



Community Health Improvement Process

**2014-2015 Community Health Needs Assessment  
Community Conversation with the Faith Community  
Faith Community Advisory Council – Neighbors in Need Working Group  
October 1, 2015**

## **Introduction**

Healthy Montgomery hosted a community conversation on health and well-being in partnership with the Faith Community Advisory Council’s Neighbors in Need Working Group on Thursday, October 1, 2015. The conversation took place from 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm at the Rockville Presbyterian Church in Rockville, MD. There 21 participants. The conversation was facilitated by Anne Wiseman.

The community conversation included a discussion of what is meant by health and well-being at the individual and community levels, elements of a healthy community, community assets and challenges in Montgomery County, and practical steps to improve the health and well-being of the community. Participants engaged in one large group discussion, and were also offered the opportunity to contribute comments and feedback regarding the meeting in writing.

## **Defining Health and Well-Being**

Participants were asked to think about a time when they were at their healthiest. They were then asked to discuss those times in regards to “what does healthy mean to you?” Due to time constraints, participants were also asked to describe this in the context of healthy communities. Below are their responses:

- Visual, Thriving
- Unity
- Happy and active
- Linked together, harmony
- Access to resources
- Safe sidewalks
- Education re: resources available, access[able]
- Informed, ability to participate
- Being able to worship
- Equality and justice, fairness
- People exercising, restaurants w/ healthy food
- Time for Intentionality
- Women’s health
- [People are] engaged have a voice
- Mutual understanding, multicultural [understanding]
- Holistic, access to care—spiritual and mental
- Intentionally caring for mental or emotional needs a place to support health, to be still
- Advocacy
- Cooking, food literacy (community building)



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- Timeliness of a community response
- Including and caring for the aging community
- A singing community song and music dispels the darkness
- Music and arts programs in [the] education system
- Consider collectively—all of these things should be considered

### Assets and Barriers to Health and Well-Being

Given the abbreviated time, participants were asked to discuss assets and barriers to a healthy community. As service providers, the participants were also asked to consider this from a consumer's perspective. The responses mostly identified what is needed to promote health in Montgomery County.

- Housing concerns
- [Do more to address] Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- [More support for] individuals qualifying for childcare voucher, women and childcare, supporting low-income families more, early childhood care/subsidy
- Reconsider prohibitive requirements for individuals to receive care (i.e. financial documents)
- Removing barriers (co-pay, IDs, one stop shop for services, team approach to care and services)
- Informing people what is required to receive services (managing expectations)—there is a limit to resources (e.g. vouchers available for housing). [This will] require more funding, more staffing, increased availability.
- A vibrant business community is needed.

### Practical Steps to Improve Health and Well-Being

Participants worked to identify specific actions they recommend to improve the health and well-being of the community, including the priorities and other practical suggestions discussed below. Participants were asked to identify and vote on the issues that were most important. Their top priorities were as follows:

- engaging decision makers to play a more active roll in community initiatives, including key stakeholders;
- removing barriers to services;
- creating a vibrant business community; and
- investing in more prevention efforts

Other suggestions included:

- [Increasing] resource education/information about available resources.
- HHS [should] partner with minority groups and immigrants



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- [Montgomery County Government should have a collaborative approach, identifying gaps, better preparation for meetings and approach.
- Consider how we use language in describing people—[it should be] in the most positive

### Community Conversation Feedback

Participants were provided an opportunity to give written feedback about the meeting. In a short closeout survey, participants were asked, “Is there anything else that you want us to know, including what you like or did not like about this community conversation?” Their comments are provided below.

*“I voted for multi-stakeholder activities because that is key to solutions that will reflect reality.”*

*“Need community leadership with the faith community’s help.”*