

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

by the

Indiana Minority Health Coalition

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May 2005

Executive Summary

This report presents results of a comprehensive community health needs assessment for minority populations in Noble 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 is to:

- Perform a comprehensive, community-based health needs assessment of minority populations in Noble 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 the Noble County
- Identify opportunities and initiatives to better meet the health needs

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 Noble 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. The Hispanic/Latino population in Noble County is disproportionately affected when comparing the health indicators among racial groups.

Targeted surveys were developed and administered to 98 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 Hispanic/Latinos perceive diabetes, infectious diseases, cancer, substance abuse, and high blood pressure and strokes as part of the top five worst health problems in their neighborhood. These results indicated that more than one-third (35.4%) of Hispanics indicated they had difficulty obtaining the services of a doctor, nurse or other health professional in the past year. For Hispanic/Latinos, the top five barriers attributed to accessing healthcare included: language barriers, lack of insurance, lack of money, had to wait too long for an appointment, and doctor would not take new patients.

Local residents from selected minority populations with an understanding of significant needs, solutions, and expectations were identified to participate in focus groups. Results from focus groups indicated that Noble County community residents perceive the following as major health problems: diabetes and substance abuse. These results also highlighted that the most frequently noted barriers to accessing healthcare encountered by minority residents in Noble 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 Noble 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 communication between consumers and providers, educate the community, increase the number of clinics to obtain healthcare services, and provide translators and interpreters.