Residents and Health Leaders Agree — We are on the right track!

There is something to be said about staying the course. On our last update, CCHD and UVMHN-CVPH, had gathered input from residents from across the county as part of the Community Health Assessment process. Nearly 1400 residents had shared their concerns related to health, social and environmental issues. A brief summary of these results is now available and can be found here: https://bit.ly/2MSEBZo.

The next step in the Community Health Assessment process was to identify our priority areas. Over 200 health stakeholders were invited to a Community Health Priority Setting Session held at Clinton Community College in July. Approximately 55 health partners representing eleven different community sectors attended and shared their views. Excitingly, 46% of the attendees reported this was their first time participating in priority setting activities. Attendees visited stations which featured local data on a potential priority area topic and included results from the resident survey. At each, local experts shared their direct experiences related to the topic area. After visiting all stations, attendees were asked to vote for the priority areas they believed to be most important for Clinton County to address as a community over the next few years.

Responses from the priority setting event overwhelmingly favored addressing chronic diseases and mental wellness. Both are current priority areas that are being addressed in Clinton County’s Community Health Improvement Plan. Therefore, Clinton County will stay the course for the next few years. That’s good news as the valuable momentum from current activities will push us forward to achieve additional positive outcomes.

As we update shared plans for local health improvement, it is a good time to recognize current successes and the solid foundation that has been set for more to come. Read on to see examples of the progress that is being made.

And keep an eye open for the new Community Health Improvement Plan to be released and posted here: www.clintonhealth.org/#xl_xr_page_default_sdata

Thoughts and comments are welcome as we get started on new efforts to improve local health.
Initiative to Improve Pediatric-to-Adult Health Care Transition

While most of us would agree that we don’t suddenly wake up one morning and become adults, legally-speaking, we do. Yet, only about 15% of youth in the United States make an ‘ideal’ transition from pediatric to adult health care.

Do you know your primary care provider’s name? Their phone number? What to do and who to call if you are sick? These are the questions that the Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) and Adirondacks ACO want to be sure all young adults can answer. Recently the two agencies helped local pediatric, family, and adult health care providers complete quality initiative (QI) projects to improve adolescent patients’ transition from pediatric to adult health care. Project facilitators measured success using evaluation tools created by Got Transition, a program of the National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health. At the conclusion of the initiative, sixty-three percent of the health care offices that participated had implemented practices to help youth and young adults manage their own health care and use health services.

At the same time, a community campaign was launched to increase awareness among adolescents and parents of their responsibilities. Fun and engaging messages urged young adults to take charge of their health, offering concrete examples such as scheduling their own annual wellness visit. The campaign’s social media component consisted of 34 posts, like the ones shown here, which were viewed over 12,500 times. CCHD’s website also featured a blog on the topic and project facilitators worked with the SUNY Plattsburgh Communications Department to produce a series of Public Service Announcements (PSAs).

Data shows that one in five Clinton County children are food insecure. The grant is working with local pediatric providers and community based organizations to universally screen for food insecurity and refer households identified as food insecure to community resources.

Cooking classes are scheduled to take place through December. CCHD will continue working with local health care practitioners and community partners toward universal food insecurity screening practices.

To find out more about this project contact CCHD at (518) 565-4993. To learn about cooking classes check out the CCHD Facebook page for upcoming events.

For more information about transitioning from pediatric to adult health, visit www.gottransition.org.

Knowing how to prepare fresh and healthy foods can make a big difference in how well we eat.

That’s why the Clinton County Health Department and Cornell Cooperative Extension have been busy offering a series of cooking classes where participants gain hands-on experience preparing dishes that are healthy, quick and easy. To date 16 group lessons have been held at the MHAB Life Skills Campus in Plattsburgh. Classes with names like “Chop It Like It’s Hot!” and “Taters Gonna Tate” have caught the attention of local residents. Every session has been full.

The classes are part of a collaborative effort between CCHD and Clinton County Mental Health and Addiction Services through a grant from Adirondack Health Institute. The project’s aim is to reduce food insecurity in Clinton County. The USDA defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy lifestyle.

FOCUSED APPROACH

Websites

www.facebook.com/clintonhealth/
For some individuals in our community who experience mental health or substance use disorders, life endeavors such as finishing school, finding and keeping a job or securing a place to live, can at times seem almost impossible.

The Adult Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) program of Behavioral Health Services North offers a unique approach to treatment compared to the traditional office setting. Since 2017, HCBS rehabilitation practitioners in Clinton County have been going into the homes and communities of clients, working one on one to assist them in the behavioral change process. Staff provide person-centered services. They meet clients where they want to meet and work with them on client-centered goals to build skills to better manage difficult life circumstances and make progress toward higher overall functioning.

The approach has proven successful as participants in the Adult HCBS have been able to:

• Find stable housing;
• Develop exercise routines and healthy diet plans;
• Get a GED, college degree, or vocational certificate;
• Learn skills to manage a home such as cleaning, cooking and budgeting;
• Develop exercise routines and healthy diet plans;
• Improve time management skills to better manage life and multiple appointments;
• Reduce instances of hospitalization;
• Increase community involvement and overcome social anxiety.

To qualify for services, individuals must be 21 years old or older and have Managed Medicaid Insurance with a HARP plan. For more information about the program and eligibility requirements, call (518) 563-8000 ext. 327 or visit www.bhsn.org/hcbs.

The Adult Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) program has helped eight communities develop transportation and pedestrian concept plans. These plans provide a blueprint for implementing low-cost strategies to improve pedestrian safety.

In the first year, CHSC contracted with the planning firm, Chazen Companies, to develop concept plans for the Towns of Moriah, Ticonderoga, Chateaugay and the Village of Dannemora. Chazen Companies met with town and village officials and conducted walking audits in each locale. Data collected from the meetings and during the walking audits was used to create individualized concept plans for each community. In spring of 2019, CHSC awarded the municipalities mini-grants to begin implementing their plans. Pedestrian safety was improved near local parks and on busy roadways by installing new crosswalks and increasing signage. Each concept plan included additional strategies for future consideration. The project went over so well that this year, Chazen Companies was asked to create concept plans for four more communities, the Towns of Mooers, Altona, Lewis and Elizabethtown.

CCHD’s Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) grant is a five year (2015-2020) public health initiative funded by the New York State Department of Health to reduce the major risk factors of obesity, diabetes and other major chronic diseases. CHSC works with targeted towns and villages serving specific school districts in Clinton, Essex and Franklin counties identified by the NYS Department of Health. CHSC assists communities in developing and implementing Complete Streets policies, plans and practices. Complete Streets are streets that are safe for users of all ages and abilities.

For more information about the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities grant visit http://www.clintonhealth.org/chsc. For more information about Complete Streets and to find out if your town or county has a Complete Streets Policy visit https://www.dot.ny.gov/programs/completestreets.
Blue Shield of Northeastern New York recently awarded a $125,000 Blue Fund grant to the Foundation of CVPH for community health improvement projects. The award will support the Town of Schuyler Falls Saranac River Trail Greenway (SRTG) Spur and Behavioral Health Services North (BHSN) Center for Well Being. Both projects will result in permanent and sustainable physical activity community health improvement features.

Blue Shield of Northeastern New York Blue Fund awards major grants in the Capital Region to organizations and initiatives that have a positive impact on key health areas. Blue Fund will directly support the Town of Schuyler Falls (River Street Park) spur of the SRTG with funds to construct a Futsal Court (soccer). The area will be designed as a soccer field in the warm months and an outdoor skating rink in the winter. This dual use feature will provide year round opportunities for youth, families and seniors to be physically active.

Blue Fund will also help establish a year round, public outdoor physical activity area at the BHSN Center for Well Being located on Rt. 3. The space will feature 8-10 exercise stations designed to improve cardiovascular health that will be available for BHSN clients, plus an exercise component will be incorporated into clients’ care plans for personal physical health improvement. Both projects will be completed in 2020.

New Try Five Challenge

Have you seen the newest publication available from Champlain Area Trails, also known as CATS? The group recently created a Northern Champlain Valley 2019-2020 Trail Map featuring trails and walking paths in Clinton County. The new map expands upon the Recreational Trails Map previously offered by the CCHD’s Healthy Neighborhood Initiative. The map highlights more than 30 trails and walking paths which range from flat, easy-to-access paved paths to more challenging mountain hikes.

To introduce residents to this new resource, as well as to the variety of walking and hiking venues available in Clinton County, CCHD has created the Try Five Challenge. Anyone can participate. The diverse trails and paths in Clinton County provide options for all ages and abilities. Starting the Challenge is simple:

- Get a copy of the map (available from CCHD or CATS);
- Select any five of the trails and paths, preferably ones you haven’t tried before;
- Walk, bike, hike, roll or even x-county ski on them;
- Answer a quick survey;
- Claim your Try 5 decal or magnet.

The final two spurs of the Saranac River Trail Greenway (SRTG) will begin taking shape very soon. One will be in the Town of Schuyler Falls, at the end of Ladue and River Streets in the Hamlet of Morrisonville. The River St. Park will include a large Adirondack-style pavilion with four grill stations. A 5 mile inclusive walking trail, lined with 18 solar lights, will be created and will meet ADA requirements. Construction is planned for late 2019. Funding for the project also allows for the creation of a Pump Park for bicycles at the Salmon River Road Recreation Park to be built by late summer of 2020.

The Town of Saranac spur will include the enhancement of an existing informal walking trail around the Town Green neighborhood. It will include a landscaped safety barrier that will buffer the Town Green from Rt. 3 during community events. This work is expected to be complete by June 30, 2021. The two spurs will provide additional opportunities for physical activity and healthy nutrition for residents of all ages, abilities and income levels.

The Foundation of CVPH received a $200,000 award from the New York State Health Foundation to complete these final two spurs. The NYS Health Foundation is a not-for-profit philanthropic organization whose primary mission is to improve population based health through permanent and sustainable change focused on built environment, systems and policy change. Blue Shield of Northeastern New York is also contributing to the Schuyler Falls spur project.

The first SRTG spur, which opened in 2018, was completed in the Town of Plattsburgh on LaPierre Lane. This project was also facilitated by the Foundation of CVPH and funded primarily by the NYS Health Foundation. The project included generous contributions from local individuals and businesses.