

**MONROE COUNTY  
COMMUNITY HEALTH  
IMPROVEMENT PLAN  
2012-2015**



## Dedication: To all the residents of Monroe County

*The Monroe County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was developed through the intentional and collaborative work of community partners to enhance the health of the community. This dynamic process defines interventions to address priority needs as determined by the review of community concerns identified in the Community Health Assessment, found in the COMPASS NOW 2012 document at <http://www.compassnow.org>.*

*It will be periodically revisited and modified to address changing community needs and reflect new initiatives, partners and community input. Key data from the COMPASS NOW 2012 Community Needs Assessment informed this plan. Subsequent needs assessments will help in assessing the success of your Community Health Improvement Plan.*

The Monroe County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was made possible through the collaboration and invaluable contribution of the community partners listed below:

### Community Members

Coulee CAP- Safe Communities Coalition (SCC)  
Gundersen Lutheran Healthcare-Sparta (GLHC)  
Head Start  
Ho-Chunk Nation Health Department-Tomah (HCNHD)  
Mayo Clinic Health System (MCHS)  
Monroe County Board of Health (MCBOH)  
Monroe County Department of Human Services (MCDHS)  
Monroe County Health Department (MCHD)  
Monroe County Justice Program (MCJP)  
Monroe County Senior Services (MCSS)  
The Parenting Place (TPP)  
Parish Nurses  
Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center (SBCHC)  
Sparta Police Department (SPD)  
Sparta School District (SSD)  
St Clare Mission Clinic (SCMC)  
Tomah Memorial Hospital (TMH)  
University of Wisconsin Extension- Monroe County (UWEX)

Thank you to the members of the Monroe County's CHIP 2012-2015 workgroups

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# MONROE COUNTY PROFILE \*

\*Source: COMPASS NOW 2012 Community Needs Assessment

<http://www.compassnow.org>

## Monroe County

Population: 44,673

Population in poverty: 12.2%

Unemployment rate: 7.2%

Uninsured ages 18-64: 13.9%

Uninsured under age 19: 7.2%

Adults 25+ years with a high school education or less: 53.1%

## Community Strengths

- ❖ Community Services- The quality of emergency services was rated high; library services are valued. Most survey respondents rated the community as a good or excellent place to live.
- ❖ Health Care The Great Rivers Region is recognized for its quality medical facilities and care.
- ❖ Education Our region is known to be a place that meets the educational needs of people.
- ❖ Natural Environment Air and water quality are good.
- ❖ Safety The region is proud of its safe neighborhoods and schools.

## Challenges

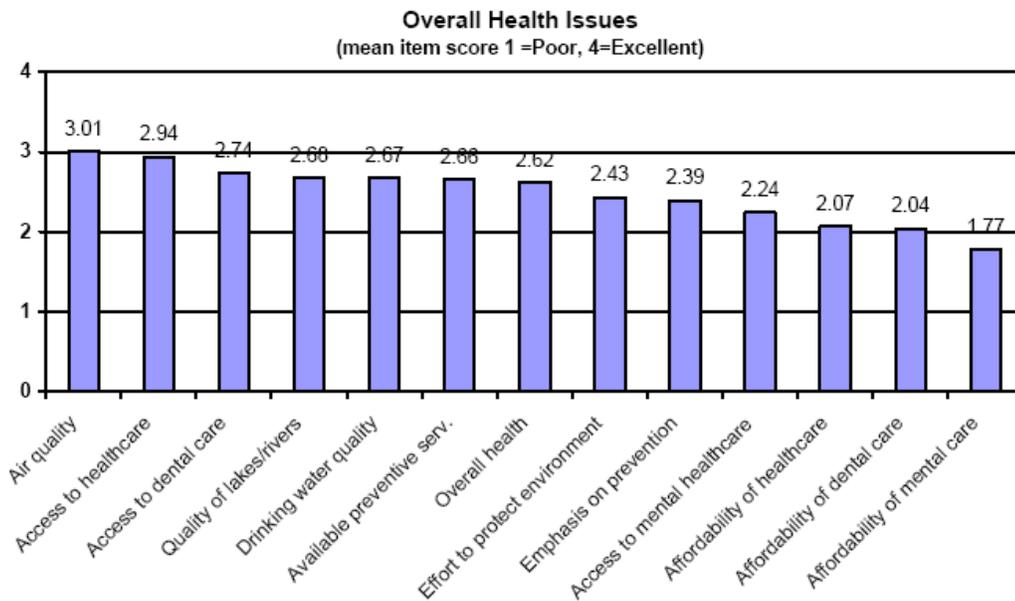
- ❖ Economic opportunity— including poverty, economic development, affordable housing, homelessness, livable wage, daycare, and transportation
- ❖ Access/availability of affordable health, dental, and mental health care
- ❖ Alcohol and other drug misuse and abuse
- ❖ Need for both community and personal responsibility for community health
- ❖ Funding for population needs and programs to address obesity and physical inactivity
- ❖ Community awareness involving diversity

## COMPASS NOW SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

<http://www.compassnow.org>

### Health Subject Area Summary

- Monroe County residents rated the “quality of air” as the highest of all health items reviewed.
- “Access to quality healthcare” was rated second highest, with 70% indicating good or excellent.
- 68% of residents indicated that “access to quality dental care” was good or excellent.
- 60% rated the “health of people in the community” as good or excellent; however residents in Monroe County rated the “overall health” of the people as the poorest of the five counties participating in COMPASS NOW.
- Monroe County residents rated “access to quality mental health care” and “affordability of mental care” lower than the other counties participating in the Needs Assessment.



### Quality of Life and Living Subject Area Summary

- Monroe County residents rated “quality of library services” as highest of all the quality of life items surveyed.
- 59% of respondents rated opportunities for “physical recreation for young and old” as good or excellent and a little over 40% ranked this area as fair or poor.
- 55% felt the “availability of appealing leisure time activities ... of individual or family members” was fair or poor.
- 61% of respondents felt that “opportunities for youth to explore interests and positive activities” were fair or poor; 38% felt that they were good or excellent.
- The “fine arts and culture” ranked lowest with 70% of respondents feeling that opportunities were poor or fair.

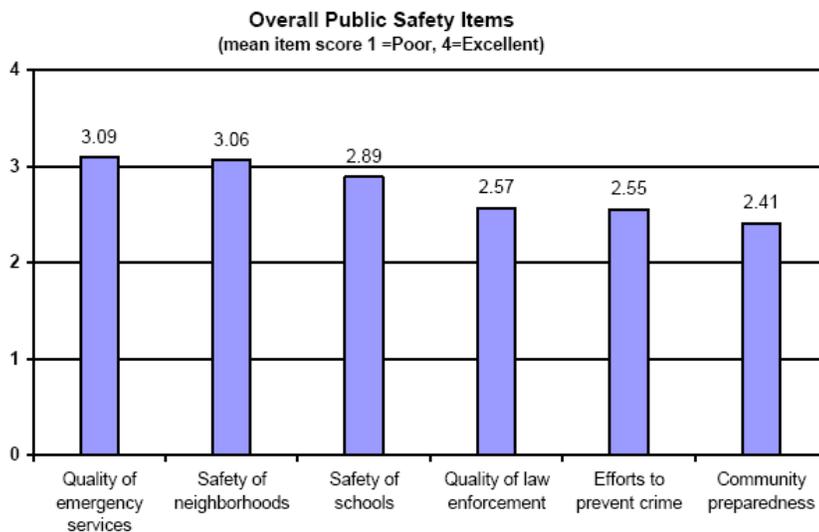
### Lifelong Learning and Enrichment Subject Area Summary

- Residents rated the “availability of preschool opportunities” in Monroe County higher than other counties did.
- Over 80% felt that the “K-12 schools” are good or excellent.
- Monroe County residents rated the “opportunity to contribute significantly in their work environment” lower.

### Public Safety Subject Area Summary

- Monroe County residents rated the overall “quality of the community’s emergency services” as the highest of all public safety items.
- Of all the items included in the public safety section, Monroe County residents gave their community the lowest score in the “community’s preparedness for major safety threats”. A majority of Monroe County respondents (54%) felt their community did either a fair or poor job of preparing for safety threats.

### Overall Public Safety Items



### Care for Families across the Generations Subject Area Summary

- Monroe County rated “meeting the needs of elderly persons” as the highest item in this section.
- The “availability of affordable and safe day care” was the second highest rated item.
- 61% of respondents rated Monroe County as “a place that meets the overall needs of persons with disabilities” as fair or poor.
- 65% rated “people of different backgrounds included in decision making” as fair or poor.
- 53% rated “all people are treated respectfully” as fair or poor.

### **Self Sufficiency Subject area Summary**

- Residents rated Monroe County as “a place where people with low income can meet their basic needs for food, housing, clothing” as the highest of all self-sufficiency items.
- The “availability of affordable, quality housing” was rated second highest, with 51% indicating availability of affordable, quality housing as good or excellent.
- “Efforts to reduce hunger” was rated third highest of the items, with 43% of residents indicating this item was good or excellent.
- Of all items included, “affordable and accessible public transportation”, “efforts to reduce poverty”, and “the availability of jobs that offer health insurance” were rated lowest.

### **Community Traits Subject Area Summary**

- Monroe County residents rated their community as “a place where spiritual health of residents is nurtured” highest of all community trait items.
- “A place where personal safety is considered important” was rated second highest.
- Monroe County residents gave their community the lowest score in the area of being “a place where people gather together as neighbors, friends, and families”.

### **Issues Subject Area Summary**

- The highest rated concern in the issues category was “illegal drug use” with 48% of respondents indicating this.
- “Alcohol use” was the second highest rated item as a concern.
- “Tobacco use” was rated a high concern by over 38% of participants.
- “Obesity” was rated a high concern by 27% of participants.
- “Inadequate nutrition” and “gambling” were seen as the least significant problems.

## COMPASS NOW FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

<http://www.compassnow.org>

### Issue 1: Questions relating to- Economic Opportunity

#### 1. How is poverty / lack of economic opportunity impacting our citizens and our communities?

*Family finances, lack of finances, lack of basic skills and housing issues all are a piece of Monroe County's number one issue brought out in the discussion groups. Many of the economic issues affect the emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being of families.*

- The housing issues of safe, affordable housing, available housing and homelessness need to be addressed. People can only afford to pay so much for rent; rent often needs to be subsidized. Some homes or housing units are unsafe due to lack of housing inspections. There is a lack of affordable housing with rising rents and low wages, coupled with (the renter's) lack of financial management skills.
- Families lack basic life skills and financial management skills. There is a definite trickledown effect when 50% of jobs keep people at the poverty level.

#### 2. How should our community effectively address these issues?

- More homeowner programs for low-income individuals/families. Emergency shelters and related programs are needed to address homelessness.
- Financial counseling
- The business community needs to become involved in addressing the problems of
  1. lack of educated workers
  2. low wages and
  3. affordable housing.
- More awareness is needed at the policymaker level to promote the understanding of core issues and to consider policy solutions to address the issues about money and programs.

### Issue 2: Questions relating to- Accessibility to Affordable Health, Dental, and Mental Health Care

#### 1. How is this issue affecting our community?

- People are going without services. Many people living below poverty are underserved. Going without medical services due to economic issues may cause family members to miss time from work/school. Pain, discomfort, and/or poor self-esteem linked to an individual's dental health or physical health can affect work and school performance.
- With limited or low incomes, many people are not eligible for healthcare benefits and are unable to afford out-of-pocket healthcare costs and medications.
- Double digit increases on health insurance premiums continue. Employers are cutting insurance benefits or passing on higher deductibles to employees. Insurance cuts affect every economic level.
- Financial issues contribute to healthcare issues for the elderly. Many are not eating a balanced diet. The elderly may also decrease or skip medications to save money and make ends meet.
- Current services are not well known among community members.

## 2. What strategies/ideas should our community consider if they address this issue?

- Increase MA reimbursements to dentists in order to increase availability of service providers
- Invest in free health clinics and low fee care providers who offer services to the low-income
- Collaborate more with community providers like Western Technical College for dental care
- Use student nurses for vision/hearing screening of kids
- Coordinate healthcare services to be able to share with agencies
- Establish or encourage the use of wellness programs for employees along with incentives.

## Issue 3: Questions relating to- Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse

### 1. How are alcohol and other drugs affecting you and your friends and neighbors?

*Awareness and visibility of alcohol usage is high. Alcohol use is engrained in our society, reflecting that drinking alcohol is an acceptable practice, especially from peers and adult role models.*

- Alcohol is prevalent at graduation parties with either no adult supervision and/or promotion of teen use.
- Communities see the effects of those needing money to buy alcohol and drugs, plus paying for essential needs. Consequently, people commit criminal theft and vandalism.
- Domestic violence is directly correlated to alcohol and drug abuse issues. In Monroe County we are seeing the affects of alcohol related to violence.
- There are health impacts of long term abuse - nutrition, oral health and alcohol/drug dependency at birth with impact as the child grows. We see more children with emotional or special needs from the effects of family alcohol or drug use. Physicians see the increased need for antidepressants for family members due to alcohol or other drugs on children. These effects are worse than people perceive.
- Businessmen must deal with employee alcohol and drug problems and related costs. There are alcohol-related issues in the hiring process, as applicants have citations for driving under the influence.
- There is a lack of involvement or lack of activities for kids. If youth are drinking and using drugs, then there is a lack of responsibility.
- There is a lack of county vision to the benefits of prevention resources.

### 2. Where should our community spend time and money to most effectively address alcohol and other drug issues?

- Community gatherings to discuss impacts of alcohol/other drugs on the community.
- Full continuum of care from prevention to treatment. There is a need for long-term voluntary shelters where there is accountability and a support network.
- Early alcohol and other drug abuse prevention and education for children and parents- not only for kindergarten and 1st graders, but sequential education programs implemented before 5th & 6th grades when youth begin to experiment with alcohol. Parent education on long-term effects of alcohol and other drugs on teen brain development is also essential.
- Focus on life and coping skills for kids, along with more community activities available for youth.
- Add the Strengthening Families Program or other children/family strengthening programs to curriculum.

#### **Issue 4: Questions relating to- Natural Resources**

*Natural resources, land use issues, and environmental awareness were identified as issues in COMPASS NOW 2012. This included the depletion and deterioration of natural resources, protection of farmland, land use planning and development, and a sustainable environment. There was “No response” to the questions as to how it affects our community and ideas to address this issue.*

#### **Issue 5: Questions relating to- Monroe County Choice of Issue: Community Awareness - Diversity**

*One additional issue was “community awareness” and the understanding of individuals and their situation.*

##### **1. How can we address issues of the increasing diversity in our community?**

- Work together as a partnership and whole community. Continue with grassroots, small group efforts to build enthusiasm, grow interest and nurture involvement
- Strong advocacy
- Bring policymakers and the people affected by this issue together at the table. There is a disconnection between people who are involved and those who can effect change. Listen to their perception of their needs and make them part of the solution.
- Norwalk has been proactive in addressing increasing diversity. Continue conversations and programs to help build trust/relationships.
- People do not understand exposure to diversity – there is fear – it is an education issue.

#### **Issue 6: Questions relating to- Additional Input in Monroe County**

##### **1. What other issues impact our community that we as a community should address?**

*In addition to affordable healthcare, other health related issues were identified.*

- Wellness programs or community programs need to be addressed. We need to recognize people who participate and do well in wellness programs and reward them!
- We have hungry children. One program that is in place provides backpacks of food for the weekend, when students are not in school.
- We need to focus on the increasing number of obesity in children and the short and long-term health concerns of this trend.

## COMPASS NOW STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

### Healthy Families Positives:

- Tobacco use is on the decline.
- A decline in sedentary lifestyles appears to be occurring.
- Lead-poisoned children incidences in the region are declining and are lower than Wisconsin's rate.
- In 2005 there were more people insured regionally than Wisconsin as a whole.
- Monroe County had higher percent compliancy rates for childhood immunizations than Minnesota and Wisconsin overall.
- The general trend is a decrease in lead poisoned children.

### Healthy Families Negatives:

- According to the 2000 census, Monroe County had a poverty rate of 12.0%, higher than the State of Wisconsin's rate of 8.7%. Quality of life for those living in poverty is usually inadequate; often people living in poverty do not have enough income to meet housing, nutritional, health, and other basic needs.
- Monroe County's tobacco use in adults is 24% with youth at 18%, highest in the Great Rivers Region.
- Monroe County has the highest overall teen pregnancy rate at 37.77 per 1000 births.
- Late entry for prenatal care is at 28.4%
- The region has a higher suicide rate the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota.
- Obesity rates are increasing with Monroe County's rate at 28%. Excess weight is associated with high blood pressure, arthritis, type 2 diabetes, stroke, cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol, and selected cancers. Lack of physical activity in sedentary lifestyles contributes to the obesity problem.
- Routine dental checks are much lower than state levels. Most communities in Monroe County do not have fluoridated water systems, greatly increasing tooth decay, the single most common disease affecting children. Poor dental health can compromise a child's ability to eat and be properly nourished. In adults, untreated dental disease is linked to heart disease, infection, premature delivery, and more.
- Two sexually transmitted infections are on the rise- Chlamydia Trachomatis and Genital Herpes.
- There is a shortage of mental healthcare workers leading to poor access, limited hospital beds for hospitalizations, and limited insurance coverage for proper follow-up care.

### Crime, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Concerns:

- Monroe County has a higher drug and alcohol arrest rate than Wisconsin.
- Monroe County had the highest rate (27%) in excessive drinking of the 5 counties participating in COMPASS.
- Violent crime offense rates are much higher in the region than our respective two states.
- Child abuse and neglect is significantly high in the region and in the State of Wisconsin.

The full COMPASS report with additional data on the health of Monroe County is on-line at [www.greatriversunitedway.org](http://www.greatriversunitedway.org) .

## ABOUT PUBLIC HEALTH

Public Health is the science and art of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research for disease and injury prevention. Public Health helps improve the health and well being of people in Monroe County and works to prevent health problems before they occur. The public's health relies on the collaboration of communities, businesses, government, organizations and groups, as well as individuals, to assess the needs and strengths of the population including lifestyle health practices, social, economic, physical, and environmental factors. This information is used to design an action plan to create healthy environmental, social, and economic conditions in which all people can thrive. Collaboration allows for the mobilization of resources and equal opportunities for optimal health for all.

The Monroe County Health Department (MCHD) is a component of public health; the goal of public health *nursing* is to promote and protect the health for all people through the creation of conditions in which people can be healthy. Public health nursing practice includes an obligation to actively reach out to all who might benefit from an intervention or service. Even though public health nursing focuses on the whole population, high-risk subpopulations or communities may need special outreach or programs to achieve an improvement in their risk status or health.

MCHD's funding is utilized to provide essential public health services that are critical to the health of the community. The ten essential services that define the responsibilities of local public health systems are:

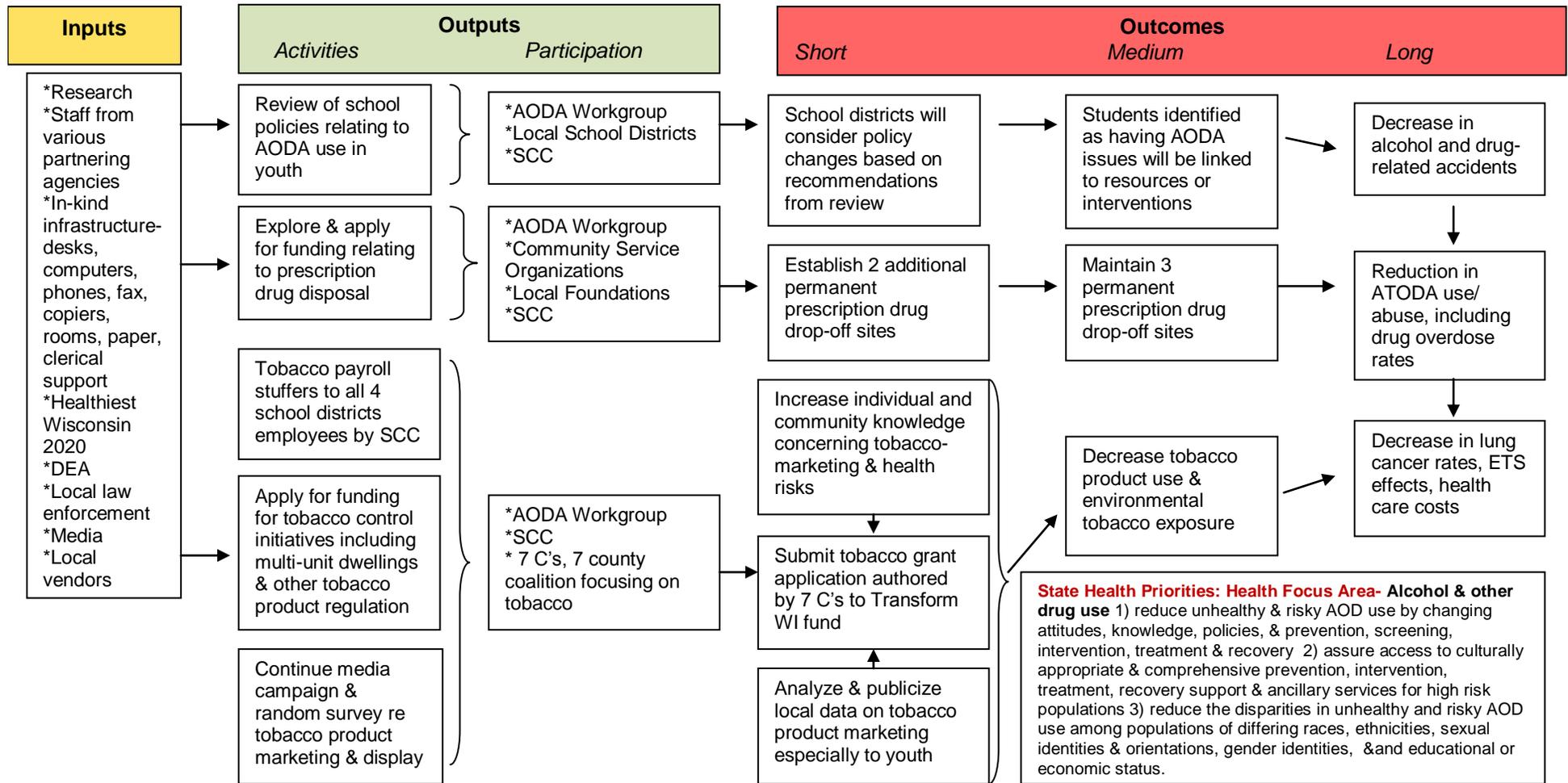
- 1) Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems.
- 2) Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
- 3) Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
- 4) Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.
- 5) Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
- 6) Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
- 7) Link people to needed health services & assure the provision of healthcare when otherwise unavailable.
- 8) Assure competent public and personal healthcare workforce.
- 9) Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
- 10) Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

### Data Highlights

- Monroe County's per person annual public health expenditure has been approximately \$15.00 for 2000-2005.
- Wisconsin ranks 47<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 states in per capita funding (fiscal year 2010-11) at \$9.29. (Source: Trust for America's Health, <http://www.healthyamericans.org/>).

**Program: Alcohol and Other Drugs Logic Model**

**Situation:** Monroe County has a high rate of binge and excessive drinking in both adults and youth. Illegal drug use has been identified as an area of high concern, with 67% of survey respondents indicating so. Our high use of daily tobacco by youth reflects the adult rate, identified as the highest of the five counties participating in COMPASS NOW 2012.



**Assumptions:** School will collaborate on policy review relating to student ATODA infractions; SCC will fund start-up costs for 2 additional prescription drug drop-off sites; community will embrace concern as a long-term need requiring continuous collaboration; workgroup will identify additional partners who will respond positively to need

**External Factors:** Tenuous federal and state government funding sources secondary to current economic and political climate; Partner collaboration unknown; alcohol is a significant piece of Monroe County culture; drug accessibility influence by access to 2 interstate roads and location of urban centers

# Taking Action

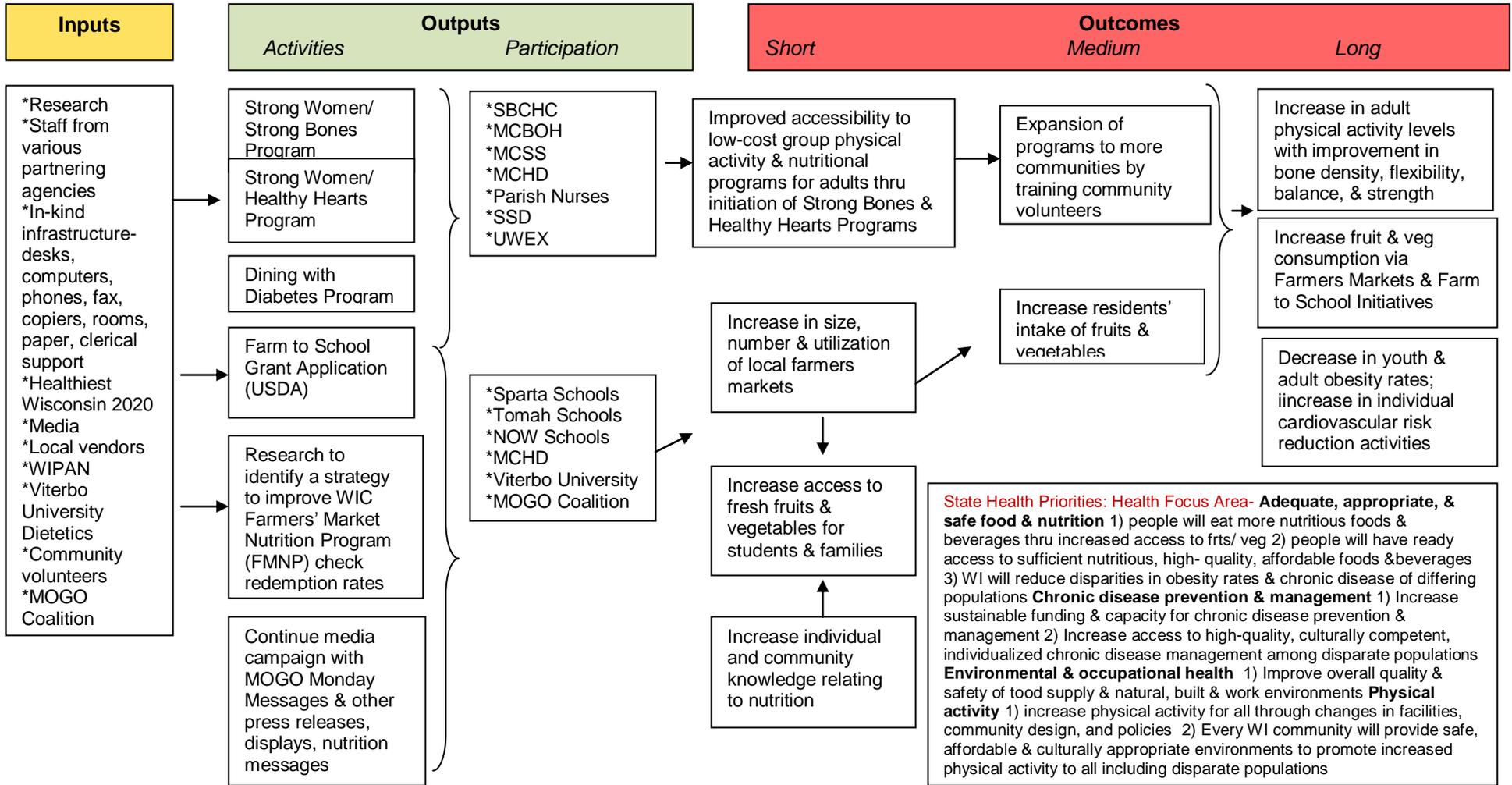
## Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA)

### What can YOU do?

- Become informed about AODA issues including:
  - signs and symptoms of drug or alcohol misuse in the individual
  - environmental clues that indicate drugs are being used or sold; report observations to law enforcement
  - accessing services for yourself or family or friend if there is an alcohol or drug concern
  - seek emergency treatment for anyone who is experiencing signs of drug intoxication
- Discuss issues with your children, stating clearly boundaries and expectations
- Advocate for local government to enact public health interventions to address AODA concerns
- Utilize prescription and over-the-counter drug drop-off sites to dispose of medications safely
- Obey the laws relating to the purchase or sale of alcohol, tobacco or over-the-counter medicines for underage residents
- Model appropriate use of alcohol, including utilizing a designated driver when consuming adult beverages
- Use prescription and OTC medications as prescribed or recommended and only for the intended individual
- Be a role model and avoid tobacco
- Support school-based tobacco and other drug use education and prevention programs
- Get to know tobacco marketing techniques and packaging for various products, recognizing that many are packaged to look like candy or other safe items
- Share your knowledge about alcohol, drugs and tobacco with others
- Advocate for smoke-free environments for households
- Support school and law enforcement officials in enforcement of rules and regulations
- If you do smoke, take it outside and respect areas where smoking is prohibited
- Plan for and follow steps to beat individual tobacco habits
- Support friends and family members in efforts to break tobacco dependency
- Wash your hands and change your clothes after smoking, especially when caring for young children
- Volunteer to work on the AODA issue- call MCHD at 608-269-8666 to find out how you can get involved.

**Program: Obesity Logic Model**

**Situation:** Monroe County obesity rates have increased dramatically over the past decade, with nearly 30% of the adults in our region obese and another 35% overweight. Many factors contribute to this concern- high fat, high sugar diets; decreased physical activity and increased screen time, built environment limitations, barriers to adequate and appropriate nutrition, marketing, and more.



**Assumptions:** Community will embrace concern as a long-term need requiring continuous collaboration; workgroup will identify additional partners who will respond positively to need; individuals will volunteer to become leaders for Strong Bones and Healthy Hearts Programs

**External Factors:** Tenuous federal and state government funding sources secondary to current economic and political climate; Partner collaboration unknown; Physical environmental needs in community should be defined and addressed

# Taking Action

## Obesity

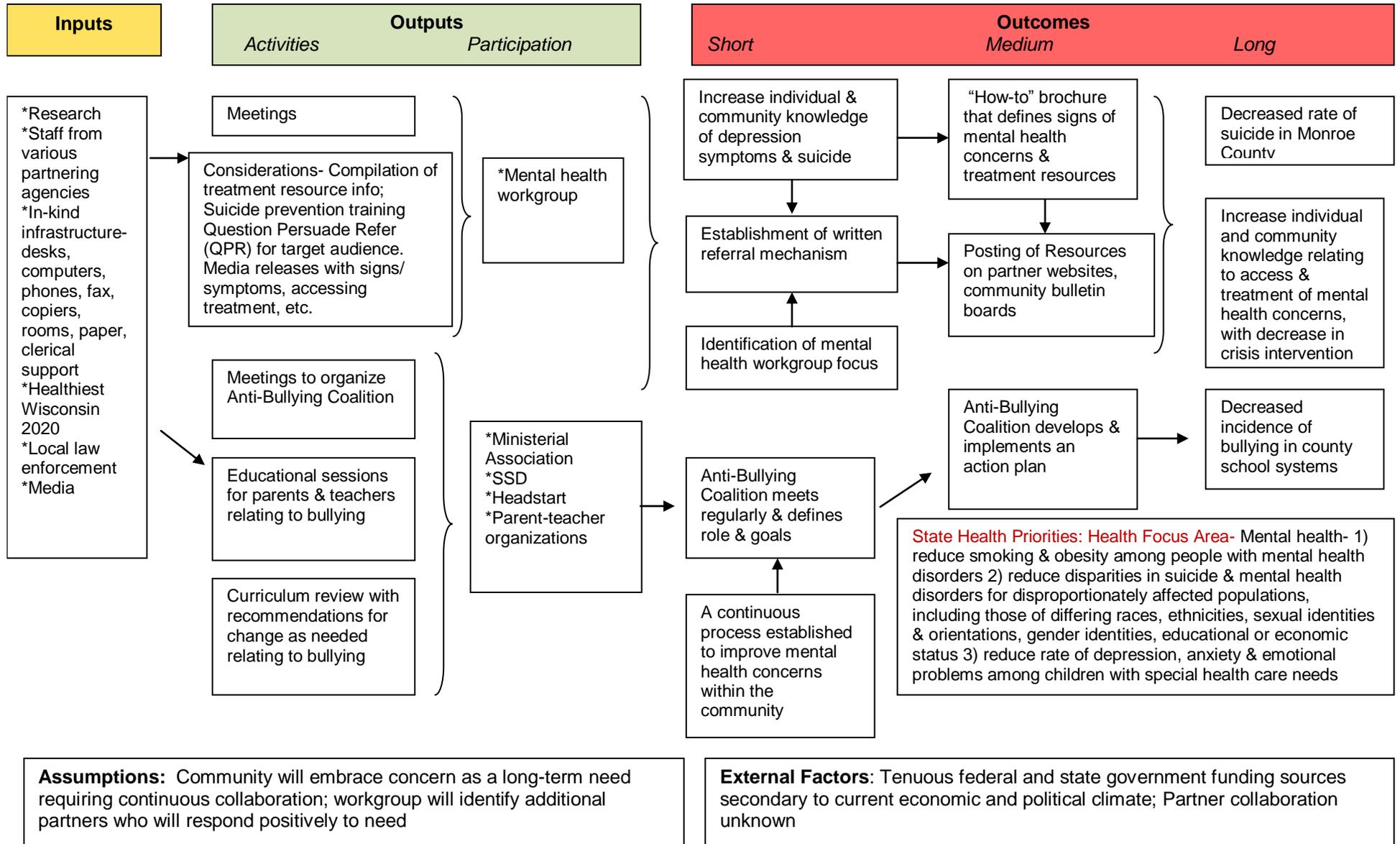
### What can YOU do?

- Make lifestyle changes-consult with your health care provider if you have a health problem before starting an exercise, diet or weight loss program.
- Make a personal commitment to be more active, by adding a few minutes of activity each week to reach current minimum physical activity recommendations:
  - Adults should do at least 2 hours and 30 minutes each week of aerobic physical activity at a moderate level OR 1 hour and 15 minutes each week of aerobic physical activity at a vigorous level-, spread out over at least 3 days a week is best.
  - Adults should also do strengthening activities, like push-ups, sit-ups and lifting weights, at least 2 days a week.
  - Children and adolescents should do 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day- mostly moderate- or vigorous intensity.
  - Children and adolescents should include muscle-strengthening activities, like climbing, at least 3 days a week and bone-strengthening activities, like jumping, at least 3 days a week.
  - Young children, ages 2-5 years, should play actively several times each day. Activity may happen in short bursts of time and not be all at once.
  - Physical activities for all ages should be developmentally-appropriate, fun, and offer variety.
- If you haven't been active in a while, start slowly and build up, choosing activities that are appropriate for your fitness level.
- Use the right safety gear and sports equipment and find a safe place to do the activity.
- Model an active lifestyle for your family and your friends; group activities enhance commitment and add to the fun.
- Reduce “screen time” and set limits for television and computer use for both you and your family.
- Use local resources offered in your community- parks, recreation programs and open school hours, classes through your health care provider or the health department.
- Advocate for more bike trails and sidewalks in your community, creating safe paths for getting around.
- Get involved in starting a community garden.
- Promote the maintenance and/or development of “green space” and parks for safe activities for all.
- Encourage healthier foods and snacks for family and church gatherings, sporting events, meetings, and workshops.
- Ask to have healthy options for foods and beverages in worksite vending machines.
- If you are involved in fundraising efforts for an organization, choose healthier food choices to sell or consider non-food items.

- Commit time and effort to dietary changes:
  - Check out the USDA website, <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> and learn about current recommendations for portion size, numbers of servings for each food group, and how it changes by age group and gender.
  - Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.
  - Choose lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts more often.
  - Decrease your intake of saturated fats, *Trans* fats, cholesterol, salt, and added sugars.
  - When thirsty, grab some water. Sweetened sports drinks and sodas add a lot of calories and cost.
  - Make smart choices from every food group.
  - Find balance between food and physical activity.
- Shop at your local farmers markets- fresh produce for the family while supporting your local economy.
- Support school efforts to improve nutrition, such as efforts to incorporate “Farm to School” programs to improve food services and add locally grown foods to the school menus.
- Consider breastfeeding your newborn infants for optimum nutrition.
- Volunteer to work on the obesity issue- call MCHD at 608-269-8666 to find out how you can get involved

**Program: Mental Health Logic Model**

**Situation:** Mental illness is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for people ages 15-44. The Great Rivers Region suicide rate is higher than state and national average, with 2012 spending for mental health care increasing by nearly 11% from the previous year. Bullying is an area of concern, impacting the individual's self esteem.



# Taking Action

## Mental Health What can YOU do?

- Dial 211 to “get help with life.” This service connects you to free, confidential information and referral services.
- Model respectful behavior in your own life- at home, work, school, and within the community. Examples do speak volumes, especially for young children.
- Practice tolerance regardless of a person’s background, beliefs, race, language, ethnicity, religion, politics, color, age, gender, or creed.
- Learn the symptoms of mental health concerns to recognize them in yourself or others.
- Advocate for health benefit coverage for mental health concerns.
- Seek assistance for concerns early on, contacting your health care provider or human services for help.
- Increase awareness of bullying behaviors and help your child develop healthy relationships with others.
- View the education of your children as a team process, working with school staff to identify concerns early and collaborate on an appropriate plan for improvement.
- Advocate for workshop and forums on bullying, suicide and other mental health issues, in the workplace, school, and community, as well as policy changes that address these issues.
- Implement steps to decrease stress in your personal life.
- Report child abuse to appropriate authorities.
- Seek help for anger management issues.
- Know what constitutes physical, emotional, mental, sexual, elder, and child abuse or neglect, and report incidents to law enforcement.
- Use resources found in your community- parenting classes, trainings offered through Community Action Program, the Parenting Place, Human Resources, local schools, home visits by the health department for new parents, and more.
- Volunteer to work on the mental health issue- call MCHD at 608-269-8666 to find out how you can get involved.