



Public Health

Key Informant Interview Summary

For Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, Winneshiek Counties
Telephone Survey done in February, 2008

Question # 1:

What are some the greatest assets or strengths of your county? (-Some of the things that make this place such a great place to live and allow the people here work together to get things done.)

- Coordination of care
- People, loving, caring, warm, friendly, helping people; The residents of the county (friendly) (3)
- Great geographic location; 4 seasons, beauty (7)
- Diverse activities available and weather
- Excellent school system; Good school systems; excellent school system (5)
- Strong medical community; Good health providers; Local hospital is good; 2 hospitals in the area; Hospital and clinic in town; A lot of access to health care; Lots of family practice providers and specialists; Many services available in town, optometrists, physicians, chiropractors, skilled nursing facilities; Strong medical community, hospital provides many services, 2 clinics and public health . (13)
- Growing businesses
- Diverse activities available; Summer recreation for adults; Good recreation, industry and tourism in area; Rural area, lots of opportunity for exercise; Rural quality of life, recreational opportunities, good schools; Recreational resources- bike paths, parks, pools for children (6)
- Teamwork with communities, regions and counties; Partnerships on projects and communities coming together; Sharing between different agencies to prevent duplication of services; Small community works well together (4)
- Good workers and work ethic; Mentality, IA work ethic (2)
- Very active emergency medical services; Good ambulance service (volunteer) (2)
- Demographic and financial resources
- Active public health- healthy IA; Good sized public health and outreach, they also rent medical supplies (2)
- Support groups
- Lots of people are looking for ways to improve health, they are scattered, need to get together; Tendency to promote fitness issues (2)
- Don't have as many industrial jobs as would like, but don't have the crime and pollution to go with them either
- Luther College (2)
- Farmers' market in summertime; Awareness of need for quality foods –Co-op is a major plus (3)

- True tendency for people to work together “up beat attitude”; The residents of the county; Rural population, people know each other and get along (3)
- Rural farming community has high stewardship quotient
- Educated population
- Diverse employment base
- Overall healthy community
- Family support, religious ties and people support family and community

Question # 2:

What challenges do the people of your county face in making changes or working to improve things?

- Communication, why things need to change; Change in general. It takes time to get people to accept change (2)
- Education
- Elderly population doesn't always appreciate change
- Losing people and businesses; Hard to draw industry to the county; Challenge to bring everyone together to bring business back to area; Need people to pull together, push forward, support community (5)
- People leave the area for a service, do other things while out of area that are available in the area and community dries up
- Transportation is a factor. No major highways (3)
- Hard to provide service to all parts of the county (2)
- Need more trained volunteers in small communities
- Historical landmarks and buildings require input from historical society
- Finances, poor general public; Low income families: A lot of low income families in the county and school district; Poor economics – not real good paying jobs; Quite a few working poor (7)
- Not a lot of industry makes it difficult to support entertainment
- Aging population with increased needs
- Number of young people declining
- North end of county vs. south end, south end gets “short sheeted”
- High b/p and obesity in children
- Limited number of activities in winter
- Working parents- parents doing shift work puts stressors on families, making parents less available to care for children
- Life isn't like it used to be, people do things differently now
- Have a good economic development committee working to improve things
- Small towns in county don't have local doctor or clinics and have to travel to other towns to get medical care: Rural area where people have to drive to go to a clinic/medical care. (2)
- High housing costs for your families; Low income housing (2)
- Disparity between low income folks for opportunities to have access to fresh foods.
- People in the area are “clique-ish”

- Fairgrounds need moved out of town to utilize the area for affordable housing.
- Nothing is written in stone; people need to stay with those issues and be proactive, politically tuned in and participate.
- Concerned we do our best to fund educational process in Winneshiek county
- Continue the work we are doing to recognize diversity and avoid discrimination
- Coordination of various groups. Agreement on what is really needed and prioritization of needs: Coming to consensus (2)
- Shrinking financial resources
- Overall economy is challenging
- Insurance companies dictating to what providers
- Not as much fancy and up-to-date equipment in our local hospitals/clinics
- Drinking is a social norm leading to alcohol and drug abuse
- Fitness facilities needed (2)

Question # 3:

How vocal and active are citizens about community issues?

- People are very vocal at times, they pay attention to issues and they care and commit. Absolutely high level of involvement and intense discussions; extremely active. When issues need confronted, citizens are very active and willing to pitch in and make changes (6)
- Fair, depending on issue; More vocal than active; A percentage is very vocal, a larger percentage less vocal: Low to moderate (4)
- Good, but nobody coordinates groups together: Need to help each other and coordinate efforts (2)
- “follows the normal bell curve”
- 20% lumps, 20% very vocal/active and the majority 60% are active if asked
- Very vocal/active in their own community or town. County wide not so much: Pretty active. Lots of community groups; A lot of people are very active. 20-30 people attending NIFF meetings. (3)
- Most citizens are not real vocal unless [the issue] is near and dear to their hearts, then they will get out and make themselves heard; Depends on the issue- if people care they are very vocal and active; ”depends upon the issue” (6)
 - A lot of people are active- “going green,” raising gardens and chickens for own use
 - Vocal re: coal emissions
 - Vocal re: cost of wellness center memberships
- Unsure, new to the area- think fairly active
- Elderly and poor less active don’t have the opportunity due to limitations in resources and/or travel
- Moderately active (2)
- Opportunities available, people choose not to be involved
- Need publicity for issues

Question # 4:

What are some of the major health issues or unmet needs that you see in your county?

- Lucky, modern hospital, 2 clinics
- Expand services for the handicap and poor
- Help each other and achieve better care
- Childhood immunizations; Immunizations, diverse populations not always receptive (2)
- Separate schools for each group make immunizing difficult
- Prevention; Knowledge needed re: nutrition: good nutrition, fact vs. myth: Need education about living/eating healthier; Underutilized women's health, prenatal and parenting classes: Less preventative medicine utilized (4)
- Inactivity, obesity, diabetes: Battle of obesity and chronic disease; Lack of being active, lifestyle of immobility (10)
- Drug use, especially meth
- High cost of medical care: Funding/ability to pay for care: Uninsured people; Underinsured, or with high deductible; Many without insurance, especially low income or self-employed; Uninsured children, elderly and working young: Ability to pay for doctor visits and medications; Uninsured and underinsured citizens (9)
- Good paying jobs
- Access to health care; Lack of access to services and need more specialized services (6)
 - Very difficult to obtain psych services especially for children, if it is available to is 40-50 miles away and transportation becomes an issue
 - No dermatology or ENT in county
 - Rehab to home services
 - Long term vent patients, local physicians unable to care for due to being overly extended. Had to go out of area to find physicians for this group
 - Low income and dentistry availability
 - Alcoholism/abuse
- More access for "walkable buses"
- Schools do a lot to try to support children- WIC
- Number of smokers, tobacco use/abuse
- Need to advertise fun, healthy and active things to do to involve more people
- Farming community, debt
- Needs of elderly need to be identified
- Preschool and elementary school children get proper nutrition
- Emergency preparedness planning
- Indoor opportunities during winter months for recreation, affordable for low income. Family focused recreation. (2)
- Lack of info among residents and willingness to use what's available
- Poverty issues. County does pretty good job of taking care of these through Good will and food bank, etc.

Question # 5:

What is your impression of the health care services currently in your county? (-Or services outside the county that serve your residents.)

- Good things to offer; Good services; Really, really good; Skilled people; Wonderful health care services; Terrific health care services, best around as far as counties go (10)
- Community action
- Good health care with fantastic support from the north (Mayo); Good input from specialists (2)
- A+ for a rural community
- “Guttenberg things highly of their medical staff and they try to service as good role models.”
- We have generalists, need more access to specialists; Need dental and mental health access; Need to improve mental health services, especially for children: Other than psych, good services; Outlying services are available but have to travel to obtain (5)
- Insurance deficits
- Clinics in smaller communities (2)
- Supportive school systems
- Emergency services see a lot on non-emergency patients due to no open appointments in the clinics: Shortage of doctors, doctors are very busy; Underserved by physicians and midlevel providers; Otherwise access to care is good due to number of providers; Good services, not as open as should be (6)
- Health promotion/preventative services available
- Care center services are good
- Child Health Specialty Clinic real asset to community
- Excellent health care in surrounding counties (Blackhawk, Johnson)
- IA is a great place to get health care low cost vs. rest of nation, providers are hard workers with IA ethics, can’t fault local or statewide health care
- OK. Good for minor things. If someone needs major medical care they need to go to large city.
- Services available are unaffordable for a lot of people, like routine physicals and hospital services for minor things.
- Great medical facilities
- Public health does great; Relative to other counties [services] is decent because we have excellent public health programs. (3)
- 3 excellent providers – hospital and 2 clinics (4)
- Better for low income folks

Question # 6:

What organizations or groups are essential to improving the health status of residents of your county?

- IA State extension office, food and health information, locally grown food more available; ISU extension office is an added bonus (2)
- Wellness center memberships, health conscious people; Offer appropriate and reasonable cost health memberships, nutrition and exercise opportunities (2)
- Clinics, hospitals, public health
- WIC, MCH, community action
- Administration at Luther and public schools are aware of health care concerns; School programs, tobacco prevention; Health care sector ; School systems; Wellness and school systems needs to be part of the health and fitness education (9)
- City and municipal government need to be active; Bringing more county supervisors and legislators into meetings (5)
- Churches are a huge factor for healthiness
- Public health crew; County health, VNA, clinics; Public health provides information and education; Public health, home health; BOH (6)
- Public health, hospitals and clinics.(6)
- More dentists and they need to agree to accept Medicaid
- Food and fitness coalition; Efforts of Food and fitness initiative, getting groups and businesses active; Need growers for fitness grant; Kellogg's grant for Food and Fitness (4)
- Individuals need to be active to seek good health (2)
- Clinics and hospitals
- Community civic organizations- wanting to get healthy is important
- Schools and churches
- Health care coalition
- Getting the "average Joe" involved
- Advertising of activities
- Vegetable tasting for young children
- Affordable health services and insurances
- Individual health care providers, dental and mental health
- Good physical therapy groups
- Need to expand dialysis facilities
- Hospice, nursing homes, and home care
- All providers need to be on the "same page"
- Conservation board, DNR for keeping environment clean and water safe
- Emergency management
- Good fire departments

Question # 7:

What are some things that you see as future health concerns in the county?

- Funding, grants, Medicaid- not all people that qualify are signed up
- [that the] County is very aware of health issues; Need to make regular citizens more aware; Education of those not educated (3)
- Diabetes prevention
- Battling chronic disease
- The baby boomers are an aging population, concern will be providing healthcare that meets the expectations of that group; Aging provider population; Many are turning to health care as a second career in their 30-40, don't have a lot of teen and 20 year olds entering the field; Need to recruit more physicians, going to be a real challenge; Shrinking of medical professionals in rural area. (5)
- Aging population; Increasing elderly population; With the aging population, in home services are needed (7)
- Keep people active, engaged and healthy longer; Learn to eat healthier and exercise; inactivity; lack of activity by younger generation (5)
- Travel long distance for specialists.
- Critical access hospitals don't have in-depth services like chemotherapy
- Chronic Disease: evaluation and early diagnosis is critical (16)
 - Obesity & Obesity in Children
 - Diabetes
 - Hypertension; ; Heart disease; blood vessel disease
- Air quality, water quality, food quality. We need preventative measures now.
- Export of youth from IA for better higher paying jobs
- Having uncompromised food sources
- Young people get information off internet rather than from local paper make it difficult to target this population for education and screening
- Financial for hospitals
- Health insurance; Cost of health care (3)
- Life spans are decreasing
- Stress is a huge issue
- Lead exposure and children
- Fetal alcohol syndrome and drugs in children
- Identifying "in need" peoples and offering services
- Water quality, keep rivers clean
- Taking care of our beautiful environment
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Kids with psychiatric issues
- Poor parenting skills
- Number of asthma cases related to environment
- Need a wellness component to our medical facilities to be more preventative.
- Housing and tax base

Question # 8:

What do you see as potential opportunities for health improvement in the county?

- Wellness center is a huge opportunity; More outlook for physical activity like a community activity center; Wellness center new- increased activity, healthy life style promotion; Having a fitness center that can be accessed by everyone at a reasonable rate (6)
- Lower income individuals need resources to get low cost memberships to wellness center, pools
- New school with NICC site
- Educational factors, college offering medical field
- Local awareness, more available education, more publicity
- Have to do something to help kids' life's spans be as long as ours; Improve the health of the pediatric population; Awareness- this is the first generation not expected to live longer than parents (3)
- Like to see people insured or some kind of health care; Funding- don't know how to improve at local level, needs to be done at state level legislatively; Not much short of changes at least at the federal level, i.e. health care costs; Utilizing insurances provided like Title IX (4)
- Working on fitness trails, need people to utilize them; getting young children engaged in physical activities and keeping them engaged for future health reasons; Younger generation needs a stronger work ethic – they're too lazy and want everything handed to them (4)
- Precautions for food quality, i.e. hormones in beef
- NIFF grants, extending grow seasons, farmers' markets and community garden space; Grocery stores locally selling locally grown produce. (2)
- Education re: healthy eating and exercise- bike trails in county, fun, exciting ways of improving nutrition, activity and outlook; Heath fairs at school and hospital to educate people; Hospitals and VNA with Kellogg's grant will have financial backing to promote healthier eating; Kellogg grant if used to address health issues (6)
- Limited travel to services
- Need more centrally located services- they are happening but need to continue and add more
- People are dependent on family, don't want to be a burden, don't want to ask family to take a day off work to take them to an appointment
- Teen pregnancy prevention
- Smoking- offering quit options
- Healthy food options in schools
- Many people are falling thru the cracks, unserved by Medicare, Medicaid or private insurers, may qualify but don't know
- Elma is working on establishing a clinic
- Trail systems to encourage people to get active (3)
- Buddy systems for exercise
- Training public by public health to prepare for a pandemic situation
- . Safe environment

Question # 9:

What lessons have been learned from current and previous community initiatives?

- Failed initiative then approved- information out in more detail, which will benefit, communicate with public as a whole; Initiatives take a broad base of support and good organization to move things forward. Need money; Don't close ranks and expect certain outcomes with a small group of people (4)
- Organizations communicate with each other and help each other out; Need to partner with groups not typically partnered with "reach beyond their comfort zone." (2)
- Police department- decreased meth use, tobacco abuse prevention
- School programs to reduce HTN, diabetes, wt loss,
- Timing and critical mass engagement
- Create tension for change
- Need to have everyone on the same page and do that by detailed planning, coordination of services and open communication; Stay one step ahead in communication to get ahead of the gossip mill. (2)
- People want to be involved and interested. They join if they can. Educating public on need for initiative to get buy in from public, especially with fund raising, need input and support from individuals with respected reputations to assist; Communication, keep people in the loop when making decisions (3)
- Need financial backing to follow through with plans
- The dos and don'ts of getting people of the same industry together and learning what works.
- New to area-unsure- think a lot was learned with the bond issue for new wellness center and new school
- Trying to get restaurants in are to offer healthier menu options- real barrier- they don't want to
- Free blood pressure screens, reduced fee lab screens, yearly mammograms for uninsured offered by different agencies
- If first attempt doesn't work go back to the drawing board, don't give up, may be a good plan just needs to be presented differently, may need more exposure to the issue
- Need more EMT/paramedics in the rural area to do triage until ambulance arrives; Need additional ambulance crews available. (2)
- We are not prepared for a wide scale disaster.
- Health care is not affordable for a lot of people.
- Not going to make everybody happy
- In midst of emergency preparedness for entire community, need to continue with training sessions
- No opinion at this time. Haven't been involved before.

Question # 10:

Do you have any other comments that you would like to add?

- Thought provoking interview
- Information collected via survey will be very helpful
- Information brought to surface will be beneficial to everyone
- Our community has grown up with the meat and potatoes diet. It a challenge to change our eating habits. We were all more active when our generation was young. Now with computers and such our children aren't as active. If you offer somebody a carrot or a candy bar, they're going to choose the candy bar. We need to change our way of thinking.
- We are very fortunate to have 2 very good hospitals and the VNA. Kellogg's grant means we'll get the word out to our schools and younger people. Future -- see healthier county and this area of the state of Iowa.
- Interested to see how survey comes out
- Fayette county has bike trails that loop destinations together
- Need to get people together looking for new ideas
- Local hospital real asset, not all counties have one
- Many of these questions positive or negative all tie into each other.
- Would have been helpful to get sample questions out to review
- Very exciting time for the communities, we need to get as many people involved as possible.
- "Insurance companies gained too much control over medical options."