Forces of Change Assessment

April 2018

Contents

Introduction

During the Forces of Change Assessment, participants answer the following questions:

- "What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of our community or the local public health system?"
- "What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?"

The Forces of Change Assessment should result in a comprehensive, focused, list that identifies key forces and describes their impact. According to the National Association for City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) recommendation as a best practice to complete the Forces of Change Assessment.

Identifying and addressing forces of change, often called "environmental scanning" is important to the success of the process. It ensures that the process: is relevant and timely, builds upon opportunities, and responds to potential threats. The identification of forces illuminates some of the "givens" under which the public health system operates or will need to operate. If these forces are not fully considered, the strategies developed later in the MAPP process may be less effective. The process of conducting a Forces of Change Assessment also has strong benefits for the working relationships of public health system partners. This promotes thinking about the "big picture." These activities often bring partners together on common ground and encourage them to think about how to collaboratively address changes. What Are Forces of Change? While it may not seem obvious at first, the broader contextual environment is constantly affecting communities and local public health systems. State and federal legislation, rapid technological advances, changes in the organization of health care services, shifts in economic and employment forces, and changing family structures and gender roles are all examples of Forces of Change. They are important because they affect — either directly or indirectly — the health and quality of life in the community and the effectiveness of the local public health system.

Forces are a broad all-encompassing category that includes trends, events, and factors. Trends are patterns over time, such as migration in and out of a community or a growing disillusionment with government. Factors are discrete elements, such as a community's large ethnic population, an urban setting, or the jurisdiction's proximity to a major waterway. Events are one -time occurrences, such as a hospital closure, a natural disaster, or the passage of new legislation.

Methodology

The participants that contributed to the Forces of Change Assessment included Dekalb County Board of Health, "Together for a Healthier DeKalb County" Steering Committee (steering committee), members of the leadership team from Dekalb County Health Department and leadership from Northwestern Medicine Kishwaukee Hospital. Four separates events were held to elicit feedback from these groups. February 15, 2018 the steering committee met for pre-planning and to coordinate the Forces of Change Assessment

- March 14, 2018 DeKalb County Health Department Senior Management Team
  Led by Lisa Gonzalez- Public Health Administrator of the DeKalb County Health Department

- March 21, 2018 Northwestern Medicine Kishwaukee Hospital Leadership Team
  Led by Dawn Roznowski – Director of Community Health Services NW Medicine

- March 27, 2018 DeKalb County Board of Health
  Led by Lisa Gonzalez- Public Health Administrator of the DeKalb County Health Department

Before each meeting the steering committee sent out the Forces of Change Assessment Matrix to prepare participates as to the information that would be sought during the sessions. The DeKalb FOC assessment sought feedback for 9 categories including:

1. Social
2. Economic
3. Political
4. Technological
5. Environmental
6. Scientific
7. Legal
8. Ethical
9. Health

The 9 categories were set during a coordination and pre-planning session by the steering committee. The steering committee used recommendations from NACCHO and expanded the categories to meet the specific needs of DeKalb County. A brainstorming questionnaire, which was also created by NACCHO, was used to initiate the process. The following questions are part of the standardized questionnaire:

How to Identify Forces of Change

Think about forces of change — outside of your control— that affect the local public health system or community.
1. What has occurred recently that may affect our local public health system or community?
2. What may occur in the future?
3. Are there any trends occurring that will have an impact? Describe the trends.
4. What forces are occurring locally? Regionally? Nationally? Globally?
5. What characteristics of our jurisdiction or state may pose an opportunity or threat?
6. What may occur or has occurred that may pose a barrier to achieving the shared vision?

Also, consider whether forces identified were unearthed in previous discussions.
1. Was the MAPP process spurred by a specific event such as changes in funding or new trends in public health service delivery?
2. Did discussions during the Local Public Health System Assessment reveal changes in organizational activities that were the result of external trends?
3. Did brainstorming discussions during the Visioning or Community Themes and Strengths phases touch upon changes and trends occurring in the community?

During the three-subsequent session with organizational leaders, participants were asked about their thoughts for each of the categories chosen by the steering committee. These three meetings were free flowing brainstorming session where ideas were captured and compiled on a matrix seeking information about threats and opportunities for Trends/ Events/ Factors that the groups identified.

Example Matrix

Forces of Change	Threats Posed to the LPHS or Community	Opportunities Created to the LPHS or Community	Questions/ More Info Needed
Category			

Assessment Results

The Forces of Change Assessment provided an overview of key trends, events or factors that participants acknowledged as current or potential influences on the overall health and wellbeing of DeKalb County. For a full review of the Forces of Change Assessment see Appendix 4.1. In accumulating this information, the Forces of Change participants identified many trends and themes that overlapped one another. These high-level themes for DeKalb County included:

Social
- Social Determinates of Health
- Health Equity
- Violence

Economic
- Health Equity
- Access to Care
- Health Care Policy

Political
- Health Care Policy
- Immigration Issues
- Maternal Child Health

Technological
- Health Information and Communication Technology
- Access to Care
- Chronic Disease

Environmental
- Vector Borne Disease
- Climate Change
- Air Quality
- Social Determinates of Health
- Chronic Disease

Scientific
- Access to Care
- Health Equity

Legal
- Violence
- Mental and Behavioral Health
- Health Equity

Ethical
- Health Equity
- Health Education

Health
- Mental Health
- Access to Care
- Health Education
- Chronic Disease
- Health Equity
- Health Advocacy
- Oral Health

Appendix 4.1

Forces of Change Assessment

Force of Change (Trend, Events, Factors)	Threats Posed to the LPHS or Community	Opportunities Created to the LPHS or Community	Questions/More Info Needed
Social			
Demographic change- aging population, increased diversity	• Not enough providers/facilities • Cost of care • Communication barriers & cultural competency issues • Transportation barriers	• Increase our workforce • Focus to provide services to seniors • Providing cultural competent care	
Increase in international student population	• Communicable disease control burden • Cultural competency is lacking • Language barriers	• Policy-how are they being screened, when are they being screened • Increase coordination with NIU health services and international program	
Language barrier (i.e. Ben Gordon limited bilingual capacity)	• Inadequate care or case management because of insufficient communication	• Bilingual staff and the use of other language resources	
Rural community (environmental concerns, social isolation and access)	• Older housing (lead paint), newer homes (radon) • Septic issues • Well water (no fluoride) • Mental health issues (well-being)	• DCHD trained to do lead assessments for homes • Identify resources for lead mitigation	

	Threats	Opportunities	
	• Lack of transportation	• Education and policy, enforcement on septic systems • Collaboration with faith-based organizations and partners to encourage cross-generation interaction	
Concerns about safety	• Active shooter • Increase in crime (violence, robberies) • Increase of stereotyping and stigmatization of certain populations	• Education and partnerships with other public safety entities • Encourage conversations and community involvement	

Force of Change (Trend, Events, Factors)	Threats Posed to the LPHS or Community	Opportunities Created to the LPHS or Community	Questions/More Info Needed
Economic			
Economy locally and nationally is becoming more service oriented	• Families may not be able to make a living wage and access services needed during standard business hours • Higher education is out of reach for many people (low education attainment, 29% have bachelors) • Housing instability	• Flexibility of social service hours of operation • Workforce development • Job opportunities • Affordable housing	
Medicaid reimbursement rate	• Providers cannot afford to administer services and it cannot be sustained over the long haul	• Advocacy for improved and timely reimbursement rates	
Changes in managed care organizations	• Not as many options available • Confusion (lack of health literacy with Medicaid population) • Lack of providers in your plan/area	• Education • Advocacy • Increasing enrollment assistance	
Increasing cost of Health Insurance	• Individuals/Families are unable to afford health coverage • Businesses and organizations are not going to be able to sustain health insurance coverage for employees • Many people choose to go without coverage	• Expanding the pool for health insurance coverage • Advocacy as a public health system to address rising costs • Education on health insurance literacy	

		• Tiering of the health insurance plans (catastrophic, high deductible, PPO, etc.)	
State Budget Crisis	• Funds for services being cut or discontinued	• Look at local sustainability for programs and services	
Force of Change **(Trend, Events, Factors)**	**Threats Posed to the LPHS or Community**	**Opportunities Created to the LPHS or Community**	**Questions/More Info Needed**
Political			
Healthcare laws at the federal and state level (ACA, expanding Medicaid, cost associated to consumer)	• Further weakening of healthcare safety net	• Opportunity to advocate for issues	
Immigration Issues (i.e. fear for undocumented individuals)	• Drives potential threats to health and safety underground e.g. TB, victims of violence	• Opportunity for outreach • Opportunity to establish safe cities	
Risk of reduction in any government funding for healthcare and social services	• Further weakening of healthcare safety net	• Opportunity to advocate for issues	
Long time to get situations resolved (i.e. environmental issues-noncompliance)	• Non-compliance could lead to health consequences/lead to CD outbreaks	• Opportunity to advocate to prioritize public health situations that may put the public at risk	
Proposed changes in the Title X Family Planning Program at the Federal Level	• Reduction in access for women's reproductive health services • Increase in rate of unplanned pregnancy • Eliminates focus on access to all forms of contraception	• Advocacy to retain the efficacy of current Title X program that emphasizes the nationally recognized clinical standards for the provision of high quality family planning and sexual health care	
Force of Change **(Trend, Events, Factors)**	**Threats Posed to the LPHS or Community**	**Opportunities Created to the LPHS or Community**	**Questions/More Info Needed**
Technological			
Effects of technology and social media on mental and physical health	• Social Isolation • Physical Inactivity • Misinformation	• Opportunity to educate • Social media monitoring for potential health threats –e.g. foodborne illness, influenza	

Access to current health data	• May not be able to be proactive in our response to local health issues • May not be competitive for funding if we cannot tell our story with current data	• Can pool resources to compile current health data in one place for all LPHS to access	
Telemedicine	• Increase access for those residing in rural areas • Increase access to specialty care	• Leverage technology and local resource to deliver this care	

Force of Change (Trend, Events, Factors)	Threats Posed to the LPHS or Community	Opportunities Created to the LPHS or Community	Questions/More Info Needed
Environmental			
Climate change/emergency preparedness (natural disasters, infectious disease)	• Increased frequency of acute weather event	• Refresh drills update monitoring and warning systems	
Change in types of vectors (different types of spiders, bed bugs)	• Additional burden on public health department to address nuisance complaints	• Work with other municipalities on education and strengthening their property maintenance and nuisance code	
Increase in disease related to vectors	• Increase in prevalence of CD activity	• Raise vigilance for uncommon pathogens, vectors	
Increase in complaints of indoor air quality (radon, mold)	• Limited resources to address radon problems • Radon & mold can lead to health issues	• Increase offering of radon test kits • Education on how to address mold concerns in your home • Find a low-cost funding source to mitigate radon & mold	
Decrease in availability and the rising cost of recycling	• Pollution- TVs & electronics in ditches	• Advocate for additional funding • Recycling programs (i.e. retail)	
Increase of fast food restaurants	• Increase in obesity rates, chronic disease prevalence	• Education on healthy choices	
Misinformation related to Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)	• Consumers may avoid GMO products, even if organic products are costlier to purchase • May avoid purchasing produce (fruits and vegetables) out of fear	• Education • Advocate for labeling of GMO products	

Transportation	• Inability to access services due to lack of public transportation	• Advocate for a more robust public transportation system	
Force of Change **(Trend, Events, Factors)**	**Threats Posed to the LPHS or Community**	**Opportunities Created to the LPHS or Community**	**Questions/More Info Needed**
Scientific			
Limitations for clinical trials	• Less access to participate in clinical trials	• Now that hospital system is merged with Northwestern, capacity will be increased • Patient education and awareness	
Low cost and pervasiveness of genetic testing	• Discrimination, bias • Misinformation related to care/treatment	• Education before testing is done and help with interpretation of results	
Force of Change **(Trend, Events, Factors)**	**Threats Posed to the LPHS or Community**	**Opportunities Created to the LPHS or Community**	**Questions/More Info Needed**
Legal			
Gun control debate	• Threat to health from gun violence • Premature mortality	• Opportunity to educate public and encourage public discourse	
Legalization of recreational cannabis	• Increased drug use leading to physical and social 'illness' • Increase in impaired driving and associated morbidity and mortality	• Opportunity to educate public and lawmakers on the effects of use	
Immigration Reform	• Refrain from seeking care or services out of fear • Potential for communicable disease threats because people are afraid to get medical care	• Encourage inclusiveness for social service providers • Outreach to populations that providers are inclusive and will not discriminate based off of legal status	
Incarceration of first time drug offenders	• Increase in incarcerated population, financial implications • Once incarcerated, users' prospects, already often limited, instantly decrease • Once incarcerated, non-violent offenders may become socialized to	• Advocate for increased funding for drug treatment and prevention services • Increase capacity of drug court • Increase the ability to divert first time offenders from the judicial system into treatment programs	

Force of Change (Trend, Events, Factors)	Threats Posed to the LPHS or Community	Opportunities Created to the LPHS or Community	Questions/More Info Needed
	prison norms (i.e. more aggression/violence)		
Ethical			
Lack of cultural competency within the county	• Diverse populations may not feel comfortable accessing services – may lead to poorer health outcomes	• Training and education throughout local public health system	
Health disparities	• Financial feasibility limited	• Awareness, education	

Force of Change (Trend, Events, Factors)	Threats Posed to the LPHS or Community	Opportunities Created to the LPHS or Community	Questions/More Info Needed
Health			
Mental health crisis	• Shortage of mental health professionals and treatment facilities leading to access issues • Financial barriers to care • Few providers certified to prescribe MAT (medication assisted therapy) for opioid addiction • Lack of mental health services within the school environment • Low academic performance, issue of missed school, bullying, violence	• Use of telepsychiatry • Increased outreach • Planning for in-house rehabilitation for children and adults • Cross-training and connections with community programs as a support system • Build mental health into school curriculum	
Medically underserved area based on our population (physician to patient ratio)	• Lack of access to care especially specialty care could lead to poorer health outcomes	• Expansion of FQHCs • Improvements in local transportation • Incentives for recruitment and retention of providers	
Access to health insurance in the marketplace (local hospital not in network for marketplace plans)	• Limited choices for in-network providers in our community • Higher healthcare out of pocket costs for consumers	• Advocate for Northwestern to include more plans in network • Increase health literacy	
Violence (bullying, harassment, guns)	• Guns, violence, crime, alcohol and drug abuse are interconnected	• Opportunity to educate • Create community connections and involvement	

		• Foster conversations about 'social despair'	
Prescription Opioid Misuse	• Increased incidence of injection drug use • Increase in incidence of HIV and HCV (due to the sharing of injection equipment) • Fatal and non-fatal drug overdose • Public Safety concerns	• Increase the number of non-EMS first responders and community members who are trained to administer naloxone • Create system of care that includes a more direct pathway into treatment • Increase substance abuse prevention programming for school aged students and education for adults • Support National Drug Take Back Day – promote and educate • Educate/Inform community on take back information • Increase safe disposal programs	
High rate of obesity in adults and children within DeKalb County	• Health risks related to obesity	• Incentivize active transportation locally • Addressing food deserts • Education and advocacy	
Stress Related Illness	• Not enough resources	• Depression, anger management, etc.	
Chronic Disease Prevention	• Resources are not always allocated early enough in population • Increase in prevalence of chronic diseases at earlier age than historically	• Education • Advocacy	
Limited access to Psychiatric Care	• Preventative and acute care is barely existent in communities, even more so in rural areas	• Advocate for provider resources in the community to address this issue	
Mammography (under-utilization)	• Increase in women who present with late stage breast cancer	• Encourage education on screening • Increase capacity to offer programs to address affordability	
Women's Health Services	• Poor health outcomes • Late diagnosis	• Educate on importance of getting screenings and services	

	• Requires more invasive treatment, costly	• Increase capacity to offer programs to address affordability	
Access to Dental Health Services for Adults	• Increased issues due to delay in care • Misuse of healthcare due to dental complications	• Advocate for referrals from emergency room to dentists • Create/strengthen current system of care for adults • Advocate for funding • Promote early dental care	