

# Community Health

To make Springfield healthier, *our community's individuals must be adaptable.*

One simple idea will not maintain our successes and solve our problems. A *compilation of ideas affecting multiple groups of people*, through various daily activities, will collectively improve Springfield's health. While initiatives and partnerships have directed our attention to provider, wellness, and infrastructure issues, *health and prevention concerns continue to impact Springfield-Greene County.*

## BLUE RIBBONS

### Addressing Provider Shortage

The shortage of healthcare providers has been a growing issue for many years. New retirees will seek more healthcare as they age and a previously uninsured population will gain coverage under the Affordable Care Act. As the number in need of care continues to grow, the number providing it struggles to keep pace. While this is a great challenge, Springfield is doing many things to act on this issue.

Mercy and CoxHealth are working with the University of Missouri School of Medicine to expand its campus to Springfield to increase enrollment and grow education opportunities (see Business and Economic Conditions section). Already the number one provider of physicians for Missouri, MU will grow its class size from 96 to 128 medical students annually, with 32 students from each class completing their last two years of medical education at a Springfield healthcare organization. Ozarks Technical Community College is using funding from MOHealthWins to train 500 unemployed workers for healthcare careers. Missouri State University has partnered with the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Pharmacy to expand its program to Springfield as early as fall 2014.

Through growing educational programs and partnerships with institutions offering programs not available in the community, Springfield is committed to ensuring that its citizens have the proper level of care available to them.

### Health and Wellness

Springfield has been addressing chronic diseases by creating a vibrant community promoting



The University of Missouri-Columbia and CoxHealth and Mercy Health System are working together to improve health, education and the economy in Springfield by increasing the number of physicians.

healthier lifestyles. Many high-profile employers are developing employee wellness programs to improve employees' lifestyles while reducing the burden of rising healthcare premiums. For example, Paul Mueller Company and City Utilities have onsite clinics that provide health services to employees while at work. These organizations have found that a healthier environment for employees can directly affect their healthcare costs.

Healthy Living Alliance (HLA), a local public health partnership, continues to improve the health of the community while strengthening the local economy through four focus areas: increasing physical activity; improving nutritional

**"The gratefulness of the patients speaks volumes about what the effort is able to accomplish to help them with their dental pain; the visible transformation of many of the volunteers speaks to just how moved we all can be when we make the effort to help our neighbors in need."**

—Dr. Darren Mahaffey, DDS

access; developing built environments encouraging physical activity; and reducing tobacco use. In 2012, HLA received a \$1.3 million grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) geared towards improving many of these focus areas.

Springfield's geography provides natural opportunities for public fitness events such as the Bass Pro Fitness Festival, races, hiking/biking, and a strong network of greenways and trails (see Recreation, Sports and Leisure section). The Springfield Urban Agriculture Coalition has worked on increasing access to healthier foods through the Dig in R-12 (DIRT) Project. DIRT, a school-based program, creates gardens on school grounds to emphasize the importance of eating healthy foods using environmentally sustainable practices. Additionally, farmers markets continue to sprout throughout the community, improving healthy choices while benefitting the local economy.

Expanding healthy programs requires community-wide efforts in the classroom, on the trail, at the market, and at other outreach points.



Runners in the Mercy Sunshine Run.



Shoppers at a Springfield farmers market.

### Springfield Healthcare Infrastructure

As mentioned in the 2011 Community Focus report, Springfield's healthcare infrastructure continues to be a strong asset to the community. Springfield's healthcare industry has a local economic impact of more than \$3 billion and annually employs 15 percent of Springfield's workforce while promoting a healthy lifestyle. The availability of services from these healthcare organizations improves the lives of the patients they serve through the following efforts:

- Mercy and CoxHealth are expanding services in the community, offering care through a provider-based, patient-focused model. Although competing entities, the two organizations collaborate on initiatives benefiting the greater community.
- Jordan Valley Community Health Center, a federally qualified health center, continues to grow its local outreach.
- Ozarks Community Hospital serves underinsured and uninsured patients and The Kitchen Clinic provides care for low-income patients.
- Burrell Behavioral Health provides a strong mental health presence while the Forest Institute prepares workers for careers in behavioral and human sciences.

Local healthcare organizations maintain a strong relationship with Springfield colleges and universities by offering opportunities for students to further their knowledge. This improves the educational systems while strengthening

Springfield's future through the training of up-coming local health professionals.

## RED FLAGS

### Mental Health

According to the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH), one in five Missourians had some degree of mental illness last year, but only 6 percent received treatment at a DMH facility.

A significant factor contributing to the lack of access to mental healthcare is the lack of reimbursement and the disproportionate number of patients in need of mental care who are uninsured.

If Medicaid were to expand to include those up to 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Line (\$15,415 for an individual or \$26,344 for a family of three), nearly 300,000 additional residents would be covered, of which nearly 50,000 would receive behavioral health services through DMH-funded programs. Furthermore, Missouri has lost nearly 1,400 psychiatric inpatient beds since 1990. Hospital emergency departments retain mental health patients because they lack sufficient psychiatric beds for their placement.

Mental health services need to be improved for people of all ages. Improvements in mental health in school systems will provide treatment for children while increased funding will help provide proper care to assist our community and those in need of these services.

### Disease Prevention

The leading causes of death related to chronic disease in Greene County are heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes. Preventable chronic

diseases negatively impact an individual's health and overall quality of life and they are costly to the individual, community, and healthcare system.

Rather than eliminating chronic diseases, we are learning how to live longer with these diseases. Healthcare is used as reactive, rather than preventive, medicine and this must change. A Springfield Public Schools assessment of fifth graders found 40 percent of that group is already overweight or obese. Youth obesity is a precursor for adult obesity, which is often associated with numerous deadly chronic diseases. To improve the lives of our community, we must start with our youth.

Several studies have shown a correlation between income and health. Low-income individuals tend to have poorer health outcomes than individuals with higher income. A significant reason for this correlation is that low-income individuals and families are often unable to afford access to proper care.

### Income, Education Levels Predict Health Problems

Access to care evaluates one's ability to obtain necessary health services for improving or maintaining health while overcoming challenges, both economic and health related. Addressing poverty and expanding access to care will improve the health of Springfield. The Affordable Care Act aims to increase access to healthcare for citizens through initiatives such as preventing insurance companies from denying coverage due to pre-existing conditions and strengthening community and rural health centers.

### Oral Health

Oral health greatly impacts overall health. Poor oral health can result in deprived nutrition, loss of self-esteem, missed school days for youth, and increased cost of care. Families of lower socioeconomic status are less likely to receive healthcare, with dental care often the last priority. According to the 2010 Greene County Health Commission report, the majority of emergency room visits among uninsured 20-49 year olds were for dental problems. According to a report from the Missouri Department of Health and

### RELATIONSHIP OF EDUCATION AND INCOME LEVELS TO HEALTH PROBLEMS

Americans who responded "yes" to the question: *Do you have health problems that prevent you from doing any of the things people your age can normally do?*

EDUCATION LEVEL	<\$24K	\$24K- <\$36K	\$36K- <\$90K	\$90K+
Less than high school	48%	27%	25%	26%
High school graduate	38%	23%	16%	15%
Some college/ vocational school	42%	23%	17%	14%
College graduate/ Postgrad	32%	18%	13%	10%

Source: Gallup Report April 28, 2010

### VISITS TO SPRINGFIELD'S SAFETY-NET DENTAL CLINICS IN 2009

CLINIC	0-18 YEARS OLD	19+ YEARS OLD
Jordan Valley Community Health Center Dental Clinic	22,600	6,922
Kitchen Clinic Dental	0	326
Ronald McDonald Care Mobile	3,323	0

Source: The Health Commission, Serving the Springfield-Greene County Region, July 2010

Senior Services, tooth decay results in an estimated 51 million school hours being missed each year. Missouri residents are not seeking oral healthcare and it is negatively affecting our community, especially our children.

In 2011, the Missouri Dental Association's charitable foundation, Missouri Mission of Mercy, hosted a two-day event at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds. During the event, 1,856 people received basic dental services provided by 1,046 volunteers and 170 dentists who dedicated their time to serve those in need of oral healthcare. Nearly 2,000 local citizens received care, indicating the tremendous need within our community.

According to the American Academy of Periodontology, the number one cause of tooth loss in adults is gum disease caused by the buildup of plaque on teeth. An Oral and Systemic Health Review article indicated scientists have found a possible correlation between gum disease and diabetes and heart disease, further illustrating the relationship between oral and overall health. Dental care is a necessity for a healthy life, and Springfield needs to improve the availability and access to oral care for people of all ages within our community.

Jordan Valley Community Health Center and the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile are operating at capacity due to challenges of physical space and recruitment of dentists. In addition, The Kitchen Clinic is limited due to the availability of dentists. The Springfield Health Commission estimates these safety net facilities could see nearly 3,000 more patients annually for each additional dental care provider.



A Springfield patient gets her blood pressure checked.