

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goals

The goal of the North Hawaii Outcomes Project (NHOP) is to support existing and future efforts to improve the health and quality of life in North Hawaii by developing a useful community health measurement system to clarify common goals and to both *track* and *facilitate* improvement. The Outcomes Project is a project of The Earl and Doris Bakken Foundation and works closely with Five Mountains Hawaii (FMH), North Hawaii Community Hospital, Tutu's House, Earl's Garage and The Kohala Center. The NHOP also collaborates with local, county, state and national organizations, which have overlapping missions.

Assumptions

One of the key underlying assumptions of the NHOP is a broad definition or "*expanded view of health*." There is increasing documentation of the "multiple determinants" or influences on individual and population health, well beyond just biology and genes. There is also strong evidence of the influence on health from: education level, social support and cohesion, economic level, environment, mental and spiritual attitudes and, of course, lifestyle choices or behaviors as well as access to quality health care, especially primary health care. Since most of these influences cut across multiple areas of the community, improving the health of North Hawaii will clearly require community-wide effort and collaboration. This leads to our second key assumption that improving community health and quality of life is a "*shared responsibility*." NHOP's shared health measurement system or *Community Health Profile is designed to serve as a tool to help raise awareness, help focus collaborating organizations and individuals on their common goals, mobilize resources and evaluate progress. (See IOM Community Health Improvement Cycle on page 8.)

"It can be done."

There is clear evidence from similar community projects across the country that identifying common goals (outcomes) and measuring common targets (indicators) does help motivate and focus community organizations and mobilize resources. Similar efforts have demonstrated effectiveness in other communities. The *Vermont Community Profile Project*, the *Maine Development Foundation* and the *Sustainable Seattle* projects are three strong examples demonstrating that a collaborative focus on measuring and tracking priority community indicators does facilitate improvement. (Maine has moved from a 1993 healthiest state ranking of 43rd to the 7th healthiest state in 2003 and Vermont has moved from 15th in 1993 to first in 2003, for three consecutive years.) See www.morganquitno.com/hc93-03press.htm.

What outcomes does North Hawaii most want to achieve?

The ultimate common vision for North Hawaii was distilled from 12 community focus groups facilitated by Five Mountains Hawaii in 1999 and 2000. The *vision* is simple: *North Hawaii is a great place to live, with a great sense of community, a great place to work and play, to raise a strong family and to heal.* (See also page 16.)

The desired outcomes to achieve this vision for the people of North Hawaii are: Healthy people making healthy choices:

- Newborns, infants and toddlers will thrive.
- Children will be safe, healthy and ready to succeed in school.
- Youth will make healthy choices and become resilient and successful adults.
- Adults will have meaningful work with family-sustaining incomes.
- Families will live in safe and supportive communities.
- Elders will be respected and integrated into community life.

What indicators should the community focus on to accelerate progress toward its vision and desired outcomes?

To answer this question, a group of 50 people, broadly representing the North Hawaii community, participated in the first North Hawaii Community Forum in March 2000, sponsored by NHOP and FMH. The participants reviewed the original focus group findings, the community vision and the *North Hawaii Community Health Profile compiled by NHOP. The community selected priorities that were consistent with the focus groups' priorities. These are:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Improve educational attainment
2. Increase number of qualified job applicants
3. Increase youth activities
4. Decrease substance abuse in youth and adults
5. Decrease child abuse and domestic violence
6. Decrease teen pregnancy

Follow-up discussions revealed three underlying common issues. There is a clear need to 1) improve economic and employment opportunities in North Hawaii, 2) “preserve what’s special,” and 3) improve public transportation.

Facilitating improvement - Engaging the community to improve its priority indicators

Following community identification of the priority indicators, the NHOP distributed nearly 400 copies of its community report *Community Health Profile Report 2000 and 2001*. That report included the focus group findings, vision, desired outcomes, the Community Health Profile, priority indicators and the Community Forum discussion of root causes and preliminary strategies for improvement. This report includes the updated Community Health Profile (CHP) as well as progress reports on the community selected priorities. The Community Health Profile on the NHOP website has had 5191 visits from June 2003 to May 2004.

The NHOP and FMH recognize that many community organizations are already working on improvements in each of the six community selected priority areas. The role of the NHOP and Five Mountains Hawaii in this *improvement* process is to support effective use of health outcomes data and to stimulate and incubate new partnerships. This is done in part by supporting and facilitating further effective collaboration that improves the priority areas. To promote effective collaboration and community leadership, Five Mountains Hawaii has sponsored leadership/facilitator training sessions on the use of the Community Health Improvement Process, an adaptation of the classic quality improvement cycle from the Institute of Medicine (See page 8). NHOP and FMH have also convened community meetings and collaborative efforts in many of the community selected priorities (See page 56).

Mobilizing resources

With assistance from Five Mountains Hawaii and the use of the NHOP data, as of December 2003 approximately 1.2 million new dollars have been granted to North Hawaii organizations to support improvement in the community selected priorities. The largest part of this new money is for substance abuse prevention and treatment. A local foundation has adopted the community selected priority indicators as part of *their* criteria for community grant making. Hawaii Community Foundation has awarded three grants for community capacity building in North Hawaii. The State Department of Health and the Hawaii Outcomes Institute have reviewed the NHOP Community Health Profile, selected it as a model for the rest of the state, and have produced a similar profile for other communities in the state, which is available at www.hawaiioutcomes.org. Continued collaboration with the Hawaii Outcomes Institute will reduce the cost of data collection and dissemination in North Hawaii and assure availability of ongoing reliable and comparative data. Hawaii Island United Way has worked with the NHOP to develop their own life course-based community profiles of the nine districts on Hawaii Island, which will be available on their website at www.hawaiiunitedway.org.

Measuring success

There is clear evidence that the North Hawaii community is actively engaged in collaboration to improve the community selected priority areas. Since the first Community Forum in March 2000, there have been at least 142 follow-up community meetings to address the community identified priority areas. The total attendance for these 142 meetings was approximately 3640 as of December 2003. These discussions, as well as other meetings, have resulted in 13 new programs, at least \$1.2 million in new grants and two state-level policy changes – Drug Court for adults and Drug Court for juveniles on Hawaii Island. There is a growing sense of community dialogue, empowerment and action. Improvement in outcomes is expected in a five to ten year time frame.

*The Community Health Profile data was based on core indicators recommended by the Institute of Medicine and obtained from multiple sources including: the State Department of Health-Vital Statistics and Hawaii Health Survey, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Census, Hawaii County Police Department, Hawaii Health Information Corporation, the Hawaii Community College survey of local businesses and our local health assessment website www.howsyourhealth.com. The Community Health Profile showed North Hawaii specific trend data over several years, and compared North Hawaii to Hawaii County, and Hawaii State and where available, to national Healthy People 2010 goal.