

# Community Health

*“Limiting access to health care will not resolve the present health care crisis. The costs of care for the uninsured and Medicaid patients are passed on to all of us. Community Health Centers can provide excellent care to these patients and are one part of the answer to a very complex question—how to limit rising health care costs and increase accessibility.”*

*Dr. John D. Bentley, Jordan Valley Community Health Center*

**Springfield-Greene County Health Department.** The dedicated staff of this department constantly works in many different areas to promote community health and its value to our citizens. The Health Department is widely recognized as an innovative public health organization for its efforts in serving Greene County residents.

**Health Education – Allied Health Program.** Education and training of new health professionals is constantly on the rise in Springfield. Strategic alliances between the Public Health Department and local colleges help ensure the ongoing focus on the importance of promoting community health and increasing the number of health professionals in our community.

**Health Care Resources.** Springfield’s “Medical Mile” is home to two of the nation’s top integrated health care networks—CoxHealth and St. John’s Health Systems—numerous outpatient surgical centers, mental health facilities, and home health care services. State-of-the-art technology and compassionate care combine to make Springfield a regional hub for health care.

**Resources for Children and Adolescents.** The Center for Child and Adolescent Development, a \$6.5 million facility opened by Burrell Behavioral Health, has been described as the best facility of its kind nationally. Burrell received \$25 million in grants over the last few years primarily for children’s mental health programming; of this, \$8 million was distributed to other community agencies, including the Mayor’s Commission on Children, Springfield

Public Schools, Community Partnership, the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, Springfield-Greene County Library District, and other agencies.

**Child Abuse and Neglect.** This issue is highly recognized within the community and is being met head-on by public officials and in the community’s public school system.

**The Mayor’s Commission on Children** is actively promoting best practices to ensure that our community offers children opportunities to grow up strong, healthy, and unaffected by detouring influences.

**Community Partnership Building Blocks** and research by the Search Institute has determined 40 Building Blocks (developmental assets) that children need in order to grow up healthy. Young people who have 31 of the 40 Building Blocks are much less likely to be involved with problem behaviors such as early alcohol use, sexual activity, school failure, depression/suicide, and violent behavior, and much more likely to make positive choices and to exhibit school success and caring behavior.

**R-12 Building Blocks** is a program working diligently with new mothers promoting healthy pregnancies, improving parental care, and improving families’ futures. Taking active roles in these problem areas is expected to reduce child abuse and neglect rates within the home and benefit the entire community.

**The Junior League of Springfield** will partner with the Community Partnership, United Way, CoxHealth, and St. John’s Hospital to develop a crisis nursery in Springfield. A crisis nursery is a proven child abuse prevention tool and a recognized community need.

**Access to Care.** Greene County is one of only ten counties in Missouri not designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas. However, access to dental and preventative care is limited for much of the population. This is apparent at Jordan Valley Community Health Center Dental Clinic, where the waiting list is currently over 3 years and 5,000 patients long. In addition, there has been an increase in mothers receiving Medicaid assistance, due partly to working mothers without employer health care benefits.

**Mothers Smoking.** Tobacco use during pregnancy directly affects many infant diseases. Tobacco use during pregnancy has increased over the last three years and is consistently higher than national averages. Tobacco use also reflects increases in low infant birth weight.

**Communicable Disease.** Our community has witnessed over a 100% increase in gonorrhea cases over the past seven years. This rate continues to grow. Recently, the community has also experienced a dramatic increase in syphilis cases.

**Recent State Budget Cuts.** Recent state cuts in health care and social services will significantly and negatively affect access to primary care.

**Concerns**

**Aging Population.** A looming concern to the health care environment nationwide is the aging of the baby boomer generation. Health care facilities and professionals will be hard pressed to keep up with the growth of this demand. However, this threat also presents a great opportunity for the health care industry to grow and advance to meet the needs of these citizens.

**2005 COMMUNITY HEALTH DATA**

	Greene County, 2003	5-Year Mean	Trend	Missouri 2003
<b>Maternal Health (percent of total live births)</b>				
Low Birth Weight	7.7	7.0	UP	8.0
Mothers as Medicaid Participants	50.5	46.8	UP	45.4
First Trimester Prenatal Care	89.5	89.3	NC	88.5
Births to Mothers Under Age 18	3.1	3.9	Down	3.5
Mothers Smoking During Pregnancy	21.0	19.4	Up	18.1
<b>Children's Health and Wellness</b>				
Child Abuse/Neglect (rate per 1,000 children)	10.9	13.1	Down	6.8
Immunization Rate (percentage of children, public clinics)	87.2	90.4	NC	84.9
Infant Deaths (per 1,000 live births)	7.1	6.9	NC	78
<b>Communicable Disease (incidence per 100,000 population)</b>				
Gonorrhea	113.0	80.6	Up	157.1
Tuberculosis	3.7	4.4	Down	2.3
HIV	3.3	5.9	Down	6.9
<b>Deaths (rate per 100,000)</b>				
Cardiovascular Disease	354.4	378.5	Down	369.9
Lung Cancer	65.9	70.3	Down	66.1
Breast Cancer	19.5	15.8	Up	16.2
Motor Vehicle Crashes	20.3	16.4	Up	21.1
Suicide	13.4	13.5	NC	12.1