

CHILD HEALTH ASSESSMENT



Status of Children's Health Santa Clara County

2015-2016

Overview

- In 2015, the County Board of Supervisors requested a comprehensive children's health assessment
- Goal: provide a countywide profile of behavioral health, preventive health and medical health status of children in Santa Clara County with a focus on the racial/ethnic disparities
- Guided by co-chairs and an advisory group
- Assessment phase I: overview of secondary data
- Assessment phase II: collect and present new data

Barriers to Accessing Services

- Cost of health insurance is a barrier.
- Eligibility requirements are challenging to navigate. Many families identified a “benefits cliff”.

“My public benefits are set federally and they don't look at regional costs.”

- Navigation and service access continue to challenge families.

“There's this pervasive sense of just fear of accessing services. I think all of those things play into health, because then families don't access services until it's a crisis response.”

- Dental care is expensive, providers do not accept Denti-Cal and is frequently not covered under health insurance plans

Structural Racism and Discrimination

- Racial profiling was identified by African American and Latino youth and parents as something they were constantly aware of and concerned about.
- Youth and parents described multiple instances of implicit and explicit interpersonal racism in educational settings.
- Healthcare and social service providers often do not consistently provide culturally competent care to people of color.
- Participants identified gap in opportunities between those young people who live in wealthier/higher resourced neighborhoods, and those who live in poor neighborhoods.

Latino parents shared that one of their children's teachers had "joked" with some of the Latino students in the class that they would not ever attend college.

Healthy Development

- More than 1 in 4 parents (26%) reported that their child's doctor or other healthcare provider asked about their concerns regarding their child's learning, development, or behavior.
- Key informants noted not having vision care coverage as part of their health plan and shortage of pediatric audiologists as barriers to accessing services.

"Kids basically have no symptoms. They don't complain. The parents don't know that their kids have a vision problem...they [should have] an eye exam to go to kindergarten."

Family and Social Support

- Many participants believe that if you support parents in having a healthy, stable life, their children will benefit.
- Childcare, high cost of housing, and issues relating to economic inequality were noted as major concerns for parent-child relationships.
- Foster youth and parents emphasized the importance of maintaining connection with the family of origin.

"You know how I reacted to ... being taken away from my mother, and my family? It hurt like hell. Nobody should have to be taken away from their parent..."

Community Safety and Violence

- Key leaders, youth, and parents discussed concerns about and experiences with violence in their neighborhoods.
- Many participants and key leaders were concerned about racial profiling of Latino, African American, American Indian, and Pacific Islander community members.

“parents of children of color... are in fear of this violence. It affects their [children’s] ability to concentrate at school and other places.”

Proposed Strategies

- Adopt Universal Developmental Milestone Screenings for All Children in the County
- Expand and Improve Accessibility of High Quality Medical and Dental Services for All Children with a Focus on Children with Special Needs
- Expand Food/Nutrition Programs at School Sites and Outside of School Time (Summer, Afterschool, Home)
- Policies and Systems: Address Structural and Institutional Racism, Discrimination, Harassment, and Biases Across Systems (Health, Education, Criminal Justice, and Other Service Sectors) that Contribute to Inequitable Outcomes for Children and Their Families
- Increase High Quality, Affordable Housing for Families
- Support Quality Universal Preschool and Expand Quality Affordable Childcare
- Support School and Community Based Efforts to Prevent Bullying and Violence Among Children

Next Steps

During 2017, the Children's Health Assessment Advisory Group will reconvene to develop processes and work plans to advance each of the high priority strategies identified.

- Identify lead organizations and implementation structure
- Align and leverage resources to support implementation
- Monitor and report progress

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Children's Health Assessment

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