

Escambia County

2010 Community Health Improvement Plan



February 2011



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Message from the Health Solutions Team Chair

The mandate for the Health Solutions Team, an arm of Unite Escambia, was to find ways to improve the overall physical health of the local community. The starting point was the 2005 “Comprehensive Assessment for Tracking Community Health” (CATCH). After many hours of deliberation, the team concluded the most effective way to affect future health needs would be a focus on children and specifically their nutritional and physical activity needs. Studies at the county, state, and national level indicated alarming trends in childhood obesity, and the very real possibility that this new generation of children would likely not live as long as their parents.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has noted those who are overweight or obese are at greater risk for many diseases and health conditions. This is a significant enough problem for an adult population, but when in Escambia County almost 40% of children under the age of 18 fall into this category, the problems are substantially worse.

With all of this as background, the team set a mission “to educate and motivate children and families to practice healthy lifestyles that include physical activity and good nutrition, thereby reducing childhood obesity and its effect on future generations.” We enlisted local government, schools and colleges, parks and recreation, the military, businesses, churches, and the health department to aid with this objective. Our measure of success is the reduction of childhood overweight/obesity in Escambia County from 30% to 20 % by the year 2020.

On the following pages, you will see the activities which we have undertaken to address the issues, as well as future plans. As you might expect, we have shown improvements in some areas, but much work remains. Working together, we believe we can make an important difference in the overall health of the citizens of Escambia County.

Respectfully,
Robin Herr

Partnership History

Following the events of Hurricane Ivan in 2004, a group of dedicated community leaders came together to assess the needs of the citizens left behind in the rebuilding process. Their idea was to find the common threads and needs of Escambia citizens to improve the community. Organizations within the community independently gathered local information to make strategic decisions within their own organizations. Through information sharing, the common areas of focus (physical, mental, economic, environmental and social) affecting a large majority of the community became clear.

In 2005, the Escambia County Health Department, the United Way of Escambia County, and the Partnership for a Healthy Community decided to collaborate in order to assess community priority needs and develop a plan to improve the overall health of the residents of Escambia County. The initial goal of the partnership was to conduct a comprehensive community assessment that would help define the vision for a strong, healthy Escambia County. This cross-sector partnership led to the formation of the Escambia Community Collaborative, which was later renamed "Unite Escambia" in Phase II of the collaborative.

Phase I of the collaborative called for the development of a shared community vision and to identify and agree on community priority areas. Within these priorities the team was to identify and collect information on strategic conditions (indicators) that, when measured over time, can evaluate community improvement or show decline. Indicators within each priority are areas where the general public, government, business, education, health, and human service organizations can see and take on an individual role for improving conditions. Indicators listed under each priority would be used to measure improvement.

Determining Priorities

During the summer of 2006, a leadership team of 41 community advocates assembled. After spending several months reviewing key community health assessment reports, the team was able to identify a community vision: "A healthy community where all have the inspiration and opportunity to succeed." Also from this data the team identified and prioritized five community areas as the most pressing: education, environment, health, housing, and poverty. Following the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) model (shown in detail in the next section), teams of community volunteers would be needed to focus on each area.

In order to elicit additional community input, the collaborative conducted a random survey throughout Escambia County. Public opinion was gathered through 700 phone, paper, and

electronic surveys along with five separate focus groups of community residents. Information was also gathered from recent documented data and reports on area conditions. There was felt to be good concordance between community perspectives and the chosen five priority areas.

May of 2007 marked the beginning of Phase II which saw five solutions teams formed, one for each of the previously identified priorities. The teams were aptly named the Education Solutions Team, Environmental Solutions Team, Health Solutions Team, Housing Solutions Team, and the Poverty Solutions Team. Solutions teams are made up of average citizens and professionals passionate about their particular areas. Teams were assigned four objectives, chosen by the original leadership group, and asked to choose one short term and one long term goal, and to develop action plans for achieving each goal over a 10-20 year horizon. Teams would seek to discover best practices that have worked elsewhere and why, to determine what we will have to do to make it work here in our community. They were to explore how to collectively and individually put effective practices in place when financial resources are limited. They were also charged with exploring how to generate additional resources as needed. It was then determined that:

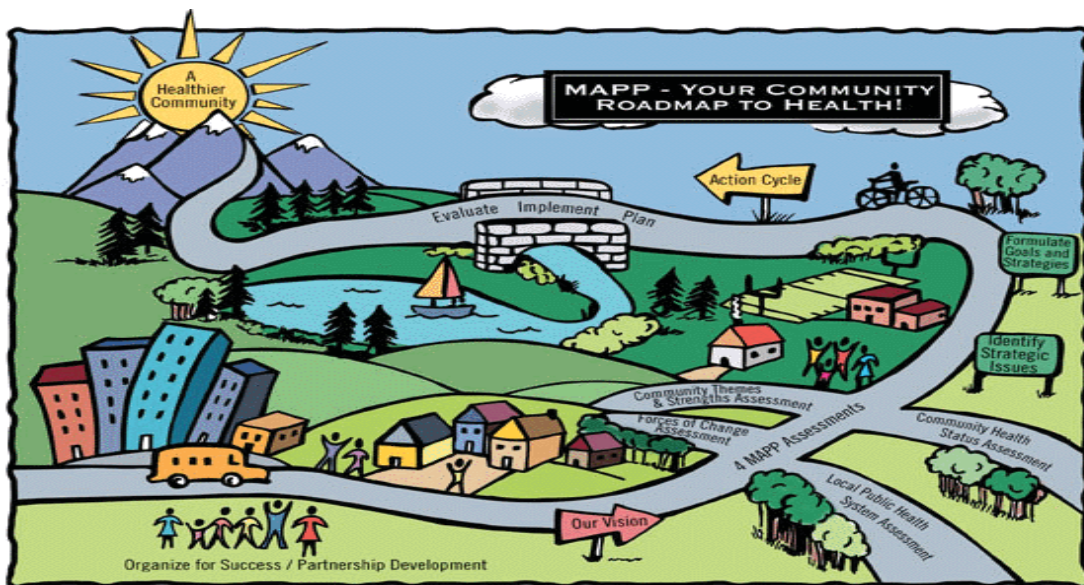
- Solutions would include methods to address both inspiration and opportunity to succeed.
- Solutions would all be research based, with reason to believe improvement will result if action plans are faithfully replicated.
- Recommended solutions would consider existing services to address the situation or condition, the effectiveness of those services, and the critical resource mass needed to adequately address the conditions or if another approach is needed.

The fall of 2007 called for each solutions team to carefully set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-oriented) goals, and to establish indicators for achieving those goals that have the greatest probability to achieve the community vision.

It was then time to put the plans into action. During this shift from planning of phase I to the execution stage of phase II the team determined a more action-oriented team name needed to be identified. A marketing team was formed, and a new team name was chosen. The Escambia Community Collaborative had now evolved into "Unite Escambia."

The MAPP Model

Unite Escambia (www.UniteEscambia.com) utilizes the “Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships” (MAPP) model developed by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) in order to better the health of Escambia County residents.



The MAPP model, shown in the center of this page, was developed by NACCHO in cooperation with the Public Health Practice Program Office, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A work group comprised of local health officials, CDC representatives, community representatives, and academicians developed MAPP between 1997 and 2000. The model is a strategic approach to community health improvement. Using MAPP, communities seek to achieve optimal health by identifying and using their resources wisely, taking into account their unique circumstances and needs, and forming effective community partnerships for strategic action, such as Unite Escambia and its five solutions teams.

Unite Escambia’s “Together We Achieve More” attitude focuses on the needs of our community to aggressively set goals, advocate for change, and implement action plans. The shared community agenda also encourages residents to actively participate in action items such as recycling, reading to children, encouraging healthy eating habits, and helping with programs that seek to improve financial stability and reduce poverty.

Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)



Shared Community Agenda

The community vision of Unite Escambia is a shared community agenda that reflects the ultimate goals of nearly all local nonprofit organizations, including United Way and its network of non-profit partners, and the Escambia County Health Department. The Escambia County School Board, Board of County Commissioners, and Pensacola City Council have all endorsed the Unite Escambia community vision and priorities. The multi-sector representation of the solutions teams is a key asset to the teams' ability to address priority needs with community engagement, expertise, research, assessment, evidence-based program implementation, and evaluation. For instance, Health Solutions Team members come from a variety of backgrounds and include members from the Escambia County Health Department, the Pensacola City Parks and Recreation Department, the Escambia County School System, the University of West Florida, Pensacola Junior College (now called Pensacola State College), West Florida Hospital, the United Way, non-profit organizations, and the business community.

Unite Escambia Solutions Team Plans

We are pleased to present this community health improvement plan (CHIP) to county residents, community organizations and civic groups. It contains the goals, accomplishments, and future action plans of our five solutions teams in their quest to increase the overall health

of the community. The five priority areas represent the most pressing public health issues for Escambia County in 2010, and will be the focus of multiple strategic interventions over the next few years. Our CHIP is designed as a roadmap to community health, and is a dynamic document that will change as conditions, resources, and the environment changes. What follows is more than just a plan—it is a guide for community members and agency leaders alike. For community members, this guide will help you to identify the agencies and parties responsible for implementing policies and programs that influence the health issues most important to you. For agency leaders, this guide will help as you move through strategic planning processes to ensure you are utilizing your resources to most appropriately meet the needs of the community you serve. The plan is presented to the Escambia County community as a call to action – an opportunity for private/nonprofit/government agencies, academic/community/faith-based organizations, and citizens to become involved in a unified effort to improve the health and quality of life for youths and adults in Escambia County. It is your pathway to a healthier you, a healthier family, and a healthier community!

Unite Escambia: Education Solutions Team

Team Chair: Ted Kircharr, VP and COO, Landrum Professional and Landrum Consulting.

Team Goals:

- Create and support an effective data system to transfer data collected by the voluntary pre-kindergarten programs to the School District of Escambia County.
- Assist in moving Escambia County from the 50th percentile to the 75th percentile of the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screening (FLKRS) by 2020.
- Assist in moving Escambia County to the 75th percentile of the State District Composite Score by 2020.

The Unite Escambia Education Solutions Team established team goals by researching issues facing Escambia County and conducting discussions with experts from pre-kindergarten to adult literacy to learn about innovative programs that are already underway. The team then identified successful, existing programs and discussed how to better engage the community behind these efforts while also working to identify gaps or duplications in services.

Since the team's implementation, Escambia County has become the first county in Florida to create a web-based database to collect the health and developmental data gathered by voluntary pre-kindergarten programs. Most importantly, access to the database was granted to the School District of Escambia County. The team has also conducted workshops with the staff of Warrington Middle School to establish a new vision and direction for the school.

Unite Escambia: Environment Solutions Team

Team Chair: Dr. Enid Sisskin, University of West Florida, School of Allied Health and Life Science.

Team Goals:

- Improve Air Quality
- Improve Water Quality
- Reduce Litter

Environmental Solutions Team members represent local grassroots and national environmental organizations, industry, government and public health agencies, and educators and citizens concerned about the environmental health of our community. The team has successfully placed recycling bins at festivals and began a curbside recycling program. The Environmental Solutions Team has also been hosting “Eco Minute” on The University of West Florida’s WUWF radio station since January 2009. Additionally, local businesses are receptive to implementing environmental action items.

Unite Escambia: Health Solutions Team

Team Chair: Robin Herr, retired President/CEO of Health First Network.

Team Goal: Reduce childhood overweight/obesity from 30% to 20% by 2020.

If the current rise in obesity trends continues, today’s generation of children will be the first to live shorter, unhealthier lives than their parents. To address the health issues facing Escambia County’s youth, the Health Solutions Team created four action teams including “Safe Ways to Schools, School & Community Gardens, the WE CAN! Marketing team, and the WE CAN! Media Smart Youth Education team.”

The School/Community Gardens team has a successful garden at OJ Semmes elementary school. Students grew a variety of vegetables, and were able to sample their lettuce and collard greens at a Salad Party. The team is seeking to expand to additional schools in the near future.

More than 100 youth at the Fricker and Cobb Community Centers and OJ Semmes Elementary School have participated in the highly engaging Media Smart Youth program facilitated by WE CAN! team members. Additionally, the team reached 19,000 students during a district-wide “PEP” rally designed to encourage students to **P**lay more, **E**at right, and **P**ush away from the screen. All of Escambia County’s elementary school students were exposed to the PEP message, with several schools holding health fairs and field days to further the message.

The Safe Ways to School Team supported Spencer Bibbs and Lincoln Park schools for the International Walk to School Day. The 370 student participants were joined by HST chair Robin Herr and various HST members. Also present were Pensacola Mayor Mike Wiggins, County Commissioner Marie Young, City Council members Sam Hall, Maren DeWeese, Megan Pratt, Diane Mack, and Fire Chief Russell Beaty. With the support of the Florida Department of Transportation and the Community Traffic Safety Team, the student participants received Safe Routes to Schools backpacks and blinking lights. The event brought attention to the hazardous pedestrian conditions facing the students at Spencer Bibbs. As a result of the event, a four-way stop is being placed at the intersection of Avery and Sixth.

Unite Escambia: Housing Solutions Team

Team Chair: Susan Senkarik, United Way of Escambia County, Director of Community Impact.

Team Goals:

- Increase by 100 every quarter the number of individuals who have the tools necessary to obtain/maintain affordable housing.
- Conduct at least 10 housing workshops annually with emphasis on basic money management, credit and credit repair, and basic home maintenance.
- Decrease substandard housing by half (from 5% to 2.5%) by 2020.
- Increase homeownership by 10% by 2020.

The Housing Solutions Team works closely with the Poverty Solutions Team to reach their shared goals. Team members have conducted two large scale housing oriented workshops for more than 190 attendees. Four partner organizations have held 75 housing and basic money management workshops reaching 487 households. The team's greatest success is that participants in the Housing Solutions Team projects have purchased at least four homes, and more than 100 participants have avoided eviction or home foreclosure.

Unite Escambia: Poverty Solutions Team

Team Chair: Janice Thomas, Circuit 1 Administrator, Department of Children and Families.

Team Goals:

- Reduce the number of people living below the federal poverty line in Escambia County by 50%, from 42,935 including 16,918 children (15.8%) to 21,467 in 2020 (7.9%), including 8,459 children.
- Increase to 200 the number of partners working to reduce poverty by June 30, 2010.

The Poverty Solutions Team has adopted the concepts and language of Bridges Out of Poverty and CIRCLES™ to change mindsets about poverty and to build a sustainable increase in community partners motivated to improve the conditions of neighbors and colleagues living in generational poverty.

The team consists of several action teams that include the Poverty Information Team, Training Team, Circles Leadership Team, Eliminating Exploitation Team, Faith Based Team, Political/Economic Structures Team, Education Team, and Resources Team. Poverty Team successes have included the training of 600 people in Bridges Out of Poverty, Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' by World, and Bridges to Circles Ally training; and the production of twelve, 30-minute Bridges Out of Poverty programs that have been aired on WUWF-TV.

Where Do We Go From Here?

How can it be that many have not heard of Unite Escambia? In 2010, Unite Escambia Champion Buzz Ritchie explained: “The work of Unite Escambia has been under the radar the past four years. Maybe this is because we have no building, no staff, and no budget. But more and more successes can be achieved as we educate the community and get more people involved.”

As noted earlier, it is from this point forward where the “rubber meets the road.” For each issue, SMART (Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-oriented) objectives must be established, with clearly-defined strategies to meet them. Evaluation standards must be woven into all initiatives, assessing both how well the process is working as well as whether or not we are meeting our objectives. In fact, this is the last cycle of the MAPP model - called the Action cycle - where we are moving through the cyclical process of planning, implementing and evaluating.

What can YOU do as a resident of Escambia County?

Become an advocate!

Educate your social circle including your family, friends and coworkers! Inform anyone you can get to listen about the possibilities outlined in this guide.

Take action!

Whether you hold a neighborhood meeting about starting a community garden, or present the idea of a walking school bus to the PTA — remember, every effort makes a difference toward the collective good of our community. But how? This is too much with everything else going on, right? Here are some simple steps on how to get involved and make a difference:

Pick up the phone and start making some calls. If childhood obesity is the issue you care most about, go to the Unite Escambia website, look at the key contacts and pick up the phone and start making phone calls.

We welcome your feedback to this Community Health Improvement Plan and encourage you to learn more about Unite Escambia. As the Unite Escambia motto states, “Together We Achieve More.” For more information, please visit us at UniteEscambia.com to learn how you can be a part of implementing our CHIP in Escambia County.