



Community Themes and Strengths Assessment

April 23, 2015-May 21, 2015

Purpose

The Community Themes and Strengths Assessment aims to answer the following questions: “What is important to our community?”, “How is quality of life perceived in our community?”, and “What assets do we have that can be used to improve community health?”

Process

The internal MAPP team at the Evanston Health and Human Services Department identified a list of about 200 community leaders who should participate in the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment. The team devised four questions that were sent in an online survey through Wufoo to the 200 members. The survey doubled as an RSVP form for the Forces of Change Assessment occurring on May 21st, 2015. The four questions included on the Community Themes and Strengths online survey were:

1. Based on your experience, what are the most important health issues that must be addressed to improve the health and quality of life in Evanston? (List as many as you would like).
2. For each issue you identify, please answer the subsequent question: What ideal actions, policies, or funding priorities would address this health issue?
3. Based on your experience, what assets does Evanston have that can be used to improve community health?
4. Based on your experience, what are the barriers to improving health in Evanston?

The survey was open from April 23, 2015- May 21st, 2015. The internal MAPP team then reviewed the responses to the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment, and categorized the responses by larger themes. The MAPP team then tallied up the responses to determine the most popular answers for each question. A total of 77 Evanston leaders participated in the survey.

Results

Listed below are the top response themes that were identified for each question.

1. Based on your experience, what are the most important health issues that must be addressed to improve the health and quality of life in Evanston?
 - Mental health
 - Access to care
 - Violence in communities
 - Affordable housing
 - Collaboration between agencies
 - Other notable responses: health and income disparities, physical activity, access to affordable healthy food

2. Based on your experience, what assets does Evanston have that can be used to improve community health?
 - Impassioned residents
 - Social service organizations, and non-profits
 - Educated citizens
 - Northwestern University
 - Two hospitals
 - Other notable responses: Erie, the school system, faith-based community, diversity, Cradle to Career

3. Based on your experience, what are the barriers to improving health in Evanston?
 - Lack of cross-collaboration between organizations
 - Funding
 - Segregation
 - Knowledge of services
 - No comprehensive health plan