Healthy Hunterdon:
Motivating Culture Change for a Healthier Tomorrow

[Diagram showing various action teams and stakeholders related to health initiatives in Hunterdon County.]
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What is the Hunterdon County Partnership for Health?

Dear Hunterdon County Community, New Jersey Health Initiatives and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation,

It is with much excitement and pride that we present the NJHI: Building a Culture of Health NJ, Round 2 Grantee Blueprint for Action. Did you know that since 1995, a group of organizations have been working behind the scenes to ensure Hunterdon County is the healthiest it can be? The Hunterdon County Partnership for Health (PFH) comprises nearly 60 community organizations and individual residents who all have the common goal to see a thriving, healthy Hunterdon.

The vision of PFH is simple: Every individual of Hunterdon County has a state of optimal physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being, which allows the individual to pursue the most fulfilling life possible, and not merely a life absent of disease or infirmity.

PFH includes representation from leaders across diverse community stakeholder groups including healthcare, government, law enforcement, business, education, public health, social services, faith-based organizations and members of the community.

“I have been active in the Partnership for Health since being a family physician at the Phillips-Barber Family Health Center in Lambertville and moving to Hunterdon County,” explains Dr. Cindy Barter, Chair of the Partnership. “Engaging with our many dedicated community organizations has helped me learn that a community can work together to create a healthy environment. It has been a rewarding process.” she adds.

Ongoing major coalition initiatives identify community health needs and what actions can be taken to improve health and wellness across the county. Over the years the PFH has addressed issues ranging from smoking cessation and drug addiction, to community access to parks and healthy foods, to raising awareness of the importance of annual wellness visits for seniors.

The current focus of PFH is promoting a healthier weight by encouraging healthy choices with a variety of programs focused on healthy behaviors, healthy weight and eating, mental health and stress management and access to health-focused programs.

Scattered throughout this Blueprint is “The Voice of our Community.” We invite you to listen and partner with us on this journey; Healthy Hunterdon- Motivating Culture Change for a Healthier Tomorrow.

- Hunterdon County Partnership for Health Leadership Team
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Executive Summary

After conducting a Community Health Needs Assessment in 2016, the Hunterdon County Partnership for Health reached a collaborative consensus to focus on Healthier Weight. Three Action Teams were created to devise goals and objectives incorporating healthier weight as a mechanism to achieve improved community health and wellness. The Action Teams are: Access and Transportation, Healthy Behaviors and Mental Health. In addition, the Partnership formed a new Communications Action Team in recognition that increasing the emphasis on quality communications and including the incorporation of social media would support action team objectives. As a recipient of the NJHI Culture of Health grant, action team leaders have been trained and received coaching and leadership skills from the Center for Creative Leadership. The grant leadership team has also focused on an enhanced governance structure for the organization that maximized new collaborative leadership skills.

These skills are incorporated into decision making for the Action Teams, Leadership Team and the Executive Committee. NJHI funds are allowing us to add capacity and enhance our collaborative impact on our community, ultimately maintaining Hunterdon’s status as the healthiest county in New Jersey as defined by the County Health Rankings.

Hunterdon County Partnership for Health History & Vision

The Hunterdon County Partnership for Health, Hunterdon’s “healthier community” initiative, was co-founded in 1995 by Robert Wise, President and CEO of Hunterdon Healthcare System, John Beckley, former Hunterdon County Health Department Director and Bernadette West, PhD, then Executive Director of Local Advisory Board (LAB) III, a Central New Jersey regional health-planning organization.

The Partnership for Health is a countywide initiative that involves nearly 60 community service providers/agencies sharing a common interest in promoting and improving the health, well-being and quality of life for Hunterdon County residents. This is reflected in the Partnership for Health’s vision statement of achieving health as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the recently developed mission.

Vision: “Every individual of Hunterdon County has a state of optimal physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being which allows the individual to pursue the most fulfilling life possible, and not merely a life absent of disease or infirmity.”

Mission: The Hunterdon County Partnership for Health is a community collaboration dedicated to achieving optimal health for all residents.

Social Determinants of Health: Health, and what influences, it has evolved with the recognition of the social determinants of health. It is now understood that health is not a result of just one factor but is shaped, promoted and protected by a multitude of variables in our environment including where we live, work, learn and play. These factors include income, education, housing, access to quality healthcare and to healthy food, employment,
transportation, family and social support, among others. The County Health Rankings are based on a model of population health that emphasizes many factors that, if improved, can help make communities healthier places to live, work, learn and play. These indicators have been at the forefront of the PFH work and will continue to be a model for our Blueprint for Action.

Areas identified in our CHNA, survey and other data sources have led us to concentrate our resources on the starred areas. In 2019 we will develop our next CHNA and re-direct our resources if necessary to meet the best health outcomes for our residents; this Blueprint will be a “living” document, changing as Hunterdon’s needs change.

Community Demographics: What does our community look like?

Hunterdon County consists of 26 municipalities over 437 square miles with a population of approximately 126,000 people. Hunterdon County is the third-least densely populated county in NJ with higher than state average median income. However, a large variation exists across the 26 municipalities. Hunterdon is made up of predominantly white, non-Hispanic residents; the second largest race/ethnicity is Hispanics. Our elderly population (65 years and above) is increasing.

Do you know ... that although 94% of the residents in Hunterdon County have health insurance, high deductible plans present real challenges for some of our residents who chose to delay treatment due to high out of pocket costs?
ALICE Population: *Who needs our help?*

ALICE is our neighbor who is Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (or retired) and living on the edge. ALICE may be a college student, a recent grad who is working and paying off tuition debt, a young family struggling to pay for child care so they can work, the underemployed working less than full-time and without benefits, active duty military personnel, a family caregiver, or a senior on a fixed income struggling with health issues. Bottom line is that ALICE individuals and families living in Hunterdon County struggle every day to make ends meet. Yet ALICE works in jobs that are essential to the county’s economy. It costs about $81,000 for a family of four to barely get by in Hunterdon County because of the high cost of living and services. ALICE struggles to pay for essentials, has little or no savings, and must make tough choices.

**What are our Community Health Priorities?**

Based on all of the Community Health Needs Assessment data, future Partnership work was encouraged to consider each of these cross-cutting issues when identifying potential interventions and community improvement activities: Healthy Weight, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Access to Care and Transportation, Chronic Disease, Preventive Care, and Healthy Behaviors and Lifestyle.

**Addressing Obesity- Why Focus on Healthier Weight?**

Review and analysis of all data helped members of the Partnership for Health identify healthier weight, as the priority health issue in the community. Action teams, comprised of individuals with the expertise, passion and knowledge of the identified priority health issue, have been formed. Action team members are tasked to define attainable objectives and develop clear strategies under the overarching goal of “healthier weight,” to address this health issue. All of this will be captured in this Blueprint for Action and HMC’s Community Needs Implementation Plan (CNIP). In addition, action team members will discuss and identify broad measures to track and measure both short-term and long-term progress and success in addressing obesity, and moving residents toward a healthier weight in Hunterdon County.

*Do you know ...* that in our local primary care network 66% of patients age 18-64 are overweight or obese?
Join us as the work continues: PFH Action Teams

Overarching Goal: Increase the number of Hunterdon County residents with a BMI within normal range as defined by the CDC every year.

The Healthy Behaviors Action Team is a diverse sub-group of the PFH with backgrounds that encompass areas related to physical activity, food distribution, healthcare, education, transportation, chronic disease management, business and prevention. This enabled us to develop objectives that spread across schools, food access (pantries, retail, farm markets, gardens) and the workplace; in this way we can reach all ages and socio-economic groups.

Team Leaders: Colette Camisa, Prevention Resources & Kristen Heimall, HC- YMCA

Team Partners: Hunterdon County Schools and School Nurses, Flemington Area Food Pantry, Chamber of Commerce, YMCA, Hunterdon Healthcare, Prevention Resources, SNAP-Ed, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Hunterdon/Mercer Chronic Disease Coalition, Shoprite of Hunterdon County, HART, American Heart Association of NJ, Hunterdon County Public Health Nurses, Fisherman’s Mark.

Schools  According to The 2014 US Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, routine physical activity is not just about exercising to improve outward appearance or reducing body mass index (BMI). Exercise reduces risk of developing chronic diseases, boosts bone health, improves mental health and well-being and improves cognitive and academic performance. (Alliance, 2016) With this in mind it seems prudent to support school-age activity programs.

Team Objective: Increase participation in the no-cost YMCA 7th grade membership program by 10% each year starting in 2017 until the program is at maximum capacity.

Indicators of Success: Increase access to physical activity. Decrease risk for chronic disease. 
Strategies:

1. **Short term**: Communicate YMCA 7th grade free membership opportunity to pediatric and family practices throughout Hunterdon County by including information in the 6th and 7th grade wellness visit packets as part of the standard of care. *Update – Hunterdon Pediatric Associates is now distributing the YMCA flyer to all families at their 6th and 7th grade wellness visits.*

2. **Short term**: YMCA to attend two middle school functions per school year to promote program. *Update- 3/29/17 Clinton Township Middle School – Marijuana Presentation – distributed 25 brochures.*

3. **Intermediate term**: As part of the YMCA’s yearly marketing plan they will attend at least two 7th grade Back-to-School Nights per year and two middle school programs to promote the program. PFH member organizations will support these efforts; this will be ongoing for as long as they offer the program.

4. **Intermediate term**: Action Team member will attend at least one School Nurse Health Advisory or Professional Practice meeting each year to educate the school nurses and promote the program.

5. **Ongoing**: Participants and families of the “Weigh to Go” nutrition and physical activity education and weight loss program offered by Hunterdon Healthcare in collaboration with the YMCA will be offered a no-cost two month membership to the YMCA.

“I love going to the YMCA and shooting hoops!”

- Nick, 7th grade student
According to The Food Trust, an overwhelming body of evidence over 20 years indicates that accessing affordable, high-quality, and healthy food is a challenge for many families. In Hunterdon County, Latinos represent our largest minority population and although we are frequently referred to as the “Healthiest and Wealthiest” county, we know that pockets of poverty exist. “Living closer to healthy food retail is associated with better eating habits and decreased risk for obesity and diet-related disease.” (Trust, 2013)

**Team Objective:** Expand the use of the NORWESCAP Backpack Program by two schools every year starting in 2017 until all qualifying students in Hunterdon County have access to food over the weekend.

**Indicators of Success:** Increase access to healthy food. Decrease food insecurity rate in school-age children.

**Strategies:**

1. **Short term:** Contact school nurses to evaluate which schools have students who would qualify for this program by December, 2017.

2. **Intermediate term:** Help facilitate educating the school nurses on the paperwork and process for getting students enrolled in the program including forms translated to Spanish by October, 2018.

3. **Long term:** Create an ongoing list of barriers to using this program for schools and parents and work with community partners to eliminate them. (delivery and pick up of backpacks, storage, allergies, language barriers, stigma etc.) by 2019.

**Voices of the Community**- There are over 50 children in this Elementary school alone that are provided free breakfast and lunch five days per week. Are these the only meals that a child eats during the week? My guess is that for some the answer is “yes”. With this program, we will be in the perfect position to provide sustenance to children whose families have difficulty securing food. Offering food consistency helps us gain trust to help address larger problems that could easily be solved with the help of other community programs that are already in place. – Susanna Cunniff, Elementary School Nurse
According to the Centers for Disease Control, gardens are collaborative projects on shared open spaces where participants share in the maintenance and products of the garden, including healthful and affordable fresh fruits and vegetables. Gardens may offer physical and mental health benefits by providing opportunities to: eat healthy fresh fruits and vegetables, engage in physical activity, skill building and creating open spaces, and decrease violence in some neighborhoods, and improve social well-being through strengthening social connections.

Team Objective: Teach students the importance of healthy choices and nutrition by supporting the development of school gardens.

Indicators of Success: Increase the access and consumption of healthy foods. Life-long skills will be learned. Increase physical activity.

Strategy:

Short term: Provide funding to at least one school per year from 2017 to 2019 in Hunterdon County to create and maintain a school garden; teaching the students the Farm to Table concept.

Long term: Support the development of gardens in every Hunterdon school by 2027.

The Voice of our Community-

“Once the garden is established, we will expand the educational component to teach our clients the basic tenets of urban gardening where you can take inexpensive materials (such as hay bales) and grow food in a small space.”

- Roni Todd-Marino,
  Fisherman’s Mark
**WORKSITE WELLNESS**

**Team Leaders:** Kim Blanda, Hunterdon Healthcare & Chris Phelan, Chamber of Commerce

Historically, health-related programs while helpful for some people may not have the reach and impact of policy, system and environmental change. In order to encourage our residents to make healthier choices, we need to reach our residents where they spend a considerable amount of time. According to Gallup, in 2014 employed individuals spent an average of 47 hours per week working. Assisting worksites to create an environment that supports a “Culture of Health” within the workplace may help facilitate healthier choices by employees.

**Team Partners:** Hunterdon Prevention, Hunterdon Cardiovascular Associates, HC -YMCA, NJCEED, Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce, Hunterdon Healthcare, Hunterdon Center for Diabetes.

**Team Objective:** Increase the number of companies registered and actively participating in the Healthy Hunterdon Workforce Initiative (HHWI), the collaboration between the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce and the Hunterdon County Partnership for Health by 20 companies in 2017 and 10% in 2018 and 2019.

**Indicators of Success:** Increase healthy options at work-sponsored meeting/events. Decrease stress in the workplace. Increase physical activity throughout the work day. Increase number of program sponsors. Increase policies supporting a Culture of Health in the workplace.

**Strategies:**

1. **Short term:** Host quarterly HHWI Champion meeting to keep current members engaged and maintain an 85% satisfaction rate or higher on yearly survey.

2. **Short term:** Provide research-based material on maintaining a healthy lifestyle to the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce for distribution to its members.

3. **Short term:** Recruit both Chamber and non-Chamber member worksites.

4. **Short term:** Publish health information in Chamber newsletter monthly and post on the Chamber website.

*Do you know ...* that sitting is the new smoking? Get up and move!
5. **Intermediate term:** Host a yearly event to promote walking that coincides with the American Heart Association’s, National Walking Day. *Update: 4/5/17 – approximately 60 individuals from 10 companies attended the organized walk while others walked individually and sent in pictures.*

6. **Intermediate term:** Partner with Hunterdon County Parks and Trails system to encourage use of local resources.

7. **Intermediate term:** Assist workplaces to develop policies specific to providing healthy options at work-related functions/meetings.

8. **Long term:** All Hunterdon businesses will participate in the Healthy Hunterdon Workforce Initiative and be designated, a “Healthy Workplace”.

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**Members of the Healthy Hunterdon Workforce Initiative:**

Celebrating National Walking Day.

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**The Voice of our Community** - “This initiative has helped me promote better eating habits for my staff, provide healthy branch snacks and become aware of moving throughout the day.”

- Jackie Stutz, Investor’s Bank

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**FOOD PANTRIES & FARMER’S MARKETS**

Food banks play a critical role in maintaining and improving the health of many people. They serve the most vulnerable members of communities, many of whom are at high risk for diet-related chronic health conditions. People who experience food insecurity have poorer diets than the general population and are more likely to be overweight or obese. (Health, 2012)
**Team Objectives:** Increase the donation of healthy foods to the food pantries throughout Hunterdon County by 10% each year starting in 2017.

Educate food pantry clients about healthy eating and use of the available fresh produce.

Determine if food pantry clients have a family physician and provide them with a physician guide.

Educate food pantry clients how to grow fresh produce using container gardens.

**Indicators of Success:** Increase the consumption of healthy food. Increase access to healthy food. Increase access to healthcare. Decrease food insecurity. Adoption of healthy food policies.

**Strategies:**

1. **Short term:** Assist Hunterdon County food pantries with healthy donation policies (no soda, candy etc.) by June 2018.

2. **Short term:** Post food pantry “needs list” monthly on PFH Facebook page by June 2017.

3. **Intermediate term:** Meet with food pantry managers to strengthen relationships between pantries and the PFH member organizations. Overcome the silos that many of the pantries say exist between them by December 2018.

4. **Intermediate term:** Create a resource list of food education resources and hold educational demonstrations at larger food pantries by end of 2018 (educational sessions by Dec. 2017)

5. **Short term:** Incorporate the question, “Do you have a family physician?” in the Flemington Food Pantry registration process and encourage other pantries to do the same by Dec. 2017.

6. **Short term:** Currently Incorporating a question about food insecurity in the Hunterdon Healthcare Practice Physician’s workflow to understand the scope of this problem in Hunterdon County.

7. **Intermediate term:** Work with local clubs and organizations that run food drives to set policies for “Healthy Food Drives” and provide lists of items for donation that are low sodium, low sugar, low fat and high fiber by 2018.

8. Write letters of support for healthy donations to the Community Food Bank of New Jersey using the strength and voice of the PFH members. *Update– letter dated 4/30/17 and signed by 16 people including community members, PFH members, President of Hunterdon Healthcare System, NORWESCAP, Food Pantry Director and Hunterdon County Freeholder.*

10. Intermediate term: Provide food pantry clients with the materials to create a container garden to provide sustainability to healthier food choices by June 2018.


The Voice of our Community—
“With the current success of our produce distribution program, offering clients the opportunity to grow personal gardens and share with one another is the next step in sustainable healthy living.”

– Kristin Heimall, HC-YMCA

Team Leaders: Rose Puelle, PhD, Hunterdon Healthcare Partners & Karen Widico, Prevention Resources

Do you know … that in the Hunterdon primary care network 18% of patients ages 18-64 and 16% of those age 65 and older had a diagnosis of depression or anxiety in 2015?
Over the course of nine monthly meetings in 2016 and early 2017 the Mental Health Action Team reviewed information about the relationship between mental health and healthy weight. Those discussions, research and input from community health professionals led us to focus on stress as a major health concern. It is our conclusion that individuals experiencing high levels of stress often engage in eating behaviors which lead to unhealthy body weight. (Why stress causes people to overeat., 2012) In addition, there is clear evidence that individual’s inability to develop appropriate coping mechanisms is highly correlated with substance use and misuse. (Sinha, 2001)

The stress response occurs as a result of tension between one’s reaction to a difficult situation while unable to manage or resolve the situation. The ability to cope with adverse conditions is dependent on one’s resources and skill sets in both recognizing the impact of stress on health and utilizing available resources. (Terzian, 2010) Indicators of stress, particularly in children, include changes in mood and behavior. Physical signs of stress can include symptoms such as abdominal pain and sleep problems. Emotional signs may include irritability, hostility (acting out behaviors) and feelings of hopelessness (depression), as well as the behavioral changes of poor eating habits and excessive weight gain or loss. Disadvantaged populations such as those lacking economic resources including sufficient nutrition or living in social isolation can be more vulnerable to the impact of stress.

Healthy coping mechanisms can include access and use of social support, behavioral techniques such as mindfulness and relaxation exercises, physical activity, and involvement in constructive activities such as hobbies, music or participation in charitable organizations.

The team identified the following factors as relevant to addressing this issue.

- Elderly in our community can be isolated and suffer from depression
- Students are “stressed” and schools would benefit from stress reduction programs
- People may not recognize the signs and symptoms of stress
- There are health consequences of stress including the

The Voice of our Community- “As a pediatrician, I see how stress adversely affects children’s functioning, including: school performance, social interactions, sleep and eating habits. I believe that stress reduction should be a priority and should be included in all school systems curricula. Hunterdon County’s Partnership for Health is working on doing this. I am excited to be part of this process.” – Mitchell Clarin, MD
potential for substance abuse

- Our local resources may not be fully utilized
- There may be little understanding on the importance of appropriate coping mechanisms
- Individuals may not recognize the need to seek professional counseling

Therefore, the team concluded to focus on two strategy areas. First, high priority should be given to fund an established, evidence based program such as Mind Up that facilitates social emotional learning and could incorporate a train-the-trainer component. (Schonert-Reichl, 2015) There was also consensus that multimodal communications strategies about stress, coping mechanisms and available local resources were needed.

**Team Objective:** Increase the use of self-regulatory and appropriate coping mechanisms to reduce stress and increase proactive social behaviors in children in Hunterdon County schools.

**Strategies:** Fund a stress recognition and management one-year demonstration project in at least one Hunterdon County school district that includes a train-the-trainer component.

**Indicators of Success:**

**Short-term Outcome** – Provide a mini-grant of up to $10,000 for a demonstration Mind Up project in at least one Hunterdon County elementary school district.

**Short-term Outcome** – Mutually agreed to measures established to evaluate demonstration project.

**Intermediate Outcome** – Presentations or a video describing the demonstration project and its outcomes to be available to school districts and the Partnership for Health and other community organizations.

**Long-term Outcome** – 20% of Hunterdon County schools adopt curriculum addressing stress and coping mechanisms.

**Team Objective:** Increase community awareness of the signs of stress, appropriate coping mechanisms and resources in the community.

**Strategies:**

1. Design and/or distribute a brochure and/or poster for individuals and families that highlight the signs and symptoms of stress. Information on coping mechanisms or resources should also be available.

2. Create social media communications concerning the signs/symptoms of stress and the importance of coping mechanisms that includes information on local resources.

**Indicators of Success:**

**Short-term Outcome** – Brochure content and design completed by December 2017.
**Short-term Outcome** – Brochure added to primary care group EHR document library in 2017 and consistently distributed by pediatricians and family practices.

**Long-term Outcome** – Digital brochure available to community groups that can be customized for specific stressor situations.

**Short-term Outcome** – Stress-related potential social media content provided to the Communication Committee at least six times during a calendar year where Google analytics can be utilized.

**Intermediate Outcome** – Create a 12-month calendar of stress related communications that can be utilized annually by the Partnership for Health or other community groups.

**Intermediate Outcome** – Develop communications that provide resources targeted toward at least 10 stressor events or occurrences that can be utilized by multiple agencies.

**Long-term Outcome** – Increased use of local resources that address mental health.

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**The Voice of our Community** - “Coping and anxiety.”

Hunterdon County school nurses answer to the question, “What is the number one student problem in your school?”

- School Health Advisory

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**Do you know ...** Did you know that 9% of Hunterdon County residents report experiencing frequent mental distress?

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**Access & Transportation Action Team**

**Team Leaders:** Karen DeMarco, County Health Department & Dr. Cindy Barter, Hunterdon Medical Center

The Access and Transportation Action Team was created in alignment with the 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment update, merging two previously existing Action Teams. The Action Team has approximately 12 members. The membership of the group is widely varied in regards to professional service areas, ranging from food pantry management, to direct care provider, to transportation specialists.
Team Partners: HART, NJ CEED, Hunterdon Medical Center, Hunterdon County Health Department, Fisherman’s Mark, Hunterdon Helpline, United Way, and a local Chiropractor.

**Objective:** Create awareness among providers of programs (not simply healthcare partners) regarding barriers of utilization of their programs.

**Strategies:**

1. Survey to evaluate and inventory access barriers of community program utilization. *Update 3/2017- A survey was created using SurveyMonkey, and a presentation was provided to the entire PFH membership regarding the Action Team’s objective and strategies. The survey was then distributed to member agencies for completion.*

2. **Short term:** Begin by inventorying programs offered by PFH member organizations, gathering information about access barriers and program successes.

3. **Intermediate term:** From the results of the survey, develop a barrier/solution checklist (topics may range from transportation, cost, time of offering, etc.)

**Challenges:**

Although the focus group process conducted in 2016 encouraged merging the Access to Healthcare and Transportation Action Team, it is challenging to define an Action Team mission that can satisfy the concerns and utilize the expertise of team members. Some members are in favor of separating into two Action Teams, and this position will be introduced to the Team at the next meeting. The Action Team chairs are utilizing Direction, Alignment, and Commitment tools in evaluating the plans for the group.

If separated, programmatic ideas suggested for the Access to Healthcare Action Team include a cultural competency training for “front-line” health center staff, LGBT inclusion training for healthcare personnel, and opportunities to engage residents in physical movement. The Transportation partners suggest creating a voucher program partnering with Uber and Lyft for ease in traveling throughout the county. Members agree that the single Access and Transportation Action Team may have too broad of a focus to make an impactful change for Hunterdon County residents.

**Do you know ...** that you can schedule the LINK to take you to your doctor’s appointments for a nominal fee? **Call 1-800-842-0531**
As Walter Isaacson argues in his book *The Innovators*, in order to innovate, it’s not enough to just come up with big ideas; you also need to work hard to communicate them clearly. (Isaacson, 2014) The Partnership for Health has been in existence since 1995 yet if you asked the majority of our Hunterdon County residents they would more than likely say they have never heard of our coalition. We recognize that we need to change this. How many more strategic partnerships could we form if more people knew about our work? The Communication Action Team is a small multi-sector sub-group of the Partnership for Health. Our goal is to promote the activities of the PFH Action Teams, nurture community partnerships and engage our residents. This action team will also serve as a resource as we continue to develop our governance model. The team has already developed a press release for our community, organized a social media presence and written a social media policy. We are looking forward to sharing the PFH with Hunterdon County!

**Team Partners:** Hunterdon Healthcare, Prevention Resources, Hunterdon County YMCA, NJ CEED, United Way of Hunterdon County, Biomedical Science Academy.

**Objectives:**

1. Create, adopt and update as needed a Social Media Policy for use by the PFH. *Update- PFH adopted its new Social Media Policy developed by this team in March 2017.*

2. Increase website hits by 15% annually as measured through Google analytics.

3. Increase social media presence by increasing “likes” by 15% annually measured by likes vs. annual comparison.

4. Increase PFH membership by 10% annually as measured by completed membership agreements. Begin 2018.

5. Strengthen and nurture current membership as measured by annual 85% satisfaction survey. Begin 2018.

6. Promote PFH activities through print, radio and other media quarterly.

**Indicators of Success:** The PFH brand and initiatives will be familiar to Hunterdon County residents. The people of Hunterdon County will join our PFH.
Strategies:

1. Post quarterly blogs to NJHI website.

2. Post weekly (if not daily) to PFH Facebook page.

3. Report action team progress to full membership at quarterly PFH meetings.


5. New Healthy Hunterdon Chamber radio show hosted by the PFH Coordinator will be another venue for building a Culture of Health in Hunterdon County.

Other Community Engagement Projects:

**Intermediate Goal: Community Chalkboard Project**: This project is based on a project done in Carroll County, Maryland. The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County wanted to get the “voice” of their residents about what a healthy community should look like. They created chalkboards that they placed at strategic locations throughout the county. On the chalkboards they stenciled, “A Healthy Community is...” and residents could use the provided chalk to fill in the blank. In this way The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County was able to engage more of their residents than in prior assessment years. The Partnership for Health would like to use this model to engage our residents for our 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment. Students at Hunterdon County Polytech may assist with building the chalkboards and community partners will “host” the boards and collect the responses. Carroll County was able to capture thousands of responses using this method and we hope to do the same.

**Intermediate Goal: PFH Membership Packet**: As the PFH Leadership Team continues to develop the PFH governance structure, the Communications Action Team will assist with producing a PFH membership packet. This will help us to be able to engage new members and clearly outline membership expectations.
Ongoing Long Term Goal: Community Meetings: The PFH Communications Action Team would like to host at least one community engagement meeting every year. In this way we can promote the PFH, connect with new potential members and form strategic partnerships.

Issue Watch Teams

The 2016 CHNA identified substance abuse and Latino health disparities as two of the priority health issues in Hunterdon County. The PFH has requested that two of their member coalitions who are actively working to make a positive impact on these issues report into the PFH quarterly. In this way we can keep abreast of their progress and support their work.

Safe Communities Coalition

The Safe Communities Coalition (SCC) based on extensive assessment is working to reduce 30 day rate use of underage drinking, Rx, marijuana and heroin abuse within the county. According to NJSAMs, Hunterdon County has almost double the state average of those in treatment due to alcohol, and while our rate of opioid overdoses are lower statewide, those in treatment for opioids are at state averages. Utilizing environmental strategies, SCC’s target is to reduce access and availability while increasing the perception of harm through education and awareness around these substances. Additionally, SCC created the S.T.A.R.T. (Steps to Action Recovery and Treatment) program to connect those most vulnerable and in great need to services, which has now gone state-wide.

Latino Access Coalition

The Latino population in Hunterdon County is our largest minority group. Many of our Latino residents face challenges with education, jobs, housing, legal assistance, healthcare, language barriers and immigration status. The Latino Access Coalition’s purpose is two-fold; first to help Latinos in need and second to promote culturally competent care. Currently our coalition is working on three initiative areas: Latino/Business Management/Leadership Training, Mentoring Program, and the launch of a digital resource platform for information pertinent to our Latino residents. The Mentoring Program introduces English as a Second Language (ESL) students to various career opportunities and helps assist them with navigation into institutes for higher learning post-high school. Through the creation of a website and centralized digital hub of information the coalition will facilitate access to community resources and up to date information on the coalition’s initiatives.
Expanding The Partnership: PFH Youth Coalition

Team Leaders: Janet Acosta, NJCEED, Donna Badgwell, HC Vocational School District Instructor & Kim Blanda, Hunterdon Healthcare

Engaging motivated, passionate, driven young minds can only help to drive our coalition to success. The development of a youth division of the Partnership for Health has long been a goal. Adults can feel threatened because the information gap that can exist between the generations but who knows better how to reach teens than teens themselves? Rather than be intimidated we should embrace our differences and learn from each other. Giving teens permission to be the experts on subject matter is an excellent and affirming way to engage their interest and get them to participate. Teens have a tremendous knowledge of social media and electronic communication. Who best to help the PFH expand our reach and engage a younger audience and members?

Our young members could also assist us with low-cost projects. Students at Hunterdon County Polytech are looking for “real” projects to practice skills like graphic design, carpentry, health promotion and video production. These are all needed services by the PFH and could be provided by the students for the nominal cost of supplies.

Team Partners: Biomedical Science Academy students, Hunterdon County Polytech Career & Technical School students, Hunterdon Healthcare, NJ CEED *Our goal will be to open up the youth coalition to more Hunterdon County students in 2018.

Objective: Develop a Partnership for Health Youth Coalition and mentoring program.

Strategies:

1. Meet with the instructor of the North Hunterdon High School Bio-med program and Hunterdon County Polytech Nursing professor to vet interest in partnering on a youth coalition. *Update: Both North Hunterdon and Polytech are interested in forming a youth coalition with their students.

2. Discuss projects that coincide with PFH goals and objectives and the High School program’s curriculum. *Update: As part of a pilot, the North Hunterdon Bio-med students produced a video on making a healthy smoothie for the PFH. The students did an amazing job and are ready to shoot more videos. Please click this link to view video: PFH Youth Coalition Video

3. Design a mentoring program so that students can benefit from the vast resources and people available through the Partnership for Health. *Update: The PFH Coordinator was invited to
become a member of the North Hunterdon Bio-med Advisory Board. This will further our relationship with the students in this program and nurture our future healthcare professionals.

4. Engage students in creating governance and a youth leadership team for the youth coalition.

**Objective:** Engage students with skills that would enhance PFH initiatives while giving students real-life practice and application of their skills. Build PFH projects into the school curriculum.

**Strategies:**

1. **Short term:** Work with graphic design students to create PFH promotional materials by January 2018.

2. **Short term:** Students will design a logo for the youth coalition by May 2018.

3. **Intermediate term:** Investigate possible internships for students with PFH member organizations by Dec. 2019.

4. **Short term:** Students will create video snippets to promote the Partnership and all its’ initiatives. *Update- Biomed students created their first video for the PFH.*

5. **Intermediate term:** Work with carpentry students to design and build chalkboards for the “Chalkboard Project” which will be used to gather health assessment data throughout the county by January 2019.

**Future Direction - Sustaining the Partnership**

**Governance**

Since its inception, the Hunterdon County Partnership for Health has demonstrated success building a health-focused county coalition and implementing impactful programming. Currently, the PFH has an Executive Board comprised of six (6) members, representing the healthcare system, nonprofit organizations, and county government. Draft bylaws exist, however, they are not finalized and do not include details about approved budgetary expenditures, creation of subject-specific white papers, and public statements representing the PFH.

In order to create a framework that provides for collegiality among PFH members, but allow for growth, the Partnership will achieve the following goals:

1. The PFH leadership will evaluate the current governance structure and other jurisdiction models to determine whether adjustment of the PFH is beneficial. By June 2017.
2. The PFH governance structure developed and presented to the Executive Committee for comment. The governance structure will include: Vision, Mission, Objectives, PFH leadership structure, Membership, Decision-making processes, Budgetary issues/grant-readiness, Public/Risk Communication, Sustainability. By December 2017

3. PFH leadership will finalize and introduce governance structure to the entire PFH membership. By March 2018

**Our Position & Voice**

As our governance structure is solidified, it is the goal of our leadership team to achieve alignment of health related goals in publicly available position statements. These statements would address pressing health needs in Hunterdon County and will be designed to impact community leaders including elected officials. We will use leadership skills to align the collective input and shared outcome goals of the Partnership to influence health related policies in the public and private sectors. We hope to set the example and standard in Hunterdon County to use reliable and evidence based sources for information concerning health thus positively impacting the implementation of rational and effective health policies that address needs across race, ethnicity, gender, ability and income. Our initial goal is to issue at least two statements per year, beginning in 2018.

**New Jersey Health Initiatives, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant Opportunity:**

**Building a Culture of Health Leadership Team**

In 2016, the Hunterdon County Partnership for Health was awarded a four-year New Jersey Health Initiatives (NJHI) grant: part of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The NJHI leadership team includes PFH members: Dr. Cindy Barter, Kim Blanda, RN, BSN, Colette Camisa, Karen DeMarco, MPH, Rose Puelle, PhD and Freeholder, Suzanne Lagay, who serves as the team’s Coach. The team represents the Partnership from healthcare, government and non-profit sectors. The grant provides leadership training and access to subject-matter experts to “Build a Culture of Health” in Hunterdon County, with a focus on evidence-based and sustainable programming for the greatest community impact. In year one, the NJHI grant team participated in training opportunities and enhancing collaborative opportunities for the Hunterdon County Partnership for Health.

The training provided through the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) to the team is not traditional in terms of healthcare or public health material, rather much of the tools and time with CCL focused on members learning each other’s skills, abilities, and inspirations. In two
overnight, retreat-style meetings, team members got to know each other on both a personal and professional level. Taking the time to understand each other’s motivations and interests at the program’s inception created a sense of camaraderie and a safe environment to introduce and discuss programmatic initiatives.

The tools provided through CCL are instrumental in growing the Partnership and keeping a pulse on the needs of the membership, as well as the community as a whole. The NJHI Leadership Team is committed to sustaining the knowledge and spirit of the CCL tools and mission. With this in mind we have set the following goals:

1. CCL tools will be integrated into the PFH bylaws currently under development. Begin 2017.

2. Team will create a train-the-trainer program regarding CCL tools. Begin 2019.

3. Action team chairs will model CCL teachings in each of the action team meetings. Begin 2017 with current team while training new chairs who will eventually take over the lead on Action Teams by 2020.

4. CCL will be operationally implemented in NJHI Leadership Team meetings. Process and learning will be ongoing with a goal of end of 2018 for full implementation.

The foundation of the NJHI leadership trainings center on respect, and developing a meeting schedule and structure that considers each of the members of the group so that everyone is able to contribute. The NJHI Team developed a number of ground rules for the four-year grant. The Team meets at a minimum of once per month, and the group only meets if every member can be present. The team agreed upon a meeting format and team norms, developing a process for communication outside of meetings, decision making, conflict management and role identification. The Team includes at least one tool from the Center for Creative Leadership at each meeting to remind the group of their commitment, direction, and alignment with the mission “Building a Culture of Health for Hunterdon County.” The growth of the NJHI Team in less than a year’s time is tremendous, with an authentic level of communication that will spread to the broader Partnership for Health membership.

**Impact of Grant Funding on Action Teams**

As a recipient of the NJHI leadership grant, action team leads have been trained and received coaching in leadership skills. The grant leadership team has also focused on an enhanced governance structure for the organization that maximized new collaborative leadership skills.

These skills are incorporated into decision making for the Action Teams, Communications Committee, Leadership Team and the Executive Committee. NJHI funds are allowing us to add capacity and enhance our collaborative impact on the community.
**Healthy Behaviors Action Team:** The PFH wants to make the healthy choice the easy choice for all of our residents. Through the financial support of this NJHI grant our initiatives will increase healthy donations to our area food pantries, provide assistance with community gardens, support worksite wellness initiatives and reduce barriers to using a weekend feeding program for school-age children.

**Communications Action Team:** NJHI grant funding will allow the PFH to become more prominent in the community by enhancing our website, media presence, public service announcements, development of a youth coalition and mentoring program.

**Mental Health Action Team:** The NJHI grant will fund a stress recognition and management one year demonstration project in at least one Hunterdon County school district that includes a train-the-trainer component.

**Access and Transportation Action Team:** As a newly formed Action Team, the NJHI grant is providing direction and alignment for the team’s objectives. As a result of NJHI tool implementation, the Action Team is considering splitting into two separate Teams to adequately address the needs of Hunterdon County residents. Potential funded projects include creation of a voucher program for medical appointments, cultural and capability training for front-line medical workers/medical professionals, program promotion and information access videos and written materials.

**Hunterdon County Partnership for Health Members**

- American Heart Association
- Anderson House
- Base Camp 31
- Easter Seals- New Jersey
- Cancer Coalition of Hunterdon and Mercer
- Calvary Episcopal Church
- Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
- Delaware Valley Family Health Center
- Fisherman’s Mark
- Flemington Area Food Pantry
- HART Commuter Information Services
- Harvest Family Success Center
- Hunterdon Care Center
- Hunterdon Cardiovascular Associates
- Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce
- Hunterdon County Residents
- Hunterdon County Department of Human Services
- Hunterdon County Division of Health
- Hunterdon County Division of Senior, Disabilities and Veterans Services
- Hunterdon County Economic Development
• Hunterdon County Medication Access Partnership
• Hunterdon County Medical Reserve Corps
• Hunterdon County Office of the Prosecutor
• Hunterdon County Parks and Recreation
• Hunterdon County Public Health Nursing and Education
• Hunterdon County Superintendent Office
• Hunterdon County YMCA
• Hunterdon Drug Awareness Program
• Hunterdon Helpline
• Hunterdon Healthcare System
• Hunterdon HealthCare Partners
• Hunterdon Medical Center
  • Center for Healthy Aging
  • Center for Nutrition and Diabetes Management
  • Home Health Services
  • Hunterdon Behavioral Health
  • HMC Foundation
  • Hunterdon Regional Cancer Center
• Hunterdon/Mercer Regional Chronic Disease Coalition
• Hunterdon Pediatric Associates
• Hunterdon Regional Community Health
  • Hunterdon Hospice
  • Visiting Health and Supportive Services
  • Hunterdon SafeLine
  • Hunterdon Integrative Medicine
• Hunterdon and Mercer County Regional Chronic Disease Coalition
• Jersey Community Acupuncture
• Latino Access Coalition
• NJ Cancer Education and Early Detection
• NJ SNAP-Ed
• Phillips Barber Family Health Center
• Prevention Resources, Inc
• Raritan Valley Community College
• Readington Township Board of Health
• Rutgers Cooperative Extension Services
• Safe Communities Coalition of Hunterdon and Somerset County
• State of New Jersey- Department of Education
• Shoprite of Hunterdon County
• United Way of Hunterdon County
• Zufall Health
From our members: Creating a Culture of Health in Hunterdon County is important because...

“...it is the best way to reduce chronic diseases.”

“... when everyone else is being healthier it is easier to do the same.”

“... we want to continue to be the healthiest county in New Jersey.”

“... a healthy today yields a healthy tomorrow.”

“... health isn’t something you achieve, it’s something you nurture, and true health is only possible in a nurturing community.”

“... health and wellness can’t be a fad or part-time effort. It requires a culture, a way of life, to ensure that we achieve the highest level we can.”

“... a healthy community is a thriving community!”

“... as a bedroom county our population carries the Culture of Health throughout the State and beyond. Moreover, with our agricultural and recreation focus, we have what’s needed to support our citizens’ well-being and those of visitors to our beautiful, natural surrounds. We are, after all, NJ’s Healthiest County!”

“... we need to put our health and safety as top priority.”

“... it affects our children and our county’s future.”

“... everyone benefits when they have the opportunity to make healthy choices, whatever their circumstances.”

“... more people need to feel that healthcare and personal steps to wellness are accessible to them.”

“... a healthy, educated workforce is one of our most valuable assets.”

“... all residents deserve an equitable opportunity to live longer, stronger, and happier lives!”

“... together we can make it happen for all!”

Our Sincerest Thanks, The Hunterdon County Partnership for Health
References


