Stark County Healthcare Resource Guide?

The Resource Guide has been developed to help Stark County residents find affordable health care options. The guide provides a comprehensive list of community providers of medical, dental, mental health, substance abuse, prescription and other services available throughout the County.

What is United Way's 2-1-1?

United Way's 2-1-1 is a free and confidential service, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. By simply dialing 2-1-1*, residents of Stark County can reach the Information & Referral Help Line and be directed to Health and Human Service agencies and programs. Linking residents to resources such as rent and utility assistance, food, health related services, homeless services, foreclosure information, senior services, family counseling, support groups and parenting information.

For more information on United Way's 2-1-1 go to:
www.uwstark.org/united-ways-2-1-1-helps

Access to Health Insurance Coverage and Health Care

2nd Phase Strategy: Promote, educate and encourage residents to properly use a primary care physician when seeking health care.

Activities:

- ◆ Promote and educate residents on the importance of practicing prevention techniques through a media campaign.
- ◆ Promote and encourage the distribution and usage of bus passes among health care providers and patients.
- ◆ Increase awareness to the community on the importance of meeting their basic health care needs, particularly the lower income and underserved populations through educational messages and/or workshops.

3rd Phase Strategy: Develop and promote the importance of using a Patient/System Navigator to access health care.

Activities

- ◆ Assess and develop a database of Patient/System Navigators within the health care system throughout Stark County.
- ◆ Organize and develop a coordinated system allowing Patient/System Navigators to communicate with each other to help patients access health care more successfully.
- ◆ Promote and encourage the health care system within Stark County to use a Patient/System Navigator.

2011 Stark County Health Needs Assessment

- ◆ The greatest proportion (31.3%) of individuals interviewed responded that availability of health care insurance was the greatest unmet need, followed by affordability of health care and health insurance (14.5% of respondents).
- ◆ Over 10% of persons interviewed indicated that there were medical services needed in the past year that they were unable to get.
- ◆ 13.3% of respondents indicated that they are without health insurance.

Access to Health Insurance Coverage and Health Care

What is a Patient/System Navigator?

Patient/System Navigators help patients and their families navigate the fragmented maze of doctor's offices, clinics, hospitals, out-patient centers, payment systems, support organizations and other components of the health care system. Services provided by patient/system navigators may vary, but often include:

- ◆ Facilitating communication among patients, family members and health care providers.
- ◆ Coordinating care among providers.
- ◆ Arranging financial support and assisting with paperwork.
- ◆ Arranging transportation and child care.
- ◆ Ensuring that appropriate medical records are available at medical appointments.
- ◆ Facilitating follow-up appointments.
- ◆ Community outreach and building partnerships with local agencies and groups.

*Patient/System Navigator definition used within the Medical Health Care Setting.

Recommendation: The Stark County Healthcare Resource Guide should provide a list of Patient/System Navigators found within the County. An electronic copy of the Resource Guide should be made available on all health care provider websites. Health care providers without a Patient/System Navigator should train an individual on the process to enable communication between health care providers and patients. Use the Cancer Patient Navigation System as a model.

Responsible Organizations:

Hospitals and Health Care Facilities, Access Health Stark County, Health Departments, Stark County Medical Society, Prescription Assistance Network (PAN).

Access to Health Insurance Coverage and Health Care

Goal 2: Promote awareness of and support for a Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) and the collaboration/coordination of a Health Information Exchange (HIE) within Stark County.

1st Phase Strategy: Increase awareness of and support for a RHIO and HIE among Stark County hospitals, physician offices and community clinics.

Activities:

- ◆ Share all collected/gathered information regarding RHIOs/HIEs to community health care stakeholders and the Access to Health Insurance Coverage and Health Care Committee members.
- ◆ Identify and develop a list of individuals within each Stark County health care entity responsible for information technology (IT).

What is a RHIO?

Sometimes a Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) and a Health Information Exchange (HIE) are used interchangeably. A RHIO is generally developed to affect the safety, quality and efficiency of, as well as, access to health care through the efficient application of health information technology.

What is a HIE?

A HIE is the mobilization of health care information electronically across organizations within a region or community. The goal of a HIE is to facilitate access to and retrieval of clinical data to provide safer, more timely, efficient, effective and equitable patient-centered care.

Health care systems are highly complex, fragmented and use multiple information technology systems incorporating different standards resulting in inefficiency, waste and medical errors. As a result patient medical information is often unable to be shared with members of the health care community.

Access to Health Insurance Coverage and Health Care

2nd Phase Strategy: Increase the collaboration and coordination of a HIE to mobilize the health care information electronically throughout Stark County.

Activities:

- ◆ Encourage IT managers/executives within hospitals, physician offices and community clinics to begin discussing the organization of a HIE within Stark County.
- ◆ Encourage IT managers/executives to research, identify, create and provide a set of guidelines/standards for organizing a HIE within Stark County to all hospitals, physician offices and community clinics.

Recommendations: Implement a HIE seminar for Stark County hospitals, physicians offices and community clinics to share and discuss ideas, concepts, resources and guidelines/standards for localized and central patient information (HIE) where all medical entities work together in an organized system.

Responsible Organizations:

Hospitals and Health Care Facilities, Access Health Stark County, Health Departments, Stark County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Advisory Committee, Stark County Medical Society, PAN.



Access to Health Insurance Coverage and Health Care

Recommended Goal: Reconvene in 2013 to address the sustainability of Stark County's programs, resources and funding.

Recommended Strategy: Increase and promote the importance of community sustainability. The Access Committee should work with other local agencies and organizations to create a strategic plan in order to help the community work together as a unified entity to enable sustainability.

Recommended Activities:

- Assess the programs, resources and availability of funding throughout Stark County.
- Promote and encourage teamwork between health care organizations and health care efforts within the community.
- Develop a strategic plan to help the community come together as a unified entity to enable continued sustainability.

Responsible Organizations: Hospitals and Health Care Facilities, Access Health Stark County, Health Departments, Stark County Medical Society, PAN, Community Stakeholders.

Priority Three Mental Health Wellness

Goal 1: Promote and encourage mental health wellness and substance abuse prevention throughout Stark County.

1st Phase Strategy: Increase awareness of mental health wellness promotion and substance abuse prevention programs, activities, initiatives, events, resources, screenings and examinations available within Stark County to community partners and residents.

Activities:

- ◆ Collaborate with county entities, worksites and community organizations to assess and identify wellness promotion and prevention programs, activities, initiatives, events, resources, screenings and examinations available and being implemented to Stark County residents.
- ◆ Develop an inventory of and a reporting mechanism for model wellness promotion and prevention programs, resources, activities, initiatives, events, screenings and examinations available throughout Stark County in order to update and share data regularly with community partners.
- ◆ Identify funding opportunities and collaborations for future wellness promotion and prevention programs, resources, activities, initiatives, events, screenings and examinations for mental health and substance abuse.

2011 Stark County Health Needs Assessment

- ◆ The Mental Health and Recovery Services Board (MHRSB) reports the top diagnostic groups for both adults and children. The Stark MHRSB top three diagnostic groups for adults during 2011 were depressive disorders (2,965 cases), bipolar disorders (2,478 cases) and alcohol use disorders (1,599 cases). For children the top three diagnoses were adjustment disorders (1,172 cases), conduct disorders (1,135 cases) and attention-deficit/disruptive disorders (752 cases).
- ◆ According to ODH the actual suicide rate for Stark County for 2006 to 2008 was a rate of 10.8 per 100,000 people.
- ◆ The Ohio Youth Survey reported that 26.6% of students felt so sad or hopeless almost everyday for two weeks in a row that they stopped doing normal activities.

Mental Health Wellness

2nd Phase Strategy: Increase access to and usage of mental health wellness promotion and substance abuse prevention programs, resources, activities, initiatives, events, screenings and examinations available to Stark County residents.

Activities:

- ◆ Develop and promote a county-wide awareness media campaign educating residents on the importance of mental health wellness promotion and substance abuse prevention.
- ◆ Promote access to and encourage the usage of wellness promotion and prevention programs, resources, activities, initiatives, events, screenings and examinations available within Stark County to the community by encouraging county entities, worksites and community organizations to promote emotional health, reducing the likelihood of mental illness and substance abuse.

Recommendations: Implement a mental health wellness seminar for county entities, worksites and community organizations to share and discuss promising mental health wellness promotion and substance abuse prevention programs, concepts, ideas, resources, activities, initiatives, events, trainings, classes and the successful outcomes.

Work with universities/colleges and faith-based populations to increase awareness and usage of mental health wellness promotion and substance abuse prevention programs, resources, activities, initiatives, events, screenings and examinations available to Stark County residents.

Responsible Organizations:

Mental Health & Recovery Services Board, ESC, Chambers of Commerce, Employers Health, Health Departments, Hospitals and Health Care Facilities, Jails/Correction Facilities, Stark County Family Council and social service and/or behavioral health organizations.



Mental Health Wellness

Goal 2: Increase mental health and substance abuse awareness and education throughout Stark County.

1st Phase Strategy: Encourage mental health and substance abuse awareness and education to the community.

Activities:

- ◆ Collaborate with county entities, worksites and community organizations to increase the understanding of mental and substance use disorders and the many pathways to recovery.
- ◆ Help people recognize mental and substance use disorders and seek assistance with the same urgency as any other health condition and make recovery the expectation.
- ◆ Promote and encourage county entities, worksites and community organizations to become trained and educated on the importance of trauma-informed care.

What is Trauma-Informed Care?

Trauma-informed care is an approach to engage people with histories of trauma. It recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma has played in their lives. Trauma-informed care is based on an understanding of the triggers of trauma survivors, so these services and programs may be more supportive.

2nd Phase Strategy: Decrease the negative stigma associated with mental health and substance abuse.

Activities:

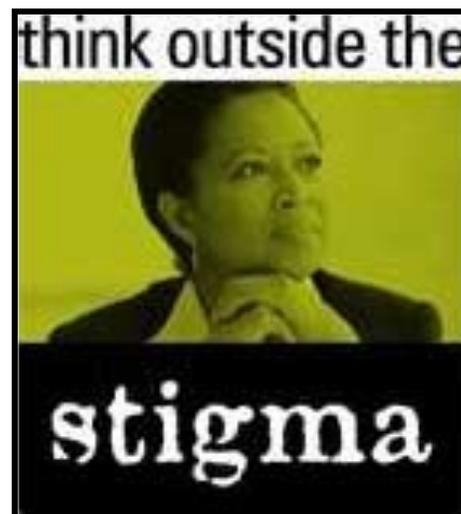
- ◆ Promote and encourage stigma reduction through community programs, resources, activities, initiatives, events, trainings and classes available to county entities, worksites and community organizations.
- ◆ Develop and promote a stigma reduction media campaign to decrease the fear and discrimination surrounding mental illness.

Mental Health Wellness

Recommendations: Implement a mental health wellness seminar for county entities, worksites and community organizations to share and discuss promising media campaigns and the successful outcomes.

Work with universities/colleges and faith-based populations throughout Stark County to decrease the negative stigma associated with mental illness and increase awareness that mental health is healthcare.

Responsible Organizations: Mental Health & Recovery Services Board, ESC, Chambers of Commerce, Employers Health, Health Departments, Hospitals and Health Care Facilities, Jails/Correction Facilities, Family Council and social service and/or behavioral health organizations.



Mental Health Wellness

Goal 3: Increase awareness and usage of mental health and substance abuse treatment opportunities available throughout Stark County.

1st Phase Strategy: Promote and encourage mental health and substance abuse treatment programs, activities, initiatives, resources and classes to Stark County residents.

Activities:

- ◆ Collaborate with county entities, worksites and community organizations to assess and identify mental health and substance abuse treatment programs, resources, activities, initiatives and classes available for and being implemented to Stark County residents.
- ◆ Develop an inventory of and a reporting mechanism for successful mental health and substance abuse treatment programs, resources, activities, initiatives and classes available within Stark County to county entities, worksites and community organizations, partners and residents.

2nd Phase Strategy: Increase access to and encourage usage of mental health and substance abuse treatment programs, resources, activities, initiatives and classes available to Stark County residents.

Activities:

- ◆ Encourage the usage of mental health and substance abuse treatment programs, resources, activities, initiatives and classes available within Stark County through a media campaign to promote the importance of recovery.
- ◆ Promote, encourage and implement treatment trainings to county entities, worksites and community organizations on relevant mental health issues.
- ◆ Identify funding opportunities and collaborations for future programs, resources, activities, initiatives, events, trainings and classes for mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Mental Health Wellness

3rd Phase Strategy: Develop and promote the importance of using a System/Patient Navigator to access mental health care.

Activities:

- ◆ Assess and develop a database of System/Patient Navigators within the mental health care system throughout Stark County.
- ◆ Organize and develop a coordinated system allowing System/Patient Navigators to communicate with each other to help individuals access mental health care more successfully.
- ◆ Promote and encourage the mental health care system within Stark County to use a System/Patient Navigator.

What is a System/Patient Navigator?

System/Patient Navigators engage, educate and offer support to individuals, their family members and caregivers in order to successfully connect them to culturally relevant health services, including prevention, diagnosis, timely treatment, recovery management and follow-up. System/Patient Navigators work with the patient to develop and implement an individualized action plan, that includes:

- ◆ Coordinating physician visits and other medical appointments.
- ◆ Arranging transportation to and from medical services.
- ◆ Accessing and maintaining insurance coverage.
- ◆ Providing education about medical conditions and recovery strategies.
- ◆ Facilitating communication with health care providers.
- ◆ Maintaining telephone contact between patients and health care.

*System/Patient Navigator definition used within the Behavioral Health Care Setting.

Mental Health Wellness

Recommendations: The Stark County Healthcare Resource Guide should provide a list of System/Patient Navigators found throughout the County. An electronic copy of the Resource Guide should be made available on all health care provider websites. Health care providers without a System/Patient Navigator should train an individual on the process to enable communication between health care providers and the individual seeking services.

Work with universities/colleges and faith-based populations within Stark County to increase awareness to the community that mental health and substance abuse treatment works and individuals recover.

Responsible Organizations: Mental Health & Recovery Services Board, ESC, Chambers of Commerce, Employers Health, Health Departments, Hospitals and Health Care Facilities, Jails/Correction Facilities, Access Health Stark County, Family Council and social service and/or behavioral health organizations.

A Healthy Community Is A Strong Community

The health of the community affects everyone. Research on wellness shows that individuals who take care of themselves and make healthy lifestyle choices are healthier, more productive, have fewer absences from work and make fewer demands from medical services. Wellness is a positive approach to living - an approach that emphasizes the whole person - mind, body and soul. Everything individuals do, think, feel and believe has an impact on their state of health. It is never too late to make healthier choices in life!

***The Stark County Community Health Improvement Plan may be found on the Stark County Health Department's website:
www.starkhealth.org***

For more information, contact:

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