

PHHS BLOCK GRANT SUCCESS STORY 2016

CALIFORNIA WELLNESS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION-A

FRESNO SHARES MAPPING TOOL STATEWIDE TO PRIORITIZE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES INVESTMENTS.

Issue: To better understand health disparities in Fresno County, California, a core team of Fresno health and planning partners developed an online map-based tool that would identify communities with the highest burden of chronic disease, to prioritize planning strategies to create healthy, active communities. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) California Wellness Plan Implementation (CWPI) Program supported a regional convening between local public health workers and planners that featured Fresno's innovation.

Intervention: When Fresno County tackled rising rates of chronic disease and obesity and their associated cost, they took the unusual approach to use local data to effectively communicate community health priorities. Fresno's Community Health Improvement Partnership (FCHIP) collaborated with planners, the Fresno Council of Governments, community stakeholders, and public health professionals to identify and analyze complex key data points related to health and social well-being. The product of that collaboration is the Health Priority Index, a tool that maps indicators related to healthy communities. FCHIP developed colorful visual maps that dramatically illustrated high burdens of chronic disease in certain census tracts that should be prioritized for community health improvements.

Faced with potential health and social well-being indicators to map, this FCHIP collaborative narrowed the list of indicators by developing indicator groupings with the assistance of a Fresno County Department of Public Health epidemiologist and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Four key indicators were then selected to approximate the burden of chronic disease: (a) pollution burden from CalEnviroScreen, (b) pre-term birth rates, (c) years of potential life lost, and (d) a chronic disease mortality index calculated by analyzing county death records for all causes of death related to physical inactivity. The Health Priority Index identified census tracts in the lowest 25th percentile for each indicator, as compared to other census tracts in the County. Each census tract was color-coded by how many indicators fall in the lowest quadrant. In addition, the Health Priority Index included place-based data such as bike paths and trails, crime rates, and economic status.

The Health Priority Index has been developed in beta format online. It displays the areas in Fresno County most in need of healthy community improvements, including active transportation, recreation space, and food access. As the online version is developed, more indicators related to health and social well-being will be included. The Health Priority Index serves as a replicable model that other jurisdictions can replace with their own data sets. CDPH CWPI co-sponsored a regional meeting where Fresno shared the beta tool to inspire other jurisdictions and invite them to use their template.

Impact:

- Developed a multi-jurisdictional data tool identifying communities disproportionately impacted by chronic disease
- Established an online map that can be replicated by other jurisdictions to prioritize healthy community improvements.
- Shared beta mapping tool with health and planning professionals from 16 other counties at a regional meeting on September 15, 2016, to an enthusiastic reception.