Introduction

Erie County is located in northwestern Pennsylvania on the south shore of Lake Erie. In 2013, the population totaled 280,294, with 80% classified as urban and 20% as rural. In this same year, 55.2% of all residents lived in either the City of Erie (100,671 persons) or Millcreek Township (54,239 persons). Poverty, especially within the City of Erie, is a concern.

In 2012, a community health needs assessment was completed for Erie County. Based on the results of this assessment, four strategic health issues, their corresponding priority health indicators, and seven overarching challenges were identified. The strategic health issues are lifestyle behavior change, chronic disease prevention and control, cancer prevention and early detection, and mental health. The overarching challenges are issues that impact the health of Erie County residents and should be considered in any community-based health action plan. They are poverty, disparities, the aging
population, medical and dental professional shortage, health-related transportation, health literacy, and lack of a central source of information and referral. This is represented in the community health blueprint below.
Community Health Improvement Plan

The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is a blueprint for achieving improved community health. It begins with community partners and stakeholders joining in a collaborative dialogue to develop goals and strategies for the strategic issues identified in the community health needs assessment. The priority indicators and overarching challenges are used as guides. These final goals and strategies describe what the group wants to achieve and how they plan on doing it. The results are action plans that use evidence based programs to provide measurable and effective interventions within the community. The overarching goal of the CHIP is to establish a unified health improvement plan to transform Erie County into a “Community of Wellness”.

The Erie County CHIP began as a unilateral group of community organizations each of whom deliver services and programs within the parameters of the priority indicators and overarching challenges.

CHIP Steering Committee
June 30, 2015

James Amsterdman, MD St. Vincent Hospital
Rachel Andrews AmeriHealth Caritas
Del Birch United Way of Erie County
Nicole Bolash Erie County Department of Health
Valerie Bukowski Erie County Department of Health
April Bush Drug and Alcohol Coalition
Terry DeLellis Corry Memorial Hospital
Carrie Ennis UPMC Hamot
George Espy Erie Community Foundation
Debra Feeney Erie City School District
Nina Ferraro Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
Anna Frantz Emerge 2040
Amanda Harkness Erie County Department of Health (Nutrition)
Jillian Heschke Millcreek Community Hospital
Dawna Himmel Erie County Diabetes Association
Karen Jakiel American Cancer Society
Gina Klofft American Heart Association
Denise Kolivoski National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Mark Kresse Healthcare Collaboration
Amy Jo Learn St. Vincent Hospital
Laura Luther Erie County Department of Health (Phys Activ)
Melissa Lyon Erie County Department of Health
Sarah Morgan Erie County Department of Health (Tobacco)
Peggy Popeski Family Services of NWPA
Anthony Snow, MD Community Health Net
Patricia Stubber Northwest PA Area Health Education Center
Kathy Wyrosdick Erie County Planning Department
Eileen Zinchiak Mercyhurst Public Health Institute

These organizations partner with over 90 stakeholders throughout Erie County to service residents.
Community Partners and Stakeholders

Adagio Health (Erie County)  
American Cancer Society  
American Diabetes Association  
American Heart Association  
Asbury Woods Nature Center  
Baldwin Brothers Realty  
Booker T. Washington Center  
Boy Scouts of America  
Chronic Disease Prevention Program  
City of Erie Police Department  
City of Erie School District  
Coalition Pathways  
Community Health Net  
Community-At-Large Members  
Coroner  
Corry Chamber of Commerce  
Corry Memorial Hospital  
Corry Police Department  
County of Erie, Mental Health and Mental Retardation  
Divine Connections  
Erie Children’s Advocacy Center  
Erie City Council  
Erie Community Foundation  
Erie County Board of Health  
Erie County Cancer Task Force  
Erie County Care Management  
Erie County Department of Health  
Erie County Diabetes Association  
Erie County District Attorney Office  
Erie County Medical Society  
Erie Gay News (LGBT population)  
Erie Housing Authority  
Erie Mental Health Association  
Erie Reader  
Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership  
Erie Yesterday  
Eriez Magnetics  
Fairview Township  
Gannon University  
Gannondale School for Girls  
Gaudenzia  
General Electric Transportation Health Initiative  
Girard Borough  
Girl Scouts of America  
Goodell Gardens  
Great Lakes Institute of Technology

Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC)  
Health America Insurance (Coventry Healthcare)  
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield  
John F. Kennedy Center  
Junior League of Erie  
Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM)  
LECOM School of Pharmacy  
Lilly Broadcasting  
Martin Luther King Center  
Mercyhurst Civic Institute  
Mercyhurst University  
Millcreek Community Hospital  
Millcreek Police Department  
Mission Empower  
Mothers Against Teen Violence  
Multicultural Community Resource Center  
NAMI of Erie County (National Alliance on Mental Illness)  
Northeast Chamber of Commerce  
Northwest Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center  
Northwest Savings Bank  
Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5  
NWPA Tobacco Control Program  
Office of Children and Youth  
Office of the Pennsylvania Attorney General  
Ophelia Project  
Perseus House  
Regional Cancer Center  
Safe & Healthy Communities  
Saint Benedict Adult Education Program  
Saint Vincent Hospital  
Second Harvest Food Bank  
Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network  
Stairways Behavioral Health  
Trinity Center  
Union Township  
United Healthcare  
United Way of Erie County  
UPMC Hamot  
UPMC Insurance  
Veteran’s Affairs Medical Center  
VisitErie  
Waterford Township  
Whole Foods Cooperative  
Women’s Care Center
Four task forces, based on the four strategic issues, were established. They are: Lifestyle Behavior Change Task Force, Chronic Disease Task Force, Mental Health Task Force, and Cancer Prevention and Control Task Force. Focus areas for each of these task force groups follows.

Lifestyle Behavior Change Task Force
- Tobacco and Alcohol
  - Alcohol and tobacco use during pregnancy and post-partum
  - Tobacco cessation programs
  - Tobacco prevention initiatives
  - Tobacco enforcement/compliance programs
  - Tobacco advocacy initiatives
  - Smoke-free public places
  - Tobacco interventions in healthcare settings
- Nutrition
  - Food deserts
  - Community gardens
  - Healthy Corner Store initiative
  - Breastfeeding policy initiative – worksite compliance
- Physical Activity
  - Bike Erie initiative
  - The “Let’s Move Outside” county wide walking program
  - Safe Routes to School program
  - Complete streets strategies

Chronic Disease Task Force
- Million Hearts initiative and expo
- Safe and Healthy Communities - Hypertension prevention
- Safe and Healthy Communities - Diabetes prevention
- Healthcare Collaboration – Diabetes, COPD, Asthma
  - Data Group: Web reporting of patient compliance data
  - Health Literacy Group: Information about each disease and why compliance is important
  - Primary Care Access Group: Identification and review of healthcare providers

Mental Health Task Force
- Erie County Suicide Task Force
- Suicide prevention education in school settings
- Prescription drug overdose awareness and prevention

Cancer Task Force
- Cancer prevention and awareness
- Lung cancer - Tobacco intervention in a healthcare setting
Despite early success, this system became cumbersome. Organizations working on different programs within the same Task Force, did not meet outside of the quarterly Steering Committee meetings. This limited the amount of meaningful discussion among community partners and limited the long term coordination of their programs and services. As a result, the progress toward achievable goals was diluted.

In order to more effectively address the health needs of Erie County residents, the community partners and stakeholders are currently reevaluating the organizational structure of the present collaborative health improvement plan. The goal is to establish a system of accountability, responsibility, and coordinated program delivery.