

# **A Health Needs Assessment Study of the Minority Population in Vigo 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 Vigo 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 Vigo 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 Vigo 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, and hospitalizations that have health indicators were gathered and analyzed for minority groups. The analysis of these existing data for Vigo 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 Black population in Vigo County is disproportionately affected when comparing the health indicators among racial groups.

Targeted surveys were developed and administered to one hundred and two (102) 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 the Black population perceive substance abuse, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure and strokes, and heart disease as part of the top five worst health problems in their neighborhood. These results indicated that fifteen 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 money, lack of insurance, medical care not covered by insurance, waiting 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 and/or key informant surveys. Results from focus groups and key informant surveys indicated that Vigo County community residents perceive the following as major health problems: cancer and diabetes.

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 Vigo 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.