

WINNEBAGO AND BOONE COUNTIES 2010 HEALTHY COMMUNITY STUDY INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Prepared by



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What is Rockford Health Council?

Rockford Health Council is a healthy community collaborative that exists to promote better health for the residents of north-central Illinois. Rockford Health Council was formed in December 1982 as a non-profit 501(c)(3). At its inception the organization was known as the Rockford Council for Affordable Health Care. The name was formally changed to Rockford Health Council in May, 1995.

By the mid-1990's, Council members had developed the concept which became the Employers' Coalition on Health (ECOH), now a separate organization that negotiates health insurance contracts for a set of local self-insured employers.

In moving to become Rockford Health Council, in 1995 the organization began to adopt the characteristics of a healthy community collaborative. By 1998, the Council restructured into a membership organization with a board of 25.

Mission

Rockford Health Council exists to build and improve community health in our region through education, action and advocacy.

Vision

Rockford Health Council will be a catalyst for collaboration to assure a healthy community with access and quality care for all.

Value Proposition

Rockford Health Council is a policy-based organization that provides advocacy and education to address key community health issues. The organization is comprised of the collective expertise of leaders in health care as well as community leaders, whose policies and positions are supported by empirical data and research.

Values/Core Principles

Rockford Health Council:

- Provides a community forum where members address health issues through multi-sector collaboration
- Has well-established, focused priorities that support the mission of the organization and meet the needs of the community
- Supports these priorities with well-defined goals and measurable outcomes
- Has a realistic financial plan for long term financial stability.

Rockford Health Council, in collaboration with Health Systems Research and other community stakeholders, has administered three significant studies of local health issues. The most recent comprehensive study was completed 11 years ago. The *1999 Healthy Community Study* resulted from a broad-based collaboration among several organizations and dozens of individuals in the greater Rockford area, including Boone, Ogle and Winnebago Counties. The purpose of the study was to develop information on the quality of life in the Rockford area so as to create and implement strategies to improve the lives of all residents. This comprehensive study was updated in 2003, followed by the *Winnebago County Minority Health Study* in 2005. The *2010 Healthy Community Study* encompasses Winnebago and Boone counties.

What Is A Healthy Community Study?

A healthy community study is a process of gathering, analyzing and reporting information about the needs of the community and what capacities are currently available to meet those needs. Undertaken periodically, at least every five years, the study captures trends and changes in the demographic and health care environment. Data analysis identifies community needs and provides the foundation for realistic planning to develop, target and deliver essential community prevention and primary care services.

The study is an invaluable opportunity to connect with community stakeholders and discover unmet needs. A gateway to building trust, it opens a clearing for a solid foundation of shared responsibility and commitment to create change and address community health needs together. The study also provides data that enable local government, nonprofit and private organizations such as Rockford Health Council, the city of Rockford, local health systems, United Way, Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, Rockford College, Rock Valley College, University of Illinois Rockford and many others to leverage funding for programs and services.

2010 Healthy Community Study Components

A description of the components of the *2010 Healthy Community Study* follows. We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to the organizations and individuals listed with each component. Without their partnership, the *2010 Healthy Community Study* would not have been a success.

Community Analysis

The Community Analysis is a comprehensive analysis of data from many sources, and provides an overview of community health, demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, with comparisons to state and U.S. measures.

- *Deborah Lischwe, Associate Director, Health Systems Research, University of Illinois Rockford*

Household Survey

A survey with three-tiered distribution gathered data on health conditions experienced, health behaviors, other problems/needs experienced, perceptions of community problems related to health and human services and other community issues. A total of 13,775 surveys were distributed, with a return rate of 16.8%.

- *Joel B. Cowen, Assistant Dean for Health Systems Research, University of Illinois Rockford*

Key Informant Interviews

In-depth interviews with 60 key individuals in the community investigated community health and human services needs, both met and unmet.

- *Anne Rappaport, Rock Valley College*
- *Karen Lytwyn, Consultant*
- *Jim Novak, Consultant*

Focus Groups

Nearly 160 people, chosen from among target populations, convened for one-hour sessions. Participants received a stipend.

- *Karen Lytwyn, Consultant*

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Rockford Health Council gratefully acknowledges the following organizations for their financial support of and commitment to the *2010 Healthy Community Study*.

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City of Loves Park	Rockford Health Council
City of Rockford	Rockford Health System
Community Foundation of Northern Illinois	Rockford Housing Authority
Crusader Community Health	Rockford Park District
Employers Coalition on Health	Rockford Public School District 205
Goodwill Abilities Center	SwedishAmerican Health System
Guyer and Enichen PC	University of Illinois Rockford
OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center	United Way of Rock River Valley
Rock Valley College	US Bank
Rockford Acromatic Products	Village of Machesney Park
Rockford Anesthesiologists Associated, LLC	Winnebago County
Rockford Area Association of Realtors	Winnebago County Dental Society
Rockford Area Economic Development Council	Winnebago County Health Department
Rockford Bank and Trust	Winnebago County Medical Society
Rockford Chamber of Commerce	YMCA of Rock River Valley

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Rockford Health Council would like to thank our Board of Directors for their leadership and direction in this important undertaking:

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