

Benton-Franklin Health District Strategic Plan

2009-2014

A Policy Framework for the
Health of the Public

October 2008

Always working for a Safer & Healthier
Benton-Franklin Counties

Introduction

Date: October 2008

Benton-Franklin Health District provides a wide variety of public health services that protect and promote the health of all 230,300 residents of Benton-Franklin Counties, as well as the thousands of workers and visitors who enter the Counties each day. In addition to providing many services directly, Benton-Franklin Health District works collaboratively with many other entities to address health needs of people living, working and visiting in Benton-Franklin Counties.

Public health needs to continue to expand and diversify because of changing conditions among Benton-Franklin Health District's populations which are influenced by national, state, and local forces -- the rise of chronic conditions like diabetes, obesity and asthma; emerging diseases and concerns such as pandemic flu, West Nile virus, and terrorism; and an increasing number of people who lack health insurance.

Benton-Franklin Health District is establishing broad public health policy through the Public Health Strategic Plan [PHSP]. The PHSP is necessitated by public health challenges which have and will continue to face the counties for the foreseeable future. The PHSP seeks to assure that funding challenges can be met strategically and rationally. Funding to address PHSP remains a challenge due to a combination of limited or declining revenues, increasing costs of existing public health services, and increasing public health needs and mandates. The PHSP will also provide an opportunity to evaluate and prioritize the most effective ways to improve the health of the population.

The purpose of the plan is to define policies and create a sustainable operational and financing model for the provision of essential public health services in the Benton-Franklin Health District.

I. Benton-Franklin Health District's Mission for the Health of the Public

The mission of the Benton-Franklin Health District is to provide all people in our community the opportunity to live full productive lives by (1) promoting healthy lifestyles: (2) preventing disease and injury: and (3) protecting individuals and their environment through cooperative participation among community, government and Health District.

Vision:

- When our county residents need important information about health, they will think of our agency first.
- We are public health leaders and innovators; we set the standard.
- Everyone in the agency will share information and talents across programs and divisions with a common goal to better serve our customers.
- The public will better understand the important work of public health and its positive impact on their lives.
- We will be an agency at which the best people want to work, and once they are here they won't want to leave.

As an agency we value our employees, partners and the people of our counties, recognize the importance of cultural competence, trust the public and believe working hard will improve and maintain that relationship. We collaborate effectively with staff, partners and community members working for a safer and healthier Benton-Franklin Counties.

II. Definitions

1. Health: Benton-Franklin Health District regards health as a state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or illness.
2. Factors Affecting Health: Benton-Franklin Health District recognizes that many factors affect health. For example, health is affected by age, race, income, ethnicity, immigrant/refugee status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, neighborhood, level of education, health behaviors, environment, housing, accessibility of quality health care, genetics and the provision of public health services.
3. Public Health: is defined as the organized efforts to (a) protect the population from natural and human-made health threats, (b) promote health by providing reliable information and an environment in which people and communities can make informed decisions that impact their health, and (c) assure the provision of quality preventative and curative health services. Public health is carried out by the public health system, which includes the governing bodies of County government, the Health District, and the many public health partners. The Health District is the local entity

that leads, mobilizes and coordinates the broader public health system to accomplish the work of public health. Public health partners are those governmental entities, private organizations, communities, and individuals who are working with the health district, either formally or informally, to advance the health of the community.

4. Healthy Community: Benton-Franklin Health District considers a healthy community to be a place where social infrastructure and policies support health and where essential public health services, including quality health care, are available. In a healthy community: community members and groups actively communicate and collaborate with one another to achieve healthy conditions; the contributions of ethnically, socially and economically diverse community members are valued; the broad array of determinants of health are addressed; and individuals are able to make informed, positive choices in an environment that protects and supports health.

III. Guiding Principles

Benton-Franklin Health District's Public Health goals and objectives, policies and programs shall be:

1. Based on Science and Evidence: Benton-Franklin Health District's public health goals and objectives are based whenever possible on science and evidence.

2. Focused on Prevention and Protection: Benton-Franklin Health District recognizes that the best investments are those that protect from and prevent disease and promote good health. Prevention and promotion goals and objectives achieve optimal health impact in the most cost-effective manner.

3. Centered on the Community: Benton-Franklin Health District's public health solutions require collaboration of the entire community. In order to arrive at solutions which best meet the needs of all, Benton-Franklin Health District's public health system must include partnerships with a wide variety of communities, government agencies and private organizations.

4. Driven by the Reduction of Health Disparities: Benton-Franklin Health District will proactively pursue the elimination of preventable differences in health among different population groups. Public health will be a voice for the needs of the weak, the poor, minorities and the disenfranchised.

IV. Public Health Functions

Benton-Franklin Health District acknowledges that public health includes promotion of physical, behavioral, environmental, social, and economic conditions that improve health and well-being; preventing illness, disease, injury, and premature death; and protecting our citizens from diseases and an unhealthy environment.

Benton-Franklin Health District's governmental public health functions include:

1. Health Protection: Benton-Franklin Health District has fundamental and statutorily defined responsibilities and powers to protect the public's health. These responsibilities include such as: regulating dangerous environmental exposures; ensuring the safety of water, air, and food; tracking disease and other threats to the public's health; and protecting the public from communicable diseases. Regulatory action should be taken when it is warranted and will result in significant improvements to the public's health and safety. Benton-Franklin Health District must also prepare for and respond to natural and human-made disasters and plays a leadership role in engaging the community in emergency preparedness.

2. Health Promotion: Benton-Franklin Health District is responsible for leading efforts to promote health and prevent injuries such as those from chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity, traffic accidents and injury prevention. These complex health challenges often are best addressed through voluntary actions by individuals and organizations in combination with governmental policies that make the right health choice the easy health choice. Through a collaborative and educational approach, the department of public health encourages voluntary actions with science-based evidence and effective interventions that maximize people's ability to make healthy choices.

3. Providing Preventative Health Services: Benton-Franklin Health District's role in preventing disease and illness is vital to our community; our role in the past has been strong in the communicable disease arena and improving the health of women, infants and children. We need to continue and improve in these areas but need to add facilitating healthier behavior and lifestyles to help turn the epidemic of increasing chronic diseases. Partnerships with our community will be more important than ever.

To fulfill its responsibilities in each of three functions listed above, the department undertakes the following types of activities/core functions of Public Health:

A. Assessment: The Health District must regularly track health status, identify emerging health problems and disease outbreaks, analyze health outcomes and interventions, and report on these to the public. Through this activity, the district supports the development of effective responses by all components of the public health system.

B. Policy Development: The Health District must work in collaboration with community and government leaders to formulate evidence-based public policies designed to solve health problems.

C. Assurance: The Health District must engage policy-makers and the public in determining those services that will be guaranteed to every member of the community and ensure that these services are available through encouraging action by public and private entities, implementing regulatory requirements, ensuring communities and the public health staff are prepared to respond to public health emergencies or directly providing services.

V. Organizational Attributes of the Health District

Benton-Franklin Health District shall:

- Pursue excellence and innovation in public health practice, including prudent risk-taking and applied research;
- Communicate clearly and accurately with our partners and the public;
- Emphasize collaboration when so indicated;
- Adhere to sound operational practices and systems including assuring the transparency, cost effectiveness, and accountability of its activities, services and outcomes.
- Recruit and retain a talented, dedicated, well-trained and prepared workforce;
- Provide recognized leadership, both adaptive and directive;
- Develop and maintain state of the art tools and systems to protect the public's health; promote healthy communities and provide reliable, high quality public health services;
- Lead system-wide strategic planning and performance evaluation in order to continually improve effectiveness and to help assure that resources of the public health system are being effectively deployed to achieve priority health outcomes;
- Maximize Health District's revenue for infrastructure vitality.

VI. Prioritizing Public Health Goals and Objectives

Benton-Franklin Health District will use the following criteria to guide prioritization of public health goals and objectives, while recognizing that prioritization also requires value-based judgments across public health functions that are not directly comparable. Goals and objectives that most fully address the set of criteria should have highest priority.

Agency Purpose

Goal 1: Prevention, promotion/education, and protection are planned components of all public health programs and activities

Objective 1: Logic models are developed for all programs

Objective 2: Annual program evaluation assures that prevention, health promotion/education, early intervention and outreach services are provided

Objective 3: Annual reports, health indicators, program logic models, etc. are utilized to measure program goals

Objective 4: Promote wellness/healthy behaviors, child and family development and prevention of chronic disease/disability, communicable disease, food/water/air/waste/vector borne and injuries

Objective 5: Work to reduce barriers, collaborate with other agencies, and promote policy development to improve access to care

Agency Infrastructure

Goal 2: Hire and Retain well qualified employees

Objective 1: Provide trainings to enhance employees' knowledge, skill level, and cultural competency awareness

Objective 2: Work environment is conducive to agency productivity

Objective 3: Encourage healthy lifestyles of employees and their families

Goal 3: Enhance data management and use of public health information (assessment)

Objective 1: Facilitate access to public health data

Objective 2: Local public health indicators are identified and selected to target program interventions

Objective 3: Establish measures to evaluate intervention success (OMAHA system etc); to ensure we are using the most up to date technology

Objective 4: Data about community health, environmental health risks, health disparities and cases to critical health services are collected, tracked, analyzed and utilized along with review of evidence-based practices to support health policy and program decisions

Objective 5: Public health programs and activities identify specific goals, objectives and performance measures and establish mechanisms for regular tracking, reporting, and use of results

Objective 6: Information systems support the public health mission and staff by providing infrastructure for data collection, analysis, and rapid communication

Goal 4: Improve external and internal communication and customer service

Objective 1: Minimize agency process for external and internal customers to increase efficiency and satisfaction

Objective 2: Identify and create internal and external communication strategies and develop distribution methods such as newsletters, e-mails, staff orientation and meetings, etc.

Objective 3: Provide and maintain facilities that maximize services

Objective 4: Seek active involvement of community members and development of collaborative partnerships address community health risks and issues, prevention priorities, health disparities and gaps in health care resources/critical health services

Goal 5: Pursue stable and adequate dedicated funding and maximize our current resources.

Objective 1: Focus agency resources on public health priorities; local, flexible funding is necessary for the support of essential public health functions and key infrastructure (including planning, research, and analysis) and should also be used to leverage other funds.

Objective 2: Practice efficiency and flexibility in management of agency resources.

Objective 3: Pursue funding opportunities to support goals and objectives.

Objective 4: Leadership and governance bodies set organizational policies and direction and assure accountability

Objective 5: Effective financial and management systems are in place and utilized

Goal 6: Strengthen the public health system to better serve the public, including preparing for emergencies and everyday threats.

Objective 1: Develop and enhance strategic partnerships and collaborative relationships

Objective 2: Improve readiness of the Health District and community for emergencies and everyday threats

Objective 3: Urgent public health messages are communicated quickly and clearly

Objective 4: Monitoring and reporting processes are maintained to identify threats to the public's health.

Objective 5: Procedures to investigate and prevent the spread of disease are in place and documented

Objective 6: Compliance with regulations is sought through education, information, investigation, permit/license conditions and appropriate enforcement actions.

APPENDIX:

Essential Responsibilities of the Benton-Franklin Health District

The essential responsibilities of the Benton-Franklin Health District are defined in part by the National Association of County and City Health Departments, Operational Definition of a Functional Local Health Department. The definition is a shared understanding of what people in any community, regardless of size, can expect from a Health District.

- Understands the specific health issues confronting the community, and how physical, behavioral, environmental, social, and economic conditions affect them.
- Investigates health problems and health threats.
- Serves as an essential resource for local governing bodies and policymakers on up-to-date public health laws and policies.
- Engages the community to address public health issues.
- Coordinates the public health system's efforts in an intentional, non-competitive, and non-duplicative manner.
- Ensures compliance with public health laws and ordinances, using enforcement authority when appropriate.
- Addresses health disparities.
- Prevents, minimizes, and contains adverse health effects from communicable diseases, disease outbreaks from unsafe food and water, chronic diseases, environmental hazards, injuries, and risky health behaviors.
- Leads planning and response activities for public health emergencies.
- Collaborates with other local responders and with state and federal agencies to intervene in other emergencies with public health significance (e.g., natural disasters).

- Implements health promotion programs.
- Provides science-based, timely, and culturally competent health information and health alerts to the media and to the community.
- Develops partnerships with public and private healthcare providers and institutions, community based organizations, and other government agencies (e.g., housing authority, criminal justice, education) engaged in services that affect health to collectively identify, alleviate, and act on the sources of public health problems. • Strategically plans its services and activities, evaluates performance and outcomes, and makes adjustments as needed to continually improve its effectiveness, enhance the community's health status, and meet the community's expectations.
- Provides its expertise to others who treat or address issues of public health significance.
- Employs well-trained staff members who have the necessary resources to implement best practices and evidence-based programs and interventions.
- Facilitates research efforts that benefit the community.
- Conducts research that contributes to the evidence base of public health.