

Resources & Opportunities for A Healthier Denver:

Building an Ideal System for Promoting Health
In Denver

*An Assets Report on What's Currently Happening to Promote Denver's Health,
and Some Opportunities for Change*

*Based on Denver Healthy People 2010's Recommendations for an Ideal Health
Promotion System for Denver's People*

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A Report of the Denver Healthy People 2010 Initiative

April 2003

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INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2002, Denver Healthy People 2010 released a health promotion needs assessment on how to make Denver a healthier place for all, “Healthy Denver 2010–What We Know”. It concluded with a set of actions recommended for creating an ideal health promotion system for Denver’s people. Denver Healthy People 2010 is about to develop an action plan for making Denver a healthier place for all, and as a start to the process, Denver Healthy People 2010 has developed this report—a scan of what groups are already working in the recommended action areas, and a look at some great ideas for action tried elsewhere.

To generate the information contained here, staff facilitated Denver Healthy People 2010 members in a brainstorming session, solicited input via the member e-mail list, interviewed key leaders, employed an internet search, and researched models and “best practices” from the field. Finally, The April 2003 Healthy People 2010 General Committee meeting, attended by 22 participants, was dedicated to reviewing a draft of this report and providing input for the final document. In particular, participants identified potential roles for Denver Healthy People 2010 within each recommended area.

Due to the plethora of wonderful players dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Denver’s people, they are not all mentioned here. An effort was made to highlight those discovered whose impact stands out as important to our planning for action. Although individual groups are often active across the spectrum of recommended areas, they are highlighted in the area(s) of their predominant thrust. We welcome input about any key groups we may have omitted. Please contact Stacey McConlogue at 720-865-5407 or stacey.mcconlogue@ci.denver.co.us with any comments or concerns.

OVERVIEW

The System

The recommendations of Denver Healthy People 2010 for building an **IDEAL HEALTH PROMOTION SYSTEM** for building a healthier Denver are as follows:

- **COLLABORATION** –Improve communication, collaboration and synergy between those working to improve the health of Denver, including traditional and nontraditional partners, especially community members.
- **DATA** – Build better data systems to capture all of Denver’s health data from public and private sources.
- **EDUCATE LEADERS & THE PUBLIC** –Raise awareness among leaders and the public about ways to improve health.
- **FINANCIAL RESOURCES** –Increase financial resources dedicated to health promotion and disease prevention.
- **MULTI-DIMENSIONAL HEALTH PROMOTION EFFORTS** –Use multi-dimensional health promotion approaches that use proven health promotion methods, and address change on multiple fronts including policy change, people’s economic, social and physical environments, as well as behavior change.
- **ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES** –Address the root issues of poor health, including **social, physical, psychological and environmental issues**. **Income and education** are by far the strongest predictors of a person’s future health, in good part, due to the difference a good income has on a person’s physical and social environment. However, **environmental issues, such as availability of healthy food choices and social support for eating well**, affect people at all income levels. For example, when communities are built to allow easy walking to schools, stores, work, and for pleasure people are more likely to be physically active.

Denver Healthy People 2010 members identified two possible actions for the group to take on that relate to root causes: Advocate for a **livable wage/income** for every person in Colorado; Educate all Coloradans to know **how to impact the political system**.

- **ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE** –Make access to health care, health promotion and disease prevention available and affordable to *all*.

DENVER'S HEALTH PROMOTION SYSTEM

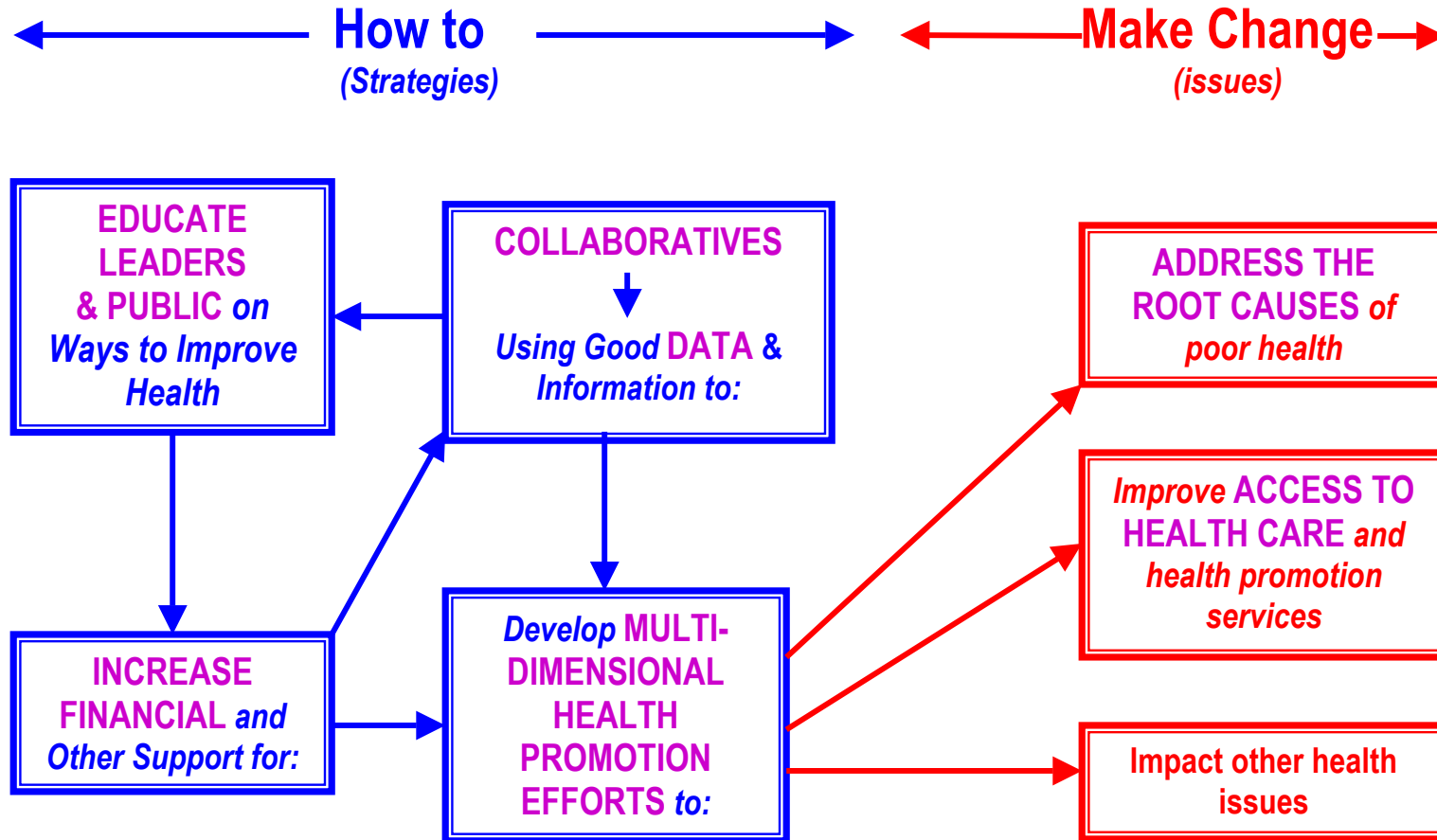
These recommendations can be visualized as critical pieces of the **HEALTH PROMOTION SYSTEM** needed to advance the health of all Denver's people:

Strong **COLLABORATIVES**, utilizing good **DATA** and information, can **EDUCATE LEADERS AND THE PUBLIC** on ways to improve health. This generates support for health promotion actions. In particular, **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**, as well as general support for policy change, programs, and other actions that lead to a healthier place for all. **COLLABORATIVES** can then garner the resources, and tap the data and information, to launch quality, **MULTI-DIMENSIONAL HEALTH PROMOTION EFFORTS** to improve health. These initiatives use quality health promotion methods, and address change on several fronts including policy change, people's economic, social and physical environments, as well as behavior change. Denver Healthy People 2010 highlighted several areas of change of particular interest: initiatives that **ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES** of poor health and those that improve **ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE** and health promotion services.

See Figure 1

Figure1

Creating an Ideal System for Growing a Healthier Community



What's Going On?

There are real opportunities for building bridges between health partners and those who work to address the underlying causes of poor or good health—the root causes embedded in people’s social and physical environments—and to create significant improvement in Denver’s health. Without education on the value of health promotion initiatives, such as programs or policy change efforts, there will not be adequate support, financial or otherwise, for these and other initiatives. Although there is tremendous interest in providing health care access and a highly organized system to advocate for it, health care access still eludes us, perhaps because the political will is not there in the public at large.

COLLABORATION & ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES

There are many collaboratives in Colorado and Denver dedicated to improving health, mostly organized around a specific issue or population. There is some activity to connect these groups into looking at the larger picture. The Colorado Minority Health Forum plays this role around health disparities of people of color in Colorado. Still, there is tremendous potential for impacting the bigger picture of public health by strengthening common goals and partnerships.

There are also many collaboratives focused on improving the root causes of poor health such as housing, income, education, providing support for young children, etc. However, the two systems (those advocating for improved health issues and those advocating for impacting the root causes of poor health) have not come together to make the argument for addressing root causes in order to improve health. Many communities outside Colorado have successfully impacted the root causes of health in partnership with traditional public health partners by utilizing Health Impact Assessments (HIAs). These reports analyze the direct impact of a particular policy or practice in terms of the resultant effect on health. San Francisco successfully used HIAs to pass legislation and make policy changes such as passing a living wage, establishing bus routes to provide easy access from low-income neighborhoods to grocery stores and health services, switching to low emissions buses and other initiatives.

IMPROVING DATA

A number of groups have launched or are about to launch efforts to improve data and data access relevant to all who are concerned about improving health (i.e. Denver Benchmarks).

EDUCATING LEADERS & PUBLIC ABOUT IMPROVING HEALTH

Beyond a recognized need for preventive health care services, there is not a lot of support in the community at large, or in local and state leadership, for taking actions to improve the public’s health. Much of this stems from a lack of understanding about the underlying causes of poor or good health in a community, and from a general belief that there is no real evidence that various programs and policies designed to keep people healthy are effective. There is, of course, strong and growing evidence of the effectiveness of various interventions.

Leaders and the public are highly interested in having healthy communities. A well-designed social marketing communications campaign has potential for educating the public and leaders about the many benefits that investing in quality health promotion would bring to the community, including the cost effectiveness of controlling health care expenses. The potential for change in this arena is increased support for policies and programs that promote health, including financial support.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The financial environment for supporting health promotion—both for traditional programs and for the myriad health and social programs that support people and address the root causes of health—has suffered dramatically in the past year. Programs that promote health and address root causes are being cut in a big way, just as the people at the bottom of the economic ladder are losing income.

One potential avenue for increasing resources is by encouraging employers to implement quality worksite wellness programs, as these have proven positive effects on employee health and save employers health care, and other costs.

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL HEALTH PROMOTION EFFORTS

Recent funding cuts have had a devastating impact on quality multi-dimensional health promotion efforts designed to protect people's health. The Colorado Tobacco Initiative, which was launched with Tobacco Settlement Funds and is just now moving into full swing, was just cut dramatically from the State budget. Newly planned initiatives face limited sources for support.

Research shows that effective health promotion programs are designed and executed by using solid health promotion theory, quality information analysis, and proven health promotion intervention methods. The most effective efforts are also comprehensive: change is supported within all levels of barriers (environmental as well as personal), and support for change is pervasive for target audiences. Collaboratives are excellent vehicles for implementing changes within these multi-level venues.

The efforts with the highest potential for impact are those that tap into people's interests. New initiatives should be planned around themes that resonate with people's concerns. **Denver's people are interested in many root causes of health:**

- **clean, safe neighborhoods**, with low crime, little substance abuse, effective, unobtrusive traffic
- affordable **housing, employment, low poverty**
- quality, culturally accessible **education** for all ages
- affordable **food** and other **services** in their neighborhoods
- eliminating **unsafe family situations** such as domestic violence, substance abuse
- support for **parents**.
- **information** and help on how to keep healthy
- **discrimination** and cultural barriers
- **preserving neighborhoods**, building community cohesion
- **seniors and youth**
- involvement in **community decision-making**.
- **pregnancy, violence, substance abuse** (other people's), access to culturally appropriate **health care, pollution**.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE & HEALTH PROMOTION

Health care access is of paramount importance to the community and to health leaders, and a strong system of advocates and organizations (i.e. Colorado Coalition for The Medically Underserved) has been active in working on this issue for some time. However, there is no similarly organized effort around access to health promotion services. Washington State was able to reach the majority of its low-income pregnant women with personalized health education sessions by passing legislation that allowed these services to be paid for by Medicaid.

Potential Roles for Denver Healthy People 2010

In reviewing the scope of these existing groups and activities, Denver Healthy People 2010 participants identified some potential Denver Healthy People 2010 roles: It could increase collaboration, linking efforts and groups, creating new partnerships, helping to identify joint priorities and to influence policy change, especially in efforts to address root causes of poor health. It could provide leadership to increase awareness about the value of health promotion (both financial and quality of life), and could advocate for increased funding, increased health promotion services and for worksite wellness programs. It could ensure collection of data critical for building a healthier Denver.

COLLABORATION

Improve communication, collaboration and synergy between those working to improve the health of Denver, including traditional and nontraditional partners, especially community members.

Assets & Opportunities

There are many groups that have linked partners in efforts to improve health. In particular, these tend to focus around a specific health issue or population. For example, the Colorado Diabetes Advisory Council, the Colorado Lead Coalition, the Colorado Coalition For Medically Underserved, the Asian Pacific Development Center, and the Colorado Healthy Families Coalition. Within these groups there are varying degrees of engagement of community members, and there are varying degrees of collaboration with non-traditional health partners.

Community involvement is a critical piece for ultimate success of health related initiatives, and there are essentially two ways of going about it: 1) establish an issue and find those interested in the area; 2) do grass roots organizing and take actions based on the interests that evolve from the participants. Around health issues, most efforts are organized in the first way. There are a few significant efforts that are organizing in the latter way, and not focusing on health in particular, for example, Metropolitan Organizations for People (MOP) and Making Connections.

In general, overall linking of information between these various efforts isn't as strong, and the connection between the 'root causes of health' and resulting health consequences hasn't been emphasized. One exception is the Colorado Minority Health Forum. There is emerging interest among community leaders and members who are engaged in addressing root causes such as cultural issues, education, housing, in looking at health and at keeping people well. There is an opportunity to identify these non-traditional partners and bring them into the process of improving health for all in Denver.

Some Great Groups

Criteria:

- Broad, multi-issue focus
- Degree of communication produced
- Degree of collaboration generated
- Degree to which 'nontraditional health partners have been engaged (partners not primarily focused on health)
- Degree of involvement of community members

The Colorado Minority Health Forum (CMHF), with support from the Colorado Turning Point, has provided a venue for a variety groups with concerns about health issues of minority populations to learn about the 'big picture', developing an understanding of the root causes of health, and learning how to eliminate health disparities by race/ethnicity. CMHF provides a critical communication mechanism via a weekly electronic newsletter that helps bridge groups, activities, opportunities and information. Most of the current newsletter recipients are in traditional health fields. Many of them have strong connections to community members. CMHF has not become involved in active community organizing efforts.

The Denver Metro Black Church Initiative links community members through churches with traditional health partners for health screening, and with health promotion partners such as Colorado on The Move for physical activity. It also connects some partners that address the root causes of poor health. The Initiative does this by helping member churches launch health screening, Colorado On the Move walking programs, programs for youth and other quality of life areas.

Coloradans Working Together To Prevent AIDS (CWT) –CDC funding for HIV/AIDS prevention required that there be strong community involvement in the development of a plan for how their resources were spent. CWT utilized model community engagement and collaborative planning to bring a group normally on the fringes of decision-making into the drivers seat on efforts to prevent HIV/AIDS.

Community Involvement Groups:

Denver is blessed with many neighborhood based groups and organizations that have successfully engaged residents. There are two strong groups active in Denver that are employing community organizing and leadership development methods to engage neighborhood residents in taking action in their communities: the Metropolitan Organizations for People (MOP) and Making Connections. These groups are focused on addressing root causes: education, supportive communities for children, etc. in low or moderate income neighborhoods.

- **Metropolitan Organizations for People (MOP)**, a faith based Denver metro area affiliate of the Pacific Institute for Community Organization, provides community building through leadership development and promoting positive change in low-to moderate-income communities. MOP works through local organizing committees, which use dialogue to create opportunities for individuals to respond to the needs of their families and participate in the improvement of their community. One project is the Northeast Denver Parent Organizing in Education Initiative (NEDPOE) where parents of Manuel High and its feeder schools are organizing for change.
- **Making Connections** is an Annie E. Casey Foundation initiative in 22 cities, including Denver, which brings people in neighborhoods together to make communities and families more supportive of kids.
- **Many neighborhood groups–i.e. Cole Neighborhood Alliance** has successfully organized neighborhood members and organizations to develop a plan for Cole that addresses health and quality of life issues such as safety, education, and housing. They have worked successfully on environmental issues and restorative justice. –i.e. **Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods, Inc.(CHUN)** organizes community participation in events and action, such as The People’s Fair, that build community and quality of life for the Capitol Hill Neighborhood.

Great Ideas: (best practices/research)

The National Turning Point, started in 1997, is an initiative of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Its mission is to transform the public health system in the US by making it more community-based and collaborative by increasing collaborative leadership capacity across sectors and at all levels. Collaborative leadership is used to its fullest potential to achieve policy and systems change that maximizes the public's health.

The San Francisco Department of Environmental Health—brought together traditional and non-traditional partners, including a number of city services such as transportation, human services and planning as well as local businesses, to see how they could improve health in the Bayview Hunter’s Point neighborhood, a low-income neighborhood in San Francisco. They succeeded in establishing a new bus line to retail food and hospital sources, deployment of clean emission buses, building code revisions, training for child care providers, public building and street renovations, and a new public health resource center. They also did something unusual to increase the availability of healthy food sources: they arranged for a health food chain to stock neighborhood liquor stores with healthy food.

Colorado Center for Healthy Communities, San Luis Valley Community Connections organized under the Healthy Communities Initiative. They utilized extensive communications systems (e-net, newsletter, bulletin boards, local newspaper and word-of-mouth) to engage collaborative action by

many partners. They established staffing to provide facilitation, technical assistance and other support to organizations trying to improve community well being. Recently, they successfully organized to keep a foreign company from purchasing a San Luis aquifer.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Activity

Over the past two years, Denver Healthy People has developed a collaborative that includes traditional and non-traditional health partners. It has links through its members to community members and is working closely with Denver Great Kids Head Start and others to involve parents and grandparents from the Enterprise Community into its Planning for Action process this spring.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Potential Role

Linking organizations.

DATA

Build better data systems to capture all of Denver's health data from public and private sources

Assets & Opportunities:

Great things are happening for Denver in this arena! At the state level, Colorado Health Institute will soon be launched, and Rocky Mountain United Way "211" is being developed. Denver Benchmarks is in the process of setting "benchmarks", guiding measures of community well being, for Denver.

All of these efforts will result in ongoing, better identification of what data need to be collected in the future to best illuminate where we are as a City in terms of supporting improved health and how well we are working to further this goal. Some questions for Denver include: Are needed data sources appropriately specific to Denver, to Denver neighborhoods? Is the right Denver data being collected to tell us what we need to know in order to guide action resulting in better health?

Some Great Groups

Criteria:

- Access to data that is in a 'useable' format for community members and leaders to take action to improve health.
- Local (i.e. neighborhood) level data.

Denver Benchmarks has involved some of the best health and quality of life data people and community leaders in establishing key health and quality of life measures for Denver and in designing a data warehouse that will "democratize" data, making it accessible to all who wish to move Denver towards these benchmarks. There will be a focus on neighborhood data development.

Piton Foundation has established an easy to use web-based data system that provides education, quality of life, and other data by neighborhood for Denver. It is partnering closely with Denver Benchmarks.

Rocky Mountain United Way "211" information hotline for locating services and volunteer opportunities will soon be launched. Community residents and those in the helping professions often voice a need for easy access to information about services for those in need, health services and those that help people maintain well being in their lives. This project will fit the bill, at the touch of a telephone button.

Colorado Health Institute This nonprofit corporation will soon be launched and will serve as the state's center for health data resources and analysis. In addition to being a data clearinghouse, it will analyze health information to address important issues about the state's overall health and health systems.

COHID is an on line data-base of health data searchable by state and county level. It provides easy access to data compiled by the **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)** and some other data sources at the state and county levels.

Great Ideas: (best practices/research)

All of the groups above have based their initiatives on successful models elsewhere.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Activity

Denver Healthy People established a web site www.denvergov.org/hp2010 that contains a database of links to data available on the national, state and Denver level for the Healthy People 2010 goals and objectives. This year, Denver Healthy People will be partnering with the Denver Public Libraries to

develop a web site for the library that provides access for community members to electronic information on how to make their communities and themselves healthier, and to improve its web site targeting professionals as well as closely link and coordinate the sites.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Potential Role

Ensure collection of specific data that is identified as critical for guiding steps towards a healthier Denver.

EDUCATION

Raise awareness among leaders and the public about ways to improve health

Assets & Opportunities:

Beyond a recognized need for preventive health care services, there is not a lot of support in the community at large, or in local and state leadership, for taking actions to improve the public's health. Much of this stems from a lack of understanding about the underlying causes of poor or good health in a community, and from a general belief that there is no real evidence that various programs and policies designed to keep people healthy are effective. There is, of course, strong and growing evidence of the effectiveness of various interventions.

Another barrier is the perception that public health promotion initiatives are trying to force behavior change in areas that should be people's individual choices. Of course, many policies that promote health are enforcement—for example, driving and alcohol blood levels—but the vast majority of effective approaches are not. Much of this perception has been built by a history of health promotion programs that were not developed using quality, health promotion and communications methods: for example, relying heavily on negative or judgmental messages, or developing messages without a clear understanding of the attitudes and barriers of the target group. Historically, prevention communications have often been designed without employing the methods of how people learn best or make changes in their lives.

Leaders and the public are highly interested in having healthy communities. A well-designed social marketing communications campaign has potential for impact, with messages and stories that relate to the feelings and attitudes of the audience, tailored to address their perspectives, and open new ways of seeing value of investing in nurturing community well being. Leaders need to emerge as role models of healthy living.

Some Great Groups

Criteria:

- Increased awareness of the public or leaders about policy or other changes that lead to improved community health.

Colorado Turning Point & Colorado Minority Health Forum have provided extensive education on health disparities and root causes of poor health via reports, media, presentations, electronic network, member meetings and network, and through an annual Healthy People 2010-Health Disparities conference.

Health Care Access Network, including Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved and other partners. Together with Robert Wood Johnson Foundation these partners recently hosted a visible forum in Denver, and provided information for the public, during the "Insure the Uninsured Week". These partners have been very active in educating the public and leaders about the value of preventative health care services and how to make needed changes.

The Colorado Center for Healthy Communities is the coordinating and policy arm of a statewide coalition of 15 local healthy community initiatives. The Center provides research, analysis and information on matters of community health and builds partnerships to foster healthier communities. The Center is also part of an international effort of healthy cities and communities and is a member of the National Coalition of Healthy Cities and Communities. It acts as an information clearinghouse, hosts statewide conferences and forums where groups can learn about other successful programs, provides professional facilitation services, policy analysis, etc., and promotes the value of healthy communities work to state and local leaders.

Local Foundations such as Rose Community Foundation, The Colorado Trust, Caring for Colorado have done much to educate leaders and the public on health and well being issues.

Great Ideas: (best practices/research)

The Prevention Institute at www.preventioninstitute.org/ is a national non-profit that advocates for prevention by working to build critical mass: achieving greater understanding of and support for primary prevention in key institutions and the population at large. They advance policies and programs by uniting the health interests of private organizations and federal, state and local governments through educational briefings, policy research and forums.

The California Center for Public Health Policy at www.publichealthadvocacy.org/ raises awareness about public health issues and mobilizes communities to promote the use of effective policies. Their initial priority issues are child nutrition and fitness, health disparities, universal access to health care, and public health infrastructure.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Activity

Denver Healthy People has provided education on how to make Denver a healthier place through its development of a network of partners, through its collaborative needs assessment process and report, other reports, the web site, press releases, presentations, technical assistance, etc. It worked in partnership this year with the Colorado Minority Health Forum on the Health Disparities Conference, which focused on how to address root causes of poor health.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Potential Role

Publicly answer the question, "Why be healthy?" Answer with stories that people can relate to and understand.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Increase financial resources dedicated to health promotion and disease prevention

Assets & Opportunities:

Denver has available the usual sources of financing for health promotion projects—local and national foundations, local, state and federal funding streams, private giving, etc. However, all of the monies from these sources have been dramatically reduced over the past two years. The Federal government has shifted existing resources for grants to promote community health and well being into its Faith Based Initiative, which provides funding, primarily for churches, to do health care outreach, health promotion and initiatives that address root causes (i.e. youth initiatives).

In addition, funding for health care—including preventative health care services—has been cut dramatically, at both federal and local levels. As the economy has floundered, the numbers of uninsured rose, dramatically increasing demands on those providing health care to uninsured and low-income populations. Often, this squeeze means cuts of health care provider's health promotion programs to pay for direct care.

In recent years, there has been one truly new funding resource: the Tobacco Settlement monies. Unfortunately, in Colorado these funds have recently been cut from tobacco interventions to shore up the State general fund.

An unexplored avenue to increase resources for health promotion is “selling” investment in health promotion to save money down the line in health care costs, as well as other costs related to poor health outcomes. Some key targets of this kind of advocacy include employers, as well as government and elected officials, who are currently concerned about health care costs. A few groups are doing this at the national level (see below). There are well-documented cost savings in areas such as health care insurance, absenteeism and productivity that are connected to model employee wellness programs. There is also considerable evidence for the cost effectiveness of various health promotion programs, policies, and procedures that would appeal to government.

Employers represent a potential new source of support for health promotion via their own investment of resources into employee wellness programs. They are very concerned about the cost of health care and with productivity issues. Some potential partners for this would be the various Chambers of Commerce, business groups, etc.

Many individual groups search for grants from sources outside Colorado. However, the match between groups with the capacity and desire to do good work, and appropriate grants to support their action often isn't made. Finding potential resources in a timely manner is resource intensive—the information is not readily available and there ends up being considerable duplication of research effort by the many groups.

Some Great Groups

Criteria:

- Degree to which new resources for health promotion have been generated for Denver's benefit.

The Tobacco Master Settlement provided a different source of funding resources for health promotion: litigation. This funding has provided Colorado, including Denver, with the launch of an excellent tobacco health promotion initiative. It has also paid for other health promoting initiatives, including the Nurse Home Visitors program that serves new mothers and their children. The funding from the settlement for health promotion has recently been cut to offset the State budget deficit.

Metro Denver Black Church Initiative- Whereas most sources of government funding for health promotion has decreased dramatically, Federal funding of for faith based initiatives has grown, and

Metro Denver Black Church Initiative has tapped these for Denver's benefit. This initiative helps churches improve the well being of their communities, through developing their capacity to launch and run programs like health screening, physical activity, youth programs, etc.

Great Ideas: (best practices/research)

Health Promotion Advocates at www.healthpromotionadvocacy.org/ utilizes research and collaboration to advocate at the nation's Congress for increasing health promotion in order to reduce medical costs, improve the quality of life and enhance productivity. They are currently focusing on advocating for funding for health promotion research, and for funding to disseminate information on health promotion and what works.

Partnership for Prevention at www.prevent.org/ is a national non-profit that develops and advances policies and programs by uniting the health interests of private organizations and federal, state, and local governments. It has several initiatives including: The Congressional Prevention Coalition (CPC), a bipartisan group of legislators, whose goal is to raise the level of knowledge in the Congress about disease prevention and health promotion, and to identify strategies that can lead to a healthier nation; Partnerships for a Healthy Workforce (PHW) a group that helps employers understand how investments in worksite health promotion/disease prevention can benefit both employers and employees-a win-win proposition.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Activity

Denver Healthy People has developed and distributed a brief handout on cost effectiveness in health promotion, and done preliminary research into the cost effectiveness of worksite wellness programs. It has shared this information with the Denver City employee wellness program.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Potential Role

Provide access to information about funding sources. Leverage funding and needed 'match' funds through partnerships.

Make the argument about 'why' having healthy people is good, including the long term cost savings of health promotion. Advocate for worksite wellness programs.

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACHES

Use multi-dimensional health promotion approaches that use proven health promotion methods, and address change on multiple fronts including policy change, people's economic, social and physical environments, as well as behavior change

Assets & Opportunities

Research shows that effective health promotion programs are designed and executed by using solid health promotion theory, quality information analysis, and proven health promotion intervention methods. The most effective efforts are also comprehensive: change is supported within all levels of barriers (environmental as well as personal), and support for change is pervasive for target audiences.

Collaboratives are excellent vehicles for implementing changes within these multi-level venues. Pervasive changes are most likely to succeed if they are related to people's interests, and built on good data about the critical causes of poor health. Above all, people want better health, and want a city that supports it for all residents. They are open to learning about the links between their interests and public health information on how to create healthier communities.

Model health promotion practices use individualized and flexible approaches to reach people where they are: physically, culturally, and socially. Many small, community-based programs and organizations have provided critical settings for helping people make changes, and for involving them in efforts to create healthier communities. These channels for change are as critical, perhaps more so, than traditional mass media venues for improving public health.

Denver Benchmarks developed a summary of studies on the *interests of Denver residents* and found the following areas of interest:

- **clean, safe neighborhoods**, with low crime, little substance abuse, effective, unobtrusive traffic
- **affordable** housing, employment, low poverty
- quality, culturally accessible **education** for all ages
- affordable **food** and other **services** in their neighborhoods
- eliminating **unsafe family situations** such as domestic violence, substance abuse
- support for parents.
- **information** and help on how to keep healthy
- **discrimination** and cultural barriers
- **preserving** neighborhoods, building community cohesion
- **seniors and youth**
- **involvement** in community decision-making.
- **pregnancy, violence, substance abuse** (other people's), **access to culturally appropriate health care, pollution.**

Denver Benchmarks will be providing support to collaboratives and individuals to improve Denver's well being by providing information on 'best practices'—what's worked in other places.

Two statewide initiatives have had the capacity to launch comprehensive campaigns: Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Program (COPAN) and the State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (STEPP), The Colorado Tobacco Education and Prevention Alliance, and their partners.

COPAN and its partners have established a statewide plan to increase physical activity and healthy eating. It has implemented many steps to increase physical activity and is moving on actions to improve nutrition.

There is an opportunity in Denver to increase healthy eating by adding to existing efforts increased policy and environmental change components, such as changing policies about snacks and beverages in schools, or developing affordable grocery sources in low-income neighborhoods. Some potential partners for this kind of effort include: CSU Cooperative Extension, the Colorado Nutrition Network, the Denver Metro Nutrition Network and Denver Urban Gardens.

There are also opportunities to build on resident's interests by addressing the areas of their concern, including the root causes mentioned above.

Some Great Groups

Criteria:

- Utilizes quality health promotion techniques and best practices
- Addresses many levels of support for change
- Has potential for large impact on health
- Taps community interest

Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Program (COPAN), a CDC funded initiative, is dedicated to preventing obesity and related chronic diseases and to promote healthy lifestyles for all Coloradans. It organized the COPAN coalition to plan for reaching these goals through several settings: schools, worksites and in the community. Together with the UCHSC Center for Human Nutrition a comprehensive health promotion campaign has been launched, Colorado On the Move. This effort works with community partners such as the Metro Denver Black Church Initiative, schools and workplaces to get people to increase how many steps they take throughout the day using step counters. COPAN plans to promote child activity through 'walking school buses' and also to target seniors. It works closely with the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Feet First, and others. COPAN also is working together with Colorado State University, the Nutrition Network and other partners to promote healthy eating for Coloradans.

Another key player in promoting physical activity is the Colorado Livable Communities Support Center, a non-profit that promotes the designing of communities, i.e. roads, transportation systems, residential, working and business development, etc. to support people being active—to encourage them to walk or bike in their daily routine. This effort focuses on land use and transportation policy changes that make for safe physical environments for walking. COPAN and its partners are planning for a new nutrition focus.

Colorado Tobacco Education & Prevention Alliance & State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (STEPP) –STEPP was established by state law to spend a portion of the tobacco settlement money to launch coalitions that conduct strategic planning and implement health promotion initiatives to: prevent tobacco use, increase cessation, reduce environmental tobacco smoke, and eliminate ethnic disparities in death rates from tobacco. STEPP has used model social marketing methods to develop communications campaigns including the TV ads featuring "Chuck", a quitter everyone can relate to, and has provided easy access to telephone as well as internet support for quitting. In addition, it provides school and community based prevention. The Denver City Council is currently debating stronger laws on environmental tobacco smoke in restaurants and bars as a result of Denver STEPP partners including Denver Environmental Health and Denver Health and Hospital Authority.

The Rocky Mountain Center for Health Promotion (RMC) provides health education training, technical assistance and resources for the benefit of children and their communities.

Denver Drug Strategy Coordinator's Office was established in 2000, as a City initiative to research, plan, advocate for, and launch policy and programs to prevent and treat substance abuse. This work is complemented by a community focused, comprehensive substance abuse prevention initiative, **The Regional Prevention Center Services of RMC**, which has a Denver Metro area regional initiative.

Great Ideas: (best practices/research)

The National Turning Point is developing collaborative leadership in public health that works to achieve policy and systems change to maximize the public's health. Through this collaborative leadership development and other projects, it is creating resources for a public health structure that supports partnerships to launch quality, multi-dimensional health promotion initiatives. It's focused areas to develop this capacity are: leadership development to increase collaborative leadership capacity across sectors and at all levels; use of performance management methods in public health; national leadership to achieve integration of social marketing¹ as a routine part of public health practice at all levels; using information technology to improve data use by public health; develop clear, concise, up-to-date laws that support improved health and strong public health systems.

Healthy Eating –There are a number of national efforts that have addressed the environmental factors concerning nutrition, and these might be integrated into upcoming efforts to increase healthy eating. Some of these include: locating grocery stores, food coops, farmers markets, and community gardens in low-income areas; changing policy to keep soda machines out of schools; reducing the cost of healthy items in vending machines to encourage healthy eating, etc.

- **The Strategic Alliance** is a California statewide collaborative that fought for the passage of a state law that set nutrition standards for beverages, snacks and side dishes sold in schools and prohibited the sale of soft drinks to younger students.
- **Rochester, New York** –The mayor and community activist were able to work with a supermarket chain to bring in stores to low-income neighborhoods with financial support from public funds such as the Enterprise Community.
- **The Chicago Community Roundtable** support a grassroots effort to help Chicago's Austin neighborhood start community gardens, farmers markets, launch a community grocery cooperative, and plan for other initiatives that promote healthy living, move food production closer to people, and transform urban decay into and economic development tool.

Best Practices Resources—There are many sources for best ways to address various health issues including the **CDPHE web site**, **The Community Guide** <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/>

Denver Healthy People 2010 Activity

The National Healthy People 2010 objective 7-10 aims at increasing the number of local and Tribal jurisdictions that have established community health promotion programs addressing multiple Healthy People 2010 focus areas. Denver Healthy People has filled this role by pulling together diverse partners and establishing a quality needs assessment to address multiple health areas.

Denver Healthy People approached the Cole community about their interest in neighborhood child safety with the model program a Walking School Bus used in Chicago and other cities around the world. We are working with them on this and other child safety projects, and have linked our efforts with the physical activity groups named above. Walking School Buses are model programs to increase physical activity, community safety and cohesion. (See <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm>). They are a model component in comprehensive physical activity.

¹ Social Marketing is a 'best practice' health promotion method of creating effective communication campaigns to change people's knowledge attitudes or behaviors.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Potential Role

Increase networking. Establish new collaboratives and partnerships. Help identify priorities within these initiatives. Be a model for how we can get health leaders a part of community planning and land use. Influence policy change.

ROOT CAUSES

Address the root issues of poor health, including social, physical, psychological and environmental issues

Assets & Opportunities:

The primary predictors of health are *income and education*. **Countries that invest more in providing support for those at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder have better health outcomes than the US even though the US outspends them on health care –They are keeping their people healthier in the first place.** The National Policy Institute outlines a set of actions to take that will address the root causes of poor health in a report called, “Improving Health: It Doesn’t Take A Revolution”. These are:

- **Investing in young children** –i.e. quality early childhood education
- Providing **services and opportunities for the neediest** –i.e. housing, education, nutrition
- **Improving the work environment**
- Strengthening **support at the community level** –i.e. building social network, economic development, civic participation.
- Creating a more **equal economic environment** –tax transfers, minimum wage, managing the economy to buffer business cycle extremes and keep unemployment low.
- **Assessing the effect** of economic and social actions on health –through research and public **Health Impact Assessments**

As a part of a debrief exercise by members at the Healthy People 2010-Health Disparities Forum conference Denver Healthy People identified two potential actions to take that fit into these items above:

- Educate all Coloradoans to know how to impact the political system.
- Ensure a livable wage/income for every person in Colorado.

The dramatic economic swings our country, State and City experience have a profoundly negative effect on the health of the poorest people. Efforts must address how to mitigate these swings.

Mental health is intricately connected to these root causes of health, often negatively impacted by them and then posing a risk for physical diseases.

There are many groups working on addressing the root causes, however, **the connection between these initiatives and the resulting health status of people is not often made, and partnerships with traditional health partners to work on potential joint action is missing.** The players who are addressing root causes such as economic development (i.e. Enterprise Community), homelessness (i.e. Colorado Coalition for the Homeless), are not connected with health leaders to show the dramatic impact on health that their initiatives could have. This potential impact can be outlined in Health Impact Assessments (see below) of the various proposed policy changes or programs and used partnerships to advocate for change.

Some Great Groups

Criteria:

- Connection of the impact on ‘root causes’ to the resultant effect on health of individuals and the public.
- Degree of impact on root causes.

Colorado Children’s Campaign- has worked to mobilize individuals and organizations to think and act on behalf of Colorado children. They advocate for policies and programs that support the development of children, provide research, data and information to educate leaders and the public.

Invest In Kids –This group aims to improve the physical, emotional, cognitive and social well being of Colorado's children through advancing proven early childhood and parenting programs for children and their families from pregnancy through kindergarten age. It accomplishes this goal on behalf of kids, particularly those of low-income families, through identifying, promoting and sustaining the implementation of high quality research based models. It successfully advocated throughout Colorado for the implementation of the Nurse-Family Partnership (or Nurse Home Visitor program). This program sends specially trained nurses on weekly or bi-weekly visits to low-income, first-time mothers starting as early as possible in pregnancy and continuing until their children's second birthdays. Under this voluntary program, nurses help mothers improve their health and nutrition, learn effective early parenting skills, and reach goals like completing school and finding employment. Similar home visitor programs in other states successfully use trained paraprofessional outreach workers or social workers.

Strengthening The Village is a partnership between seven Denver organizations that has started advocating for a line item in the City budget funding for youth programs.

Numerous Groups That Address Root Causes for Denver Such As:

Piton
Federal Region VIII -Office for Civil Rights
& Office of Minority Health
Women's Agenda
Lundy Leadership Group (GLBT)
GLBT Community Services Center of Colorado
Cross Disabilities Coalition

Investing in Young Children

NEDPOE
Colorado Children's Campaign
Invest In Kids
Strengthening The Village

Support for Neediest

Housing-.e.H.U.D Denver Housing Authority,
NE Denver Housing, CO Coalition for Homeless, etc.
ACORN
Colorado Progressive Coalition
Urban Institute

Improving the Work Environment

Unions-i.e. AFL-CIO,SEIU
9-5

Strengthening Communities

Community Based grps, i.e. Brother Jeff,
It Takes A Village
Numerous Neighborhood Groups
Denver City Focus Neighborhoods
League of Women Voters
Denver & Storewall Democrats

Economic Environment

Denver Enterprise Communities
NEWSED Com. Dev. Corp.
Micro Lending groups

Great Ideas: (best practices/research)

Minnesota Department of Health took comprehensive action to address the social, cultural and economic aspects of health. They developed partnerships, reports and a comprehensive state plan for addressing root causes which is currently being implemented. They employ tools such as Health Impact Assessments and distribution of grants. See <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/mhip/>

Health Impact Assessments are used nationally and internationally to assess the impact of various policies and practices upon the health of the public. They have been used extensively to illustrate the connection between root causes and the health of a community and have been applied to policy planning and implementation to have real impacts on people. For example, the San Francisco Health Department used HIA to pass a county minimum wage law, a rent dislocation ordinance, develop a green school yards program and to develop food security strategies for neighborhoods. In British Columbia, a health impact assessment is required for all proposed policies by the government ministries for potential impact on the public's health. See www.londonhealth.gov.uk for information.

Living Wage –This is a national movement to increase the minimum wage. National groups that are involved in this include **ACORN**. Many localities have passed legislation or regulations that raise the minimum wage for workers. The San Francisco Department of Environmental Health helped to pass a local law for a livable wage for San Francisco city workers and for contractors working with the City by developing a health impact assessment report on the proposed legislation. Santa Fe, NM just passed a

living wage ordinance. Some Colorado groups that are working on this at the state level are: **The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless**, and **9to5, National Association of Working Women, Colorado Chapter**.

Alternate Economies- Many communities in the nation and the world are establishing systems for exchange of work and goods outside of the money system—bartering clubs, time dollars, etc. Communities that set up time dollars clubs, establish a system whereby people can volunteer their services and receive credit or ‘time dollars’ to access a list of services or goods within the network.

Time Dollars are a way of rebuilding the networks of helpfulness and community that once existed in small towns and inner-city neighborhoods. In Chicago, about 1200 children at 25 Chicago schools earn Time Dollars for tutoring or being tutored. 100 hours earns a refurbished computer. In Florida, immigrants support food distribution and a food bank for their community. Maine has a well established network of people helping each other with a variety of services such as: home repair, computer assistance, childcare, transportation, and classes. CASA, of Maryland’s Employment Rights Project, gives low-income immigrants legal services in exchange for their work on tasks such as: studying English, coaching soccer, volunteering at church, babysitting, learning how to become a lobbyist or even working on their own cases. Ithaca, New York, issues its own paper currency, called “Ithaca HOURS”. Residents list the goods or services they have to offer in a large catalog, and then use the HOURS they earn to purchase goods and services from others. For some, this barter system provides a crucial margin of financial support. In Denver, PeopleLink supports the independence of older adults and individuals with disabilities throughout the mutual exchange of services.

The Community Guide is being developed by a, non-Federal Task Force on Community Preventive Services, appointed by the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Task Force assesses the current research on the effectiveness of various approaches to improve health. For impacting the sociocultural aspects of health, it has found that **Rental Vouchers** reduce crime victimization, and publicly funded, center-based **Early Childhood Development Programs** reduce early childhood cognitive delay, and recommend expanding these in order to improve community health.

The National Center for Children in Poverty, of the Columbia University School of Public Health, identifies and promotes strategies that prevent child poverty and improve the lives of low-income children and their families.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Activity

Denver Healthy People is working to promote the Walking School Bus model in Cole, and is linking with other local partners interested in the model. This program builds community cohesion and safety.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Potential Role

Convening. Facilitating. Becoming the center of the web of advocates who are pushing for change. Pull people together and keep the joint action in focus. Impact the political system.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Make access to health care, health promotion and disease prevention available and affordable to all

Assets & Opportunities:

Access to preventive health care services is an issue of overriding concern to the people of Denver – indeed, to people of the State and the Nation. In Colorado, there is a high degree of visible, collaborative advocacy by a sophisticated network of groups dedicated to increasing health care access, even as such access is increasingly unavailable due to funding cuts, elimination of benefits for legal immigrants, and rising unemployment. There is not a comparable local effort to increase access to health promotion programs.

The issue of culturally accessible services is key to addressing health disparities, and there is some effort by providers (i.e. DHHA Community Voices, Colorado Access training) and others to increase the cultural competence of services. The Colorado Minority Health Forum is considering taking on this issue as an area for major advocacy and systems change focus.

Some Great Groups

Criteria:

- **Numbers of partners**
- **Degree of advocacy for access to preventive health care**
- **Degree of advocacy for access to health promotion services**

Groups that advocate for accessible preventive health care:

Colorado Consumer Health Initiative advocates for access to quality health care.

Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved advocates for access to health care.

Local Foundations support public visibility and education to access issues, as well as research and financial support.

Colorado Access- Cultural competence training available

Groups that provide preventive health care services to those in Denver that can't access it due to cost, distance, or cultural barriers:

Colorado Access Insurance coverage---Provides coverage to low-income people

A.J. Kauvar Foundation Insurance coverage—developing new affordable & effective plan

Denver Health and Hospital Authority (DHHA)-direct services

School Based Health Centers-DHHA direct services

Colorado Community Health Network direct services

La Clinica Tepayac direct services

Inner City Health direct services

9Health Fair direct services

Visiting Nurse Association direct services

Other providers such as St. Anthony's, St. Joseph's, Rose Medical Center, Stout Street Clinic, etc. direct services

Great Ideas: (best practices/research)

The EthnoMed site at <http://www.ethnomed.org/> contains information about cultural beliefs, medical issues and other related issues pertinent to the health care of recent immigrants to Seattle or the US, many of whom are refugees fleeing war-torn parts of the world.

Washington State First Steps –Through legislation that expanded Medicaid services for women who had incomes up to 240% of the poverty level, Washington allowed for health education services and case management to be provided to pregnant women and those with new babies, including prenatal classes and home or clinic based individualized educational sessions. About 60% of pregnant women are eligible for these services, and statewide the majority of eligible women use them. These services are paid through Medicaid, with the State and the Federal government each paying 50%.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Activity

Denver Healthy People has raised awareness of the role increased health promotion can play in preventing disease through its needs assessment, reports, network and communications.

Denver Healthy People 2010 Activity

Increase awareness. Advocate for health promotion services.