

A Health Needs Assessment Study of the Minority Population in Clark County

by the

Indiana Minority Health Coalition

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Executive Summary

This report presents results of a comprehensive community health needs assessment for minority populations in Clark County, directed by the Indiana Minority Health Coalition with technical assistance from the Indiana University Bowen Research Center. Initial project planning activities began in 2003, with most of the data collected in 2004. The purpose of this needs assessment study was to:

- Perform a comprehensive, community-based health needs assessment of minority populations in Clark County
- Identify the real and perceived health-related issues of minority groups across age, gender, socio-economic, and geographic categories
- Examine the wide spectrum of factors impacting the health and well being of the minority populations in Clark County
- Identify opportunities and initiatives to better meet the health needs of the minority populations

Data for the health needs assessment were collected from existing data containing health indicators, targeted population surveys, focus groups, and key informant surveys.

Existing data from birth and death certificates were gathered and analyzed for minority groups. The analysis of these existing data for Clark County indicated that disparities exist by race and ethnic group. It also revealed that most rates need to be improved to meet the Healthy People 2010 Objectives.

Targeted surveys were developed and administered to 103 local residents in a variety of settings (i.e. churches, community centers, ethnic food markets, grocery stores, health fairs, neighborhood events, and retail stores) to obtain community input on important health issues, needs, values, and beliefs. The results from the surveys highlighted that Blacks perceive high blood pressure and strokes, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and diet problems as part of the top five worst health problems in their neighborhood. These results indicated that fourteen percent of Blacks indicated they had difficulty obtaining the services of a doctor, nurse or other health professional in the past year. For Blacks, the top five barriers attributed to accessing healthcare included: lack of insurance, lack of money, medical care not covered by insurance, waiting too long for an appointment, and waiting too long in doctor or clinic office.

Local residents from selected minority populations with an understanding of significant needs, solutions, and expectations were identified to participate in focus groups and/or key informant interviews. Results from focus groups and key informant interviews indicated that Clark County community residents perceive cancer and diabetes as major health problems. These results also highlighted that the most frequently noted barriers to accessing healthcare encountered by minority residents in Clark County were: culture, communication between provider and patient, lack of health knowledge and promotion, personal and economic situation, and system problems. Additionally, the findings provided information on what some minority residents of Clark County perceive as ways to improve both healthcare access and health status.

Suggestions for improving healthcare access and/or health status for minority residents included: improve personal health behavior, educate and improve communication between consumers and providers, make people more aware of available resources, and provide translators and interpreters.

It is hoped that the findings in this report will provide the catalyst to bring communities together to discuss existing differences in health indicators and ultimately to better develop strategies to reduce them so that all Clark County residents can achieve the highest possible level of health status. In addition, this report can be used by policy makers, providers and program administrators to focus interventions on those areas that are of most concern to the minority population.