

## Community Health Assessment Glossary

**Behavioral Risk Factors:** Behaviors which are believed to cause, or to be contributing factors to, accidents, injuries, disease, and death during youth and adolescence and significant morbidity and mortality in later life.

**Communicable Disease:** Measures within this category include diseases that are usually transmitted through person-to-person contact or shared use of contaminated instruments/materials. Many of these diseases can be prevented through the use of protective measures, such as a high level of vaccine coverage of vulnerable populations. This is a category of data recommended for collection in MAPP's Community Health Status Assessment.

**Community:** The aggregate of persons with common characteristics such as geographic, professional, cultural, racial, religious, or socioeconomic similarities; communities can be defined by location, race, ethnicity, age, occupation, interest in particular problems or outcomes, or other common bonds.

**Community Health Improvement Process:** Community health improvement is not limited to issues classified within traditional public or health services categories, but may include environmental, business, economic, housing, land use, and other community issues indirectly affecting the public's health. The community health improvement process involves an on-going collaborative, community-wide effort to identify, analyze, and address health problems; access applicable data; develop measurable health objectives and indicators; inventory community health assets and resources; identify community perceptions; develop and implement coordinated strategies; identify accountable entities; and cultivate community "ownership" of the entire process.

**Community Health Profile:** A comprehensive compilation of measures representing multiple categories that contribute to a description of health status at a community level and the resources available to address health needs. Measures within each category may be tracked over time to determine trends, evaluate health interventions or policy decisions, compare community data with peer, state, nation, or benchmark measures, and establish priorities through an informed community process.

**Community Partnerships:** A continuum of relationships that foster the sharing of resources, responsibility, and accountability in undertaking activities within a community.

**Demographic Characteristics:** Demographic characteristics include measures of total population as well as percent of total population by age group, gender, race and ethnicity, where these populations and sub-populations are located, and the rate of change in population density over time, due to births, deaths and migration patterns. This is a category of data recommended for collection within MAPP's Community Health Status Assessment.

**Environmental Health Indicators:** The physical environment directly impacts health and quality of life. Clean air and water, as well as safely prepared food, are essential to physical health. Exposure to environmental substances, such as lead or hazardous waste, increases risk for preventable disease. Unintentional home, workplace, or recreational injuries affect all age groups and may result in premature disability or mortality. This is a category of data recommended for collection within MAPP's Community Health Status Assessment.

**Geocode:** Addresses matched and assigned to a corresponding latitude and longitude (Healthy People 2010, chapter 23-22). The process of assigning geographic location information to attribute data that are to be used for analytic purposes.

**Geographic information system (GIS):** Combines modern computer and supercomputing digital technology with data management systems to provide tools for the capture, storage, manipulation, analysis, and visualization of spatial data. Spatial data contains information, usually in the form of a geographic coordinate system, that gives data location relative to the earth's surface. These spatial attributes enable previously disparate data sets to be integrated into a digital mapping environment. (Healthy People 2010, chapter 23-22). Geographic information systems that are computer based processes for capturing, lining, summarizing, and analyzing data containing geographical location information. These systems are particularly useful in supporting visual analysis and communication of data using maps that display the geographic distribution of data.

**Health Assessment:** The process of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information on health status, personal health problems, population groups at greatest risk, availability and quality of services, resource availability, and concerns of individuals. Assessment may lead to decision making about the relative importance of various public health problems.

**Health Promotion Activities:** Any combination of education and organizational, economic, and environmental supports aimed at the stimulation of healthy behavior in individuals, groups, or communities.

**Health Resource Availability:** Factors associated with health system capacity, which may include both the number of licensed and credentialed health personnel and the physical capacity of health facilities. In addition, the health resources category includes measures of access, utilization, and cost and quality of health care and prevention services. Service delivery patterns and roles of public and private sectors as payers and/or providers may also be relevant. This is a category of data recommended for collection within MAPP's Community Health Status Assessment.

**Impact Objective:** An impact objective is short term (less than three years) and measurable. The object of interest is on knowledge, attitudes, or behavior.

**Injury:** Injuries can be classified by the intent or purposefulness of occurrence in two categories, intentional and unintentional injuries. Intentional injuries are ones that are purposely inflicted and often associated with violence. These include child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, aggravated assault, homicide, and suicide. Unintentional injuries include only those injuries that occur without intent of harm and are not purposely inflicted.

**Local Public Health System:** The human, informational, financial, and organizational resources, including public, private, and voluntary organizations and individuals that contribute to the public's health.

**Maternal and Child Health:** A category focusing on birth data and outcomes as well as mortality data for infants and children. Because maternal care is correlated with birth outcomes, measures of maternal access to, and/or utilization of, care is included. One of the most significant areas for monitoring and comparison relates to the health of a vulnerable population: infants and children. *Births to teen mothers* is a critical indicator of increased risk for both mother and child. This is a category of data recommended for collection within MAPP's Community Health Status Assessment.

**Outcome Objective:** An outcome objective is long term (greater than three years) and measurable. The objects of interest are mortality, morbidity, and disability.

**Process Objective:** A process objective is short term and measurable. Process objectives may be evaluated by audit, peer review, accreditation, certification, or administrative surveillance.

Objects of evaluation may include adherence to projected timetables, production, distribution, and utilization of products, and financial audits.

**Public Health:** "...the science and the art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting physical health and mental health and efficiency through organized community efforts toward a sanitary environment; the control of community infections; the education of the individual in principles of personal hygiene; the organization of medical and nursing service for the early diagnosis and treatment of disease; and the development of the social machinery to ensure to every individual in the community a standard of living adequate for the maintenance of health." (C.E.A. Winslow) The mission of public health is to fulfill society's desire to create conditions so that people can be healthy (Institute of Medicine, 1988).

**Quality of Life:** A construct that "connotes an overall sense of well-being when applied to an individual" and a "supportive environment when applied to a community" (Moriarty, 1996). While some dimensions of quality of life can be quantified using indicators that research has shown to be related to determinants of health and community-well being, other valid dimensions of QOL include the perceptions of community residents about aspects of their neighborhoods and communities that either enhance or diminish their quality of life. This is a category of data recommended for collection within MAPP's Community Health Status Assessment.

**Sentinel Health Event:** Sentinel events are those cases of unnecessary disease, disability, or untimely death that could be avoided if appropriate and timely medical care or preventive services were provided. These include vaccine-preventable illness, late stage cancer diagnosis, and unexpected syndromes or infections. Sentinel events may alert the community to health system problems such as inadequate vaccine coverage, lack of primary care and/or screening, a bioterrorist event, or the introduction of globally transmitted infections. This is a category of data recommended for collection within MAPP's Community Health Status Assessment.

**Social and Mental Health:** This category represents social and mental factors and conditions which directly or indirectly influence overall health status and individual and community quality of life. This is a category of data recommended for collection within MAPP's Community Health Status Assessment.

**Socioeconomic Characteristics:** Socioeconomic characteristics include measures that have been shown to affect health status, such as income, education, and employment, and the proportion of the population represented by various levels of these variables. This is a category of data recommended for collection within MAPP's Community Health Status Assessment.

### **Bibliography:**

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