

Community Health Visioning 2006 - 2008

FINDINGS



**Charting the Course
for Improved
Community Health**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Community Health Visioning is administered by Healthy Community Coalition and sponsored by the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area, HealthReach Community Health Centers, Health Leaders Forum, University of Maine at Farmington, Franklin Community Health Network (FCHN), and Healthy Community Coalition.

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Greater Franklin County organizations and community members

The Community Health Visioning process is truly a collective effort. Countless local organizations participated by either referring individuals to the *50 Stories In 50 Days project*, or distributing Visioning surveys to staff and community members. We are also deeply grateful to 60 community members who took the time to share their time and talents, as part of the *50 Stories project*. The stories of those 60 residents were recorded by 40 community members and health leaders. This project would not have been possible without them. Approximately 400 Greater Franklin County residents participated in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System telephone survey. Finally, more than 850 community members took the time to answer the Visioning Survey at various venues including the Farmington Fair, online, or at an area town hall. From Oquossoc to Livermore, this was truly a collaborative effort.

To view the *50 Stories In 50 Days* report, or for more information about past Community Health Visioning processes, visit <http://www.fchn.org/hcc/>.

Community Health Visioning Sponsors:



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The Community Health Visioning Survey

VISIONING TIMELINE

July, 2004

- 2004 Visioning process is launched

November, 2004 – December, 2006

- Community meetings are held to review the priorities that are established by the 2004 Visioning process; action steps are developed and Task Forces are created
- Task Forces address priorities by implementing specific projects such as:
 - improving youth opportunities by supporting the development of Boys and Girls Clubs
 - expanding distribution of area walking maps
 - expanding outreach in the northern tier of Franklin County to both increase breast cancer awareness and screenings as well as decrease breast cancer mortality
 - working with area schools to prevent tobacco use
 - distributing recipes that are easy to fix, affordable and tasty throughout Greater Franklin County to improve awareness of healthy food choices

May - June, 2006

- 2006 Community Health Visioning is launched with *50 Stories In 50 Days* project
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) telephone survey is conducted
- Information gained from *50 Stories* and BRSS is incorporated into Visioning Survey

July – October, 2006

- Visioning Surveys are strategically distributed and collected throughout Greater Franklin County
- Numerous organizations assist in survey distribution
- Dramatically exceed the number of surveys that were collected in 2004

November, 2006 – February, 2007

- Community Visioning Committee analyzes survey findings and determines 2006-2008 community health priorities
- Committee reviews what community initiatives worked in the past and develops strategies to strengthen the process

April, 2007

- Community gathers at Visioning Forum to develop action steps for 2006 – 2008.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Selected Visioning priorities and what has been done over the past 12 years

This is a small sample of what has been accomplished as a result of Visioning. A full report is available by contacting Lisa Park Laflin at 645-3136 x5103 or llaflin@fchn.org.

Improve access to health care

- Franklin Health Access receives 1.7 million dollar grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services to support Franklin Health Access- RX. This grant allows Franklin Health Access, Franklin Memorial Hospital, local pharmacies, Pine Tree Medical Associates, Evergreen Behavioral Services, HealthReach Community Health Centers, and other local independent medical practices to expand access to prescription medications for all residents of Greater Franklin County. The project links medical providers to pharmacies through electronic prescribing while reducing administrative barriers and errors.

Address mental health and substance abuse

- Healthy Community Coalition (HCC) receives funding from Office of Substance Abuse Established a workgroup to develop a five year strategic plan for substance abuse prevention
- Evergreen Behavioral Services expands school-based services
- Tobacco Free Franklin Campaign initiated by HCC
- Evergreen Behavioral Services established
- Increased United Way support for mental health agencies
- Western Mountains Renaissance School established

Expand health education and outreach

- Healthy Community Coalition maintains a Mobile Health Unit, bringing health education and preventive services to outlying regions
- Western Maine Alliance's Sustain Western Maine Project explored ways in the region to sustain its infrastructure, health and economy, resulting in a local public access television station offering topics on health and wellness
- Ben Franklin Education center built at Franklin Memorial Hospital
- Franklin Health Leaders Forum established
- HCC established as a community coalition partner connecting women to Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program screenings and services

Create Public Health Information/Resource Directories

- The on-line resource directory www.TheCommunityConnector established
- Maine Health Forum website established
- HealthReach Community Health Centers publishes printed and electronic Community Resource Directory

Create jobs with affordable wages and health insurance

- Greater Franklin Development Corporation established

Expand the availability of dental-care

- A Dental Task Force was developed to explore ways to increase access to dental services for the financially disadvantaged in the region leading to the Franklin County Dental Health Center, now Community Dental
- United Way increased funding to support Franklin County Dental Health Center
- HealthReach established Strong Area Health Center Dental Program

2004 – 2006 TASK FORCE REPORTS

At a community meeting, specific projects were developed to address community health priorities that were identified in 2004. The projects were determined by a rating scale which took into consideration:

- Community impact
- The availability of resources to complete the project and
- Whether the project could be completed in a two year timeframe (2004 – 2006)

The projects were then designed and implemented by community Task Forces. This is a brief summary of the Task Force activity:

Physical Activity

Specific Project: Increase availability and awareness of existing walking maps.

- 22 libraries and town offices in Greater Franklin County were visited with 40 staff informed about the mapping kits and the trails that are available
- Previously unknown paths and trails were identified by engaged community members, and are now being mapped
- 30 walking map kits were distributed throughout Greater Franklin County
- Maps were promoted through Franklin Community Health Network websites and in local newspapers

Youth Opportunities

Specific Project: Help develop a comprehensive directory of youth opportunities in Greater Franklin County and expand after school opportunities for youth.

- Youth Activities Resource Guide created on www.TheCommunityConnector.org
- Community engaged to discuss a rural-model vision of a centrally-located Boys and Girls Club with satellite locations throughout the county
- In partnership with the Waterville Boys and Girls Club, a pilot program in Phillips was established

Access to Health Care

Specific Project: Expand Franklin Health Access.

- Increased enrollment by more than 50%. While enrollment varies due to discharging (connecting to MaineCare, for example), peak enrollment was approximately 850
- Diabetic Care Management Program initiated
- Prescription Assistance Program and Electronic Prescribing initiatives launched

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Nutrition

Specific Project: Improve access to local healthy eating choices.

- Developed and tested numerous recipes based on the following criteria: they had to be tasty, easy to fix, and affordable to ensure that they would be prepared
- Distributed recipes throughout Greater Franklin County

Environmental Issues

Specific Project: Engage area schools in improving environmental education.

- Supported recycling efforts at Mt. Blue High School resulting in a 90% participation rate in the recycling program

Tobacco and Substance Abuse

Specific Project: Develop a Youth Speaker's Bureau to support tobacco prevention efforts.

- Youth engagement proved to be a challenge, leading Task Force to pursue other tobacco prevention efforts including:
 - Sponsoring Smokeless School Days, an alternative to suspension program
 - Coordinating Youth to Youth, a grant funded program focused on engaging youth in each of the 5 area school districts
 - Supporting Smoke-Free Housing with area landlords
 - Encouraging University of Maine Farmington's efforts to go tobacco-free
 - Strengthening Franklin Community Health Network's tobacco policy
 - Encouraging fairs and ski areas to be tobacco-free

Economic Stability

Specific Project: Expand adult education courses on money management, cooking and other life skills.

- Worked with MSAD 9 Adult Education in its efforts to implement a "soft skills" curriculum based on successful models
- Cataloged other opportunities to improve skills such as customer service (Franklin Resource Network's recent series of customer service strategy sessions) and FCHN's LIFE program.

Two Task Forces were created as a result of prior Visionings. These Task Forces continue to meet and do great work in the region. They are:

Breast Care Advisory Group

- In 2005, 4,208 educational encounters were conducted, 106 new women were enrolled in the Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program and 5,537 women had a mammogram. In 2006, 3,432 educational encounters were conducted, 82 new women were enrolled in the Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program and 5,623 women had a mammogram

Peace In Our Families

- Created the Sexual Assault Response Team
- Published 2006 Domestic Violence Audit and Action Steps and pursued recommended action steps
- Assisted in finding funding for a full-time domestic violence officer at the Franklin County Sheriff's Department
- Conducted numerous media and educational campaigns in the community to reduce domestic violence

Moving Forward: 2006 Community Health Visioning SURVEY RESULTS

To identify community health priorities for the next two years (2006 – 2008), Healthy Community Coalition (HCC) reached out to hundreds of area residents using three different approaches:

- A Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey conducted over the telephone with 380 area residents contacted.
- The coordination of the *50 Stories In 50 Days* project. As part of this project, health leaders, service providers, and community leaders visited homes across the region and listened to individuals share experiences and concerns regarding their health and well-being. The storytellers were a cross-section of residents who are clients of health and social service agencies serving the region. These stories were then brought back and reviewed to expand our knowledge of health issues in our community.
- A written survey that was administered at countless fairs and festivals and other venues across the region. The survey incorporated the information that was collected through *50 Stories In 50 Days* and the BRFSS survey, and, in effect, helped to validate some of the issues that had been raised in those assessments. (See Appendix 1.) The survey results are based on 832 records as of November 15, 2006. They are:

	<u>(2006)</u>	<u>(2004)</u>	<u>(2006)</u>	<u>(2004)</u>
Gender:	65.0% F	69.7% F	35.0% M	30.3% M

	<u>(2006)</u>	<u>(2004)</u>		
Average Age:	44.8 years	43.5 years	Age Range:	7 years – 90 years

		<u>(2006)</u>	<u>(2004)</u>
Town/Plantation:	Farmington	22.7%	23.2%
	Jay	12.0%	10.4%
	Wilton	11.3%	12.0%
	Livermore Falls	6.6%	6.2%
	Phillips	5.7%	4.2%
	New Vineyard	4.8%	1.7%
	Rangeley	3.5%	2.8%
	Strong	3.2%	2.2%
	All other communities	30.2%	37.3%

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Average length of time lived in community:

<u>(2006)</u>	<u>(2004)</u>
20.0 years	22.7 years

What makes you most proud of your community?

	<u>(2006)</u>	<u>(2004)</u>
Friendly and personal	19.4%	24.5%
People helping people	16.8%	21.9%
Small town atmosphere	16.5%	9.5%
Community involvement	9.6%	5.5%
Beautiful, natural setting/ Clean environment	9.2%	6.9%
Quiet and safe environment	8.4%	5.0%
Good schools	8.3%	3.7%
Volunteer spirit/ Community pride	4.1%	5.5%
All other responses	7.7%	17.5%

What type of health care coverage/insurance do you have?

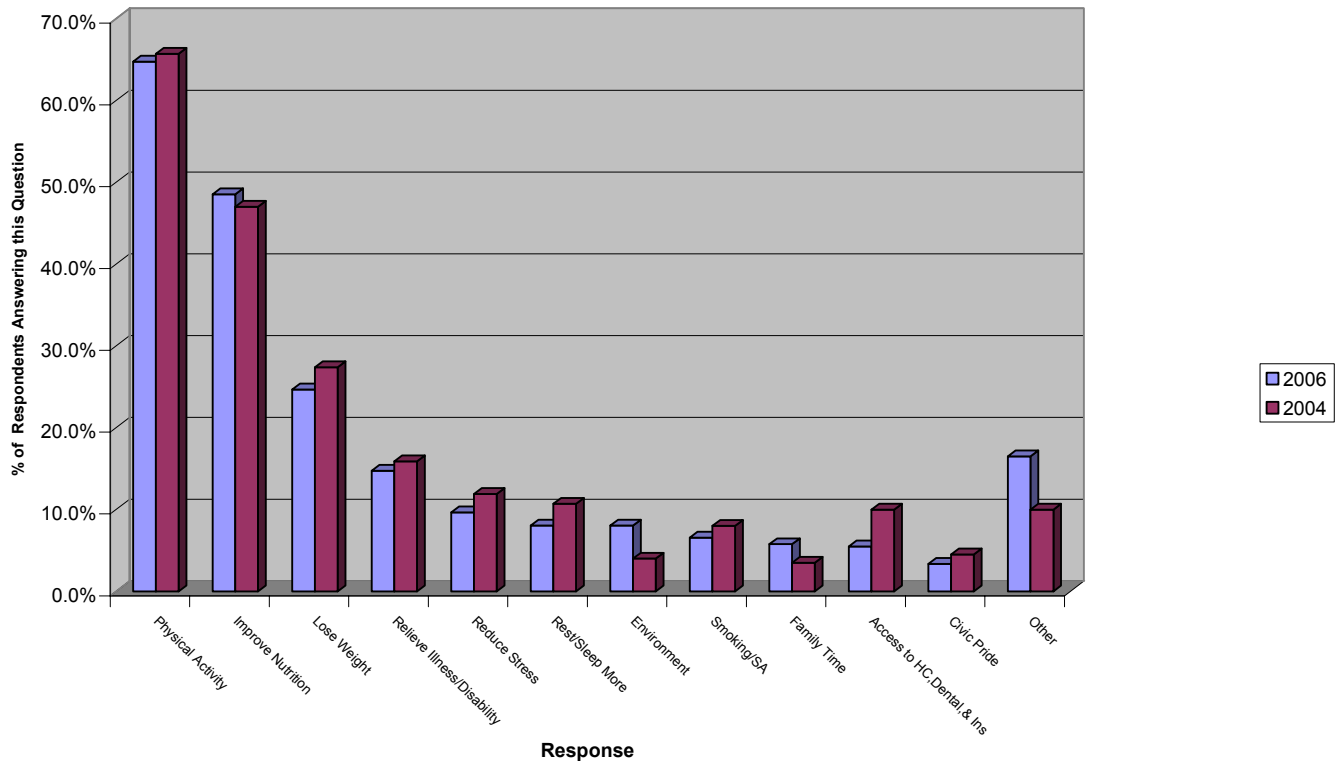
	<u>(2006)</u>	<u>(2004)</u>
Private health insurance	54.1%	67.3%
MaineCare	16.7%	14.2%
Medicare	14.1%	8.8%
None	10.5%	7.5%
Franklin Health Access	4.6%	2.3%

In general, what would you say your health is:

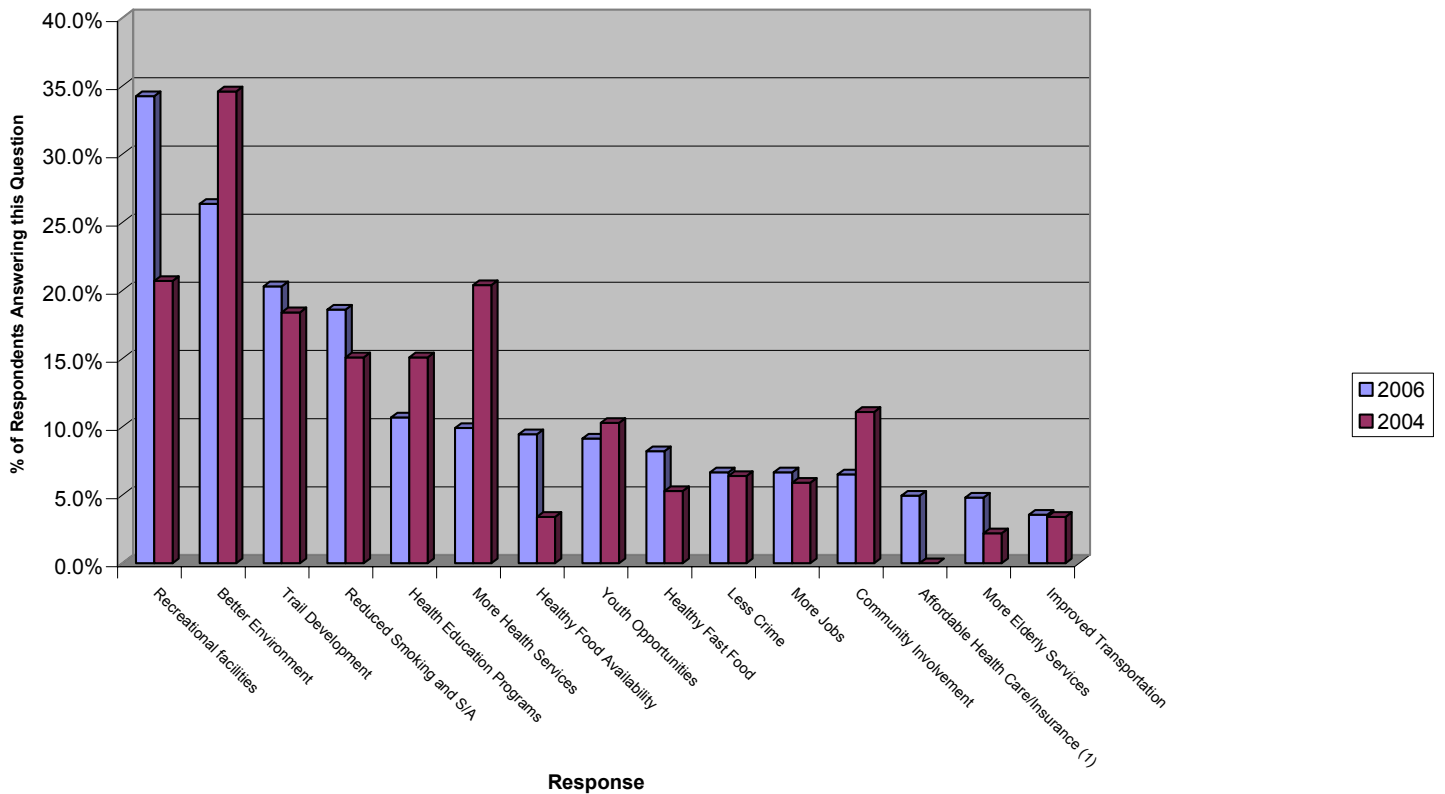
	<u>(2006)</u>	<u>(2004)</u>
Excellent	16.3%	No data
Very Good	34.8%	reported
Good	36.6%	
Fair	10.3%	
Poor	2.0%	

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Thinking about your own health, what are the 2 or 3 things that would make you feel healthier?
(746 Respondents out of 832 surveys)

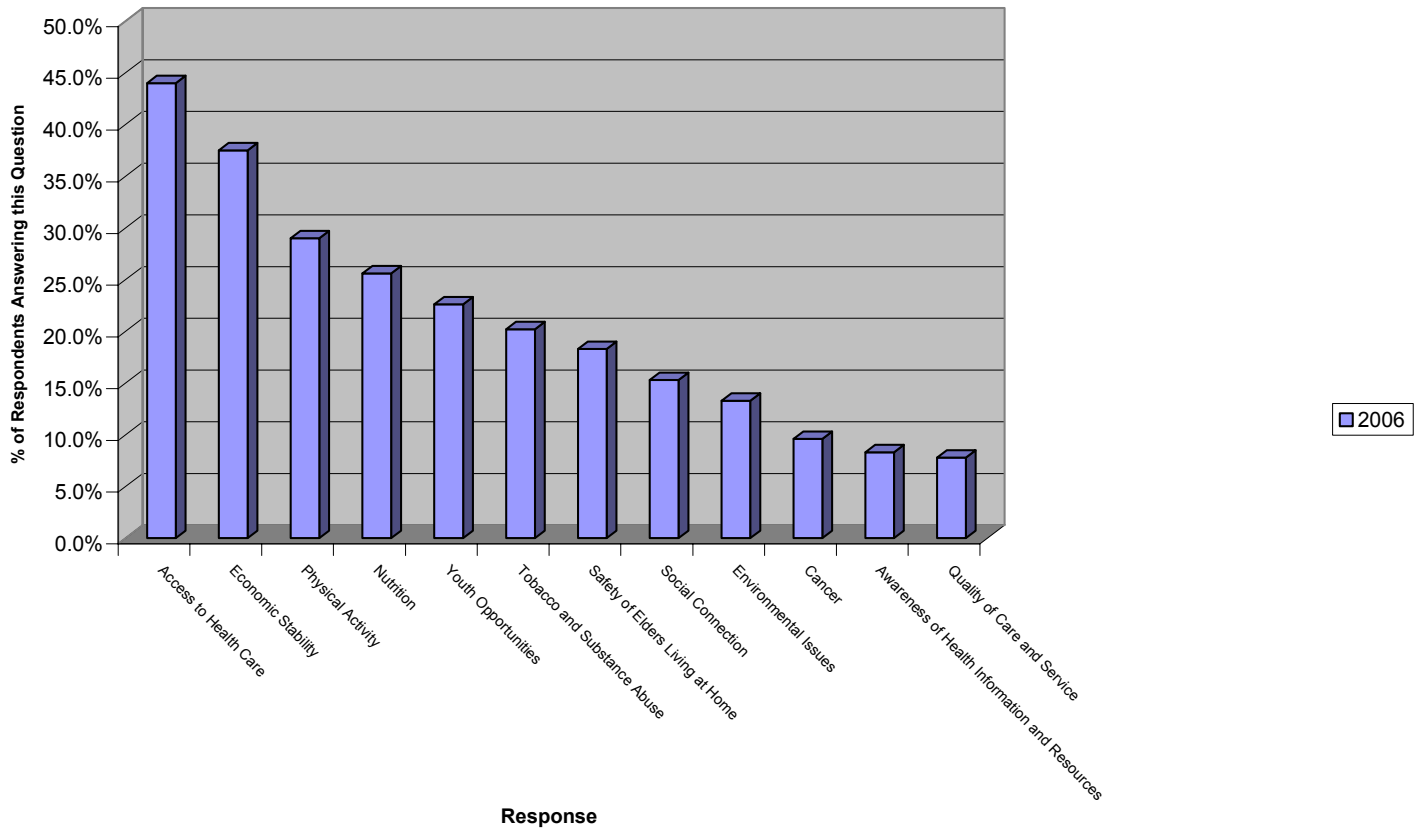


Thinking about your community, what are the 2 or 3 things that would make your community a healthier place in which to live?
(645 Respondents out of 832 surveys)



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Check the three areas you believe are the greatest challenges in Greater Franklin County today
(832 Respondents)



One question on the survey was narrative. It read:

“If you had a year to do something to improve the health of your community, and money was not an issue, what would you do?”

The most often received responses to that question have been grouped into categories.

Themes that arose worth noting include:

SURVEY THEMES:

- An overwhelming number of people want low cost, family centered recreational facilities available in local towns. The number one request was a swimming pool.
- Respondents stressed the importance of having healthy food choices, supporting local agriculture and tying the local food producers with school nutrition programs.
- Environmental issues were, again, a significant concern, ranging from a general clean up of trash, to air and water pollution.
- Respondents overwhelmingly asked for assistance with paying for health care services, insurance and prescription medication. There was also considerable interest in alternative therapies and the holistic nature of delivering care or providing services. Respondents often said “all under one roof,” or “multiple services,” or “health, wellness and community resources easy to get in one place”.
- The call to create opportunities for youth resonated throughout the responses.
- Many who took the survey saw the need to reduce substance use and abuse in Greater Franklin County– particularly smoking.
- There was a call to offer more health education programs and outreach into areas throughout the region, and inform, inform, inform. People still don’t feel they know what is available in the communities.
- Creating more jobs and diversifying the employment base was a constant theme.
- The specific need for aging and disability services/resources was evident - from prescription drug assistance to senior housing.

And finally,

- Community participation was a common theme. People saw benefits to walking groups, support groups, and community trash pickups. Many were dismayed by the lack of community involvement and hoped for more civic engagement.

“If you had a year to do something to improve the health of your community, and money was not an issue, what would you do?”

Responses Grouped by Category:

Physical Activity

- Provide scholarships to health and fitness centers
- Build a fitness center for the community with an indoor pool and several instructional classes and a nutritionist right at the facility
- Exercise place available for everyone and child care provided
- Get coaches for more sports in our community and more places to play sports
- Get people exercising through opportunities for outside exercise
- Put in a gym and have more classes like yoga and massage
- Provide more family activities and more teen-aged activities to stop drinking
- Give everyone a membership to the gym
- Build more walking trails that connect communities
- Make physical activity a mandatory hour at work
- Build a town multi-purpose rec center
- Develop community walking groups, yoga groups, stretching teams
- Start a running club – it is more motivating to run with others
- Build a community skating rink
- Form a community action group that would get people outside and active again
- Take a part of Hippach field and make it into an ultimate place for fitness with bball course, weight rooms, pool, fitness classes, and tons of people dedicated to the health of the community
- Really try to get more students and the whole community involved in health care aspects ie exercise, diet, recycling

Youth Opportunities

- Offer a teen center with a healthy focus
- Develop a newer playground with track and field
- Make sure all kids have a healthy place to go after school
- Clean up towns to make more play areas for children
- Build an art school for kids - that's their only escape

Education/Training

- Provide supported job training opportunities, that would grow locally
- Start a Technical College branch

Economic Stability

- Create more jobs
- Build a mall
- Provide more affordable housing and heat assistance
- Improve childcare for working women

Nutrition

- Educate the public on the dangers of obesity and making healthier nutritional choices
- Improve school lunch and have parents set the example for their children
- Give seminars in schools on how to take favorite local dishes and reduce calories and fat
- Remove vending machines –chips and soda, put in water
- Buy healthy food for the less fortunate families
- Start gardens for people
- Open healthier restaurants

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- Work on nutrition education
- Create individual nutrition and exercise plans for each resident
- Build a community greenhouse
- Bring in a fresh food market every weekend (during summer) that would mainly include local farmers
- Make a deal between schools (elementary through UMF) and local farmers to provide fresh fruit and veggies to all students
- Obesity needs to be addressed starting in Kindergarten and hammered home to parents as well
- Work to improve farmer to consumer food transfers and facilitate vegetable storage capability
- Set up a local food store/stand
- Take all soda and non-healthy food out of our schools
- Build a food store with only healthy choices for food stamp recipients
- Start a community “Biggest Loser” competition and get families involved with school lunch programs

Outreach and Education

- Have more programs in all health problems
- Have kids give presentations on health
- Provide a class as part of the curriculum in public school, hire a special teacher for this and starting in kindergarten be serious about the children learning from an early age on so they will be prepared to teach their own children when they grow up. Perhaps each generation will become better because of better knowledge and practice. It would be imperative for teacher and parents to work together in the learning process
- Get people’s names and counsel on nutrition and exercise
- Provide more health screening opportunities-Promote economic development-Promote all the outside and inside hiking, walking, skiing and exercise options in the community
- Make information about affordable health and dental care widely available
- Go door to door to access the people on their own turf to gain insight into their needs
- CPR/ First Aid training for all HS students
- We need more publicity for what is available - agencies should constantly send news releases to the local newspapers, radio stations, TV stations - it’s free, make use of it and let folks know know know
- Expand parent education to the northern part of the community

Health Access

- Provide free or reduced medical care for all
- Set up more mobile clinics for health outreach and medical care
- Provide affordable, equal insurance and prices for medications
- Provide truly affordable access to health care and health insurance
- Develop our own cardiac hospital with local doctors, nurses and clinics
- Improve access to providers – it’s hard to navigate all over the place – put them all under one roof and combine the services. (For example, put a massage therapist with a medical provider treating chronic pain.)
- Have town medical service providers deliver that service rather than just process that service
- Improve access to affordable dental care
- It’s very hard for people who have no health insurance, because they are self-employed. Guidelines for assistance for families are not good, and we need help

Alternative Therapy

- Get acupuncture and massage on a regular basis
- More programs on stress reduction
- Bring yoga and other complementary therapies to the area
- Experiment with natural herbs and plants figure out which cures what

Environment

- Pick up trash/ Clean the community
- Take all of the waste out of the Androscoggin River
- Make more things solar powered and clean
- Stop the mills from polluting
- Have cleaner air by reducing pollution

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- Conserve land which makes for a healthy community
- Clean up around schools
- Increase the use of renewable energy
- Eliminate all sources of carbon monoxide
- Make sure we have good equipment for keeping the air pure
- Make a business to clean the roads and the wilderness
- Explore different forms of fuel vs. gasoline
- Get more trees and gardens planted
- Reduce traffic
- Build a bypass so trucks en route wouldn't have to go through town (truckers would also favor this)

Social Connection

- Transportation is hard in our rural areas and leads to other problems. Getting to job appointments, social contacts. This is a problem that really needs attention
- More music, dances, folk celebration, gatherings
- Create more family events- Events to get the whole family together with other families
- Less emphasis on money, promote traditional free recreation
- Have more community volunteers taking elderly places (doctor visits, shopping etc.)
- Visit with people and spend time with them
- Try to get people together to help people
- Develop a program to call elderly at home to see if ok
- Find ways to connect to community resources like a handyman
- Start a women's group just to get together, talk, share thoughts - from addiction to in home problems; also share joys and support each other share recipes, watch TV, exercise, etc.

Elderly, Mental Health and Disabled Issues

- Build a fitness care center for MR/handicapped people to live
- Build senior citizen's retirement building with organized activities and nursing available
- Improve health coverage for mental health patients
- Make everything in stores handicap accessible
- Provide help with prescriptions for the elderly
- Improve elder and disabled services which are only loosely organized, mostly volunteer and therefore not always reliable
- Form a program to help elders improve their own health
- Increase senior housing opportunities
- Services for the deaf, children and adults are needed
- More transportation for the elderly and more people trained to provide in-home care
- Have some available handicap vans-like United Vans
- Need resources to address parenting challenges and behavioral health challenges

Substance Abuse

- Make smoking illegal
- Advocate more to prevent smoking /Make better medical programs and programs for alcoholics and smokers
- Develop local programs to target dangers of smoking
- Stop Phillip Morris and other companies' claims of concern while making more cigarettes
- Start support groups for addiction ie alcohol and drugs
- Develop a campaign focused on young kids: No smoking or drinking
- Reduce marijuana use
- Talk to kids about smoking laws
- Help all the kids that have parents who drink
- Make a banner that said "I solemnly swear I will never smoke" and try to get everyone to sign it

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Miscellaneous

- Start a restaurant and store that offers healthy food, classes in Yoga and a rehab program as well as AA meetings
- Reroute all logging trucks, construction vehicles, and Canadian 18 wheelers. Heat the downtown homes with the steam from the Boralex steam stack
- Reduce homelessness
- Restore libraries so they are an asset to the community
- Better lighting on sidewalks and parking lots
- Devote more time to cleaning streets around the town of Farmington
- Reduce traffic congestion on Rt. 4
- Give financial support to local farms
- Lower crime and domestic abuse in families
- More education for teens concerning sex/teens having children
- More help in maintaining necessary repairs to the home
- Open a resort with indoor/outdoor activities for all ages. This resort would include parks, walking trails, health food stores and restaurants with only healthy foods. It would offer educational classes for health, history and other activities of interest. Lodging would be available. All would be offered on a sliding fee scale
- Back up the town and county with more policing
- Build a new health facility to decrease heart disease, obesity, and overweight percentages in both the community and the University. Work closely with the athletic teams on the UMF campus
- Provide transportation and participation fees for everyone who worked to get to something that would improve their fitness physically, socially, spiritually, and emotionally
- Women in shelters need opportunities to transition into jobs, ideas include, thrift shops, boutiques

Geographic specific:

- Build a big better Public Safety Station in Rangeley
- Buy the fire department new fire trucks in Rangeley
- Public Health Club in Wilton
- Clean up the lake water at Dummer's Beach
- Personal Trainers in Carrabassett Valley
- Build a fitness trail around school for walking, running, cross-country skiing, and the snowshoes, x country skis for use by the students and community of Rangeley
- Put a bike and walking trail around the lake in Weld
- Build a Bio-Dome in Wilton
- Build a new pool and offer different water fitness programs in Carrabassett
- Check all septic systems and replace all those needed in Rangeley
- Pave a rollerblade path in E. Dixfield
- Build an indoor swimming pool in Rangeley
- Try to establish a pharmacy between Kingfield and Stratton.
- Establish a "Curves" in Kingfield, a local drug store, and a safe and interactive playground for Kingfield
- Install an acceptable sewer system at Dummer's Beach
- Reopen The Rangeley Youth Center "Outer Limits". It was good for the community. We lost a valuable resource