



COUNTY OF POLK
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After the completion of the 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment, the Polk County Health Department (PCHD) engaged in the following activities to address priorities addressed in the assessment.

1. **Access to Care** - The PCHD facilitated conversations, led by a Community Health Worker, in the refugee and immigrant community and identified the specific needs in that community. These results were shared with the health systems. Polk County is building a refugee welcome center and these needs will help determine programming and services.
 - a. Lack of relationship with a primary care provider
 - b. Need for professional medical interpretation, in-person preferably
 - c. Need for reliable transportation
 - d. Need for a primary care provider and a relationship with that provider
 - e. More cultural competency by healthcare providers, understanding the preference for same-sex providers and discomfort discussing certain topics
2. **Access to Care and Mental Health** – The PCHD facilitated conversations in the Latinx community at Our Lady of the Americas about the health needs in that community.
 - a. Mental health was identified as a need. 7 CHW’s were trained to facilitate conversations with the community. Topics included how to effectively listen and how to address stress.
 - b. A program of several conversations with Father Fabian, called Coffee with the Pastor, were held discussing a variety of mental health topics and community needs.
 - c. Fall 2023 a licensed therapist will hold 4 meetings with the community of Our Lady to discuss mental health topics.
 - d. The CHW’s are now engaged in a demonstration project, supported by United Way of Central Iowa and the PCHD, to provide navigation at the Community Hub and the LatinX project. **Access to Care**
 - e. Two CHW’s will be providing information and conducting enrollments for the PCHD Breast and Cervical Cancer screening program. **Access to Care**
3. **Substance abuse** – The PCHD has installed two Harm Reduction lockboxes in Polk County. We have been collaborating with the Iowa Harm Reduction Coalition and other community partners to promote them to the community. We are also actively supporting the legalization of fentanyl test strips in Iowa.
4. **COVID-19** – While this priority was not included in the health system priorities, the PCHD has continued to lead the response and outreach for COVID-19. We continue to promote vaccination and appropriate mitigation. We also completed our COVID-19 After Action Report.
 - a. Polk County is creating a broad community Health Care Coalition and it will be housed in Emergency Management. A full-time coordinator has been hired.
5. **Injury and Violence** – The PCHD launched a safe gun storage campaign **Talk It Up, Lock It Up**, in August 2023, engaging with a variety of community partners: health systems, law enforcement, libraries, behavioral health, and community groups.