SUTTER & YUBA COUNTIES COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

September 2013

Introduction

The Sutter and Yuba Counties Community Health Needs Assessment—available as a full report at http://www.frhg.org and other local organizations—provides the foundation for policymakers, community organizations and advocates to more strategically plan services and make needed improvements in Sutter and Yuba Counties; it also informs funders about directing investments toward areas and populations of highest need. The assessment process included extensively reviewing existing data, and conducting surveys, focus groups and interviews to obtain the communities’ perspectives about health needs and potential solutions for responding to them.

Highlights of Findings

Demographics

- The populations of both counties have grown by over 20% since 2000.
- The percentage of children is expected to decline in both counties from 2010 to 2050; the proportion of seniors is expected to rise, strikingly so in Yuba County.
- Both counties are projected to become increasingly culturally diverse, mostly attributable to residents self-identifying as Hispanic. Declines are anticipated in the non-White groups.

Socioeconomic Factors

- Recovery from the recession has been slow; the recession continues to have a painful impact on families and children.
- 41% of low-income adults (<200% federal poverty level) in the two-county region report not being “food secure.” Having limited resources for purchasing food has a direct impact on health.
- About two-thirds of students in both counties receive free/reduced price lunches. Enrollment in this program has steadily risen since 2007.
- 492 persons were counted as homeless on a single night, a very likely undercount of this snapshot of unstable living situations/homelessness.
- Fewer Sutter County residents (18.4%) than statewide report being uninsured, while more in Yuba County did—28.7% compared to 21.0% statewide.
- About 80% of children ages 0-18 in Sutter and Yuba Counties are insured through private or public insurance program. Both counties have high rates of Medi-Cal coverage.
- Close to 12% of Sutter County’s and 18% of Yuba County’s K-12 enrollment are English-language learners; the percentages are highest in grades K-3.
- More than three-quarters (78%) of those aged 25+ in both counties have at least a high school education, close to the state average, 81%.
- Sutter County’s high school dropout rate, 11.7%, is more favorable than statewide at 13.2%, while Yuba County’s rate, 17.5% is higher than both. Non-White students drop out of school at higher rates.

Key Resource Factors

- Yuba County ranks very low relative to the number and type of physicians and dentists that are needed to serve the whole community. The supply of both is relatively more favorable in Sutter County.
- Access to primary care and some specialty medical services is limited in both counties,
- Community-based clinics play an essential role as safety net providers but sometimes have long waits for appointments.

Key Health Factors

Communities commonly measure their health against statewide averages and national objectives to track and gauge progress. Residents in Sutter and Yuba Counties fare better than other Californians when it comes to:

- AIDS and Chlamydia incidence.
- Low infant birth weight.
- Death from female breast cancer.
- Children's dental visits (Sutter County).
Sutter and Yuba County residents are more likely than other Californians to:

- Have higher rates of drug use (including prescriptions).
- Have higher rates of obesity.
- Die from diabetes-related causes.
- Die from coronary heart disease.
- Die from most cancers.
- Die from chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (Yuba County).
- Die from suicide.
- Die from alcohol-involved motor vehicle crash.
- Not initiate breastfeeding.
- Be a teen mother (Yuba County).
- Not get screened for breast cancer (Yuba County).

Sutter and Yuba County residents are about as likely as other Californians to:

- Start kindergarten fully immunized.
- Enter care early enough to have adequate prenatal care.

**Input from the Community**

The findings below reflect input from focus group participants, interviews with key community health and other leaders, and the 856 residents who completed a Community Health Survey.

**Personal Habits for Maintaining Health**

Community residents reported exercise, eating fresh produce daily, brushing/flossing teeth daily and not smoking, in that order, as the 4 personal health habits that contribute to maintaining their own health.

**Unmet Health Needs**

The highest-ranked unmet health needs were for:

- Affordable dental (first priority) and medical care.
- Healthier eating/access to fresh produce, obesity prevention.
- Substance abuse problems (smoking, illegal drugs, alcohol abuse, abuse of prescription medications).
- Affordable mental health (including for stress, anxiety, depression) services.

The following barriers were usually a problem or issue when seeking services for more than 30% of individuals who filled out a Community Health Survey:

- Finding free/reduced-cost health care services.
- Finding an office/clinic open during non-work hours.
- Finding a provider to take Medi-Cal or other type of insurance.
- Ability to take off work and not lose pay when self or family member is sick.

**Suggested Strategies and Solutions**

The community input process, backed by data, suggested areas where additional support was needed to improve health in Sutter and Yuba Counties:

- Support more affordable dental (especially) and medical services.
- Promote healthier eating (gardens, cooking classes).
- Create year-round activities for youth.
- Expand substance abuse services.
- Conduct a major public education campaign targeted to increasing awareness/prevention.
- Expand mental health services.
- Support services for the homebound and frail elderly.

**Recommended Priorities**

After evaluating all the findings from the needs assessment, the Steering Committee agreed that an important opportunity exists in Sutter and Yuba Counties for all health partners to focus on the key priorities below along with their own missions. Some of the same strategies can be used to address the needs where these areas overlap.

- Tobacco prevention education and cessation
- Use/abuse of illegal drugs and prescriptions
- Adult dental services
- Food and nutrition
- Breastfeeding promotion

Suggested strategies for support regarding the priority areas are described in the full report. Visions for future community support in all areas will require identifying effective leadership, raising awareness of stakeholders and determining how to involve them, and collaborating among agencies.

**Participating Collaborative Organizations**

- Peach Tree Healthcare
- Sutter County Schools
- Sutter-Yuba Mental Health Department
- Yuba County Health & Human Services
- Sutter County Human Services Health Division
- Sutter County Children & Families Commission

**Researched and Written by**

BARBARA AVED ASSOCIATES