

# Community Health Visioning Update

As of April, 2007

## Visioning Forum Held

The Community Health Visioning Forum was held on April 4, 2007 in the Bass Room at Franklin Memorial Hospital. More than 60 health leaders and community members gathered, despite the looming snowstorm, to chart the course for improved community health.

Participants were welcomed by Leah Binder, Executive Director of Healthy Community Coalition (HCC) and Vice President, Franklin Community Health Network. Leah stressed the importance of the Community Health Visioning process, noting how this biennial process ensures that we are listening to the residents of our communities, and responsive to their concerns. She then introduced the priorities the community is mobilized to address through the Visioning process:

- expanding physical activity,
- improving nutrition,
- helping people gain access to health care, and
- improving economic stability.

Leah then welcomed Rev. Scott Planting who gave a moving keynote address that urged those in attendance to consider the power of collaboration and connection to each other. In addition, Rev. Planting encouraged those in attendance to weave together initiatives that address our health priorities to make an even bigger, and more profound, difference. He prompted the audience to consider how the Franklin Community College Network, for example, could incorporate physical activity into its curriculum, and how Franklin Health Access, for example, could promote improved nutrition through its efforts.

Rev. Planting also facilitated a stimulating roundtable discussion featuring leaders who are currently addressing the four identified priorities. The roundtable participants were:

### *Physical Activity*

- Jim Toner, Director, UMF Fitness and Recreation Center
- Sandy Richard, Program Manager, Healthy Community Coalition

### *Nutrition*

- Eileen Liddy, Program Associate, Healthy Community Coalition
- Tanya Swain, Executive Director, Western Mountains Alliance

### *Access to Health Care*

- Connie Coggins, President/CEO, HealthReach Community Health Centers
- Charlie Woodcock, Director, Franklin Health Access

### *Economic Stability*

- Marc Edwards, Tourism Economic Development Educator, University of Maine Cooperative Extension
- Doug Dunlap, Professor Rehabilitation Services, University of Maine, Farmington; pastor, Wilton First Congregational Church and member, Franklin County Community College Network
- Alison Hagerstrom, Executive Director, Greater Franklin Development Corporation

After hearing strengths as well as opportunities from the roundtable participants, the forum attendees broke into small groups related to each of the priorities. The charge of the small groups was to collectively arrive at a solution to address the identified problem, such as the lack of healthy eating choices in our schools. A leader was also to emerge from the group who agreed to continue working on the solution using a set of tools created by HCC staff. The following will be pursued as a result of the small group work:

### **Moving Forward: 2007-2008 Task Forces**

#### **Nutrition:**

***1. Leader: Renee Blanchet, Franklin County Children's Task Force***

Focus: Improve access to and exposure of healthy foods to children in school by partnering with Hannaford, PTAs, 4-H, Coop Ext. and other groups. Focus is on creativity (such as family fun nights) and the introduction of new foods so when children are ultimately introduced to these foods through the school nutrition program – an ultimate goal, they will be welcomed.

#### **Economic Stability:**

***1. Leaders: Doug Dunlap, Gary Perlson, Ray Therrien, FCCCN members***

Focus: This group decided that rather than form a new task force to address economic stability over the next two years, it would commit resources to strengthening the Franklin County Community College Network. There will be an emphasis on education and outreach as it pertains to letting those entering the workforce for the first time or re-entering a new career, know what financial resources and support services are currently available to help them in Greater Franklin County and across the state. (A no wrong door philosophy.)

#### **Access to Health Care:**

***1. Leader: Doreen DesRosches, Community Concepts***

Focus: Developing a better means of educating the target population regarding basic health care and the scope of services available in Greater Franklin County.

***2. Leader: Richard Batt, President and CEO, Franklin Community Health Network***

Focus: Develop and implement plans to identify, then reduce or eliminate “capacity/availability gaps” in the medical specialties and/or segments of care in Greater Franklin County including, but not limited to:

- |  |                |   |
|--|----------------|---|
| -Dental Care (Specifically Pediatrics) | -Dermatology   | -Mobile health care in hard to reach areas of |
| -Allergy/Asthma                        | -Mental Health | Greater Franklin County (primary care).       |
| -Cardiology                            |                |   |

#### **Physical Activity:**

***1. Leader: Sandy Richard, HCC Program Manager, (interim)***

(Due to the wealth of ideas and short time period, leader and focus is to be determined.)

Initiatives under consideration:

- Collaborate regionally with 5 area school districts and other parties (such as Northern Lights) to inventory equipment that is available for loaning out at low or no cost.
- Train students across the region to become personal fitness trainers (modeled after Mt. Abram's current efforts).
- Capitalize on the communities' request to organize more walking groups or group/family physical activity opportunities.