

WELCOME

Welcome to the first issue of a new community service publication of the **Adams County Partnership for Community Health!** The purpose of this newsletter, which we are calling **AHealthy Communities®**, is to provide a medium for all of our Partnership affiliates and friends to share news about meetings, activities, issues, and events impacting **health and quality of life** throughout Adams County. We intend to publish this newsletter on a quarterly basis initially - and more frequently if needed. We welcome comments and participation by anyone in the community who has an interest in improving health in Adams County (as defined in our **Mission** and **Vision** Statements).

BACKGROUND OF THE A.C.P.C.H.

The Partnership was created in response to a Community Health Needs Assessment of Adams County, completed in 1996, which identified community perceptions of critical health and human service needs, and recommendations for action. The **top five prioritized needs** included: lack of health insurance/ability to pay for medical care, lack of awareness (by the community) and information (by providers) about health and human service resources, lack of mental health / psychiatric services, transportation (access to services), and lack of access to dental care. This Needs Assessment, conducted under the auspices of the **Adams County Council of Community Services**, resulted in establishment of an on-going collaborative effort to address key issues led by A.C.C.C.S, and supported by **The Gettysburg Hospital**.

For the past two years A.C.P.C.H. has been governed by the A.C.C.C.S. Board of Directors, and is currently served by fifteen active **task forces** and **committees**. They are:

- *ACCESS
- *ADAMS COUNTY COALITION TO PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY
- *ADAMS COUNTY YOUTH RESOURCE NETWORK
- *CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION
- *CHILDREN=S HEALTH
- *COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT
- *COLLEGE COMMUNITY COMPUTER NETWORK
- *COMMUNITIES THAT CARE
- *DENTAL SERVICES
- *DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
- *HEALTH STATUS INDICATORS
- *HOMELESSNESS
- *MANAGED CARE
- *SPIRITUAL HEALTH
- *TRANSPORTATION

These work groups are dedicated to addressing major issues of **access** (and barriers) to health and human services, **affordability** (cost/insurance), **awareness** (education/information), **measurement** (indicators/trending), and **availability** (resources/gaps/adequacy) which were evident throughout the initial assessment effort. Well over one hundred volunteers now participate in one or more of these efforts, and each group is looking to add more people. In addition, new task forces will be formed soon. **If anyone is interested in joining or learning more about Partnership efforts, please contact William Taft (who is coordinating Partnership development) at 337-4137.**

NEW DEVELOPMENTS/EVENTS

***Dedicated Partnership Support** - We are very pleased to announce that **The Gettysburg Hospital** has expanded their continuing commitment of support to the A.C.P.C.H. through provision of dedicated staff and facilities. Effective June 1, a Hospital-owned building, formerly a private residence which has been renovated for office use (**located at 424 South Washington Street - directly across from Gettysburg Internal Medicine Associate, Inc.**) will become the **Headquarters** for our Partnership. In addition, William Taft, will assume responsibility for managing the development of the Partnership, with office support by a secretary - both serving on a full-time basis. This level of support by the Hospital will enable us to centralize all files, better coordinate and assist task force activities, and accelerate pursuit of Partnership objectives toward improving community health status locally. These facilities will also provide additional meeting space for task force meetings, and greatly facilitate internal and external communications through greater visibility in the community.

***Community Health Needs Assessment** - An update of a Community Health Needs Assessment, completed in 1996, is well underway for Adams County. Like the initial effort, which is also sponsored by the Adams County Council of Community Services, the current study will combine a random sample survey of perceptions about needs and services with results of multiple **focus groups** being conducted across the community, and a report of secondary data targeting population trends in Adams County. In addition, a telephone survey assessing health risk behaviors and health status indicators has been undertaken as a joint effort by the **Adams County Partnership and the Healthy York County Coalition**. This effort is supported by **South Central Community Health**, the integrated health system which includes The Gettysburg Hospital and York Health System, covering the combined service areas. More news regarding finding and results - and implications for the work of the A.C.P.C.H. will be announced in future issues of our newsletter, **A Healthy Communities**.