

# PUBLIC HEALTH 3.0 Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

## Highlights



April 4, 2016

As part of the implementation of Public Health 3.0, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) is hosting a series of listening sessions to learn about the challenges and opportunities experienced by local public health entities in their work to promote healthier communities.

The meetings also spotlight local public health innovations, creating a valuable opportunity for community leaders to collaborate and develop strategies to improve public health going forward. Below you'll find highlights from the Allegheny County meeting, which took place on April 4, 2016.

## Public Health Infrastructure

Public health is governed at the county level by the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD), which currently has a staff of approximately 370. ACHD upholds the 10 Essential Public Health Services that are the national standards for public health departments, and has adopted the social determinants of health into the strategic public health plan for the County.

## Health Problems and Challenges

Three behaviors — eating unhealthy foods, being physically inactive, and smoking — are responsible for a large proportion of the County's health problems. In fact, **80% of deaths in Allegheny County are related to poor diet, physical inactivity, or smoking.**

Allegheny County is part of the "Rust Belt," which has experienced significant economic decline — this contributes to health equity issues in the region. County leaders also cite a lack of trust in authorities by community members as a barrier to improving public health.

## What is Public Health 3.0?

Public Health 3.0 is a challenge to business leaders, community leaders, state lawmakers, and federal policymakers to incorporate health into all areas of governance.

## Allegheny County Fast Facts

**Municipalities:** 130

**Population:** 1,230,459

**Median Income:** \$52,390

**Median Age:** 41

### Sources:

- Vintage 2015 Population Estimates
- 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## Health Outcomes

According to the [County Health Rankings](#), Allegheny County ranks **26<sup>th</sup>** out of 67 counties in Pennsylvania for overall health outcomes. This is a dramatic improvement from 5 years ago, when it ranked 42<sup>nd</sup>.

## Bright Spots of Innovation

There are a number of public health initiatives in motion that local leaders hope will help continue the trend of improving health outcomes in Allegheny County. For example:

- The [Live Well Allegheny](#) campaign is a comprehensive strategy for improving the health and well-being of people in Allegheny County with a particular focus on reducing smoking, improving nutrition, and increasing physical activity. It will also incorporate efforts to improve mental wellness, personal and community safety, preparedness, well-being and quality of life, education, and health literacy. It includes programs such as *Live Well Communities*, *Live Well Schools*, *Live Well Restaurants*, and *Live Well Workplaces*.
- ACHD maintains health indicator data and a [Promising Practices](#) repository that captures best practices for improving community health.
- Allegheny County has a strong community within the private sector that engages in public health initiatives, including business coalitions like the [Pittsburgh Business Group on Health](#) and nonprofits like [Just Harvest](#), [Neighborhood Allies](#), and [Grow Pittsburgh](#).
- [Active Allegheny](#) is part of a comprehensive economic development plan to improve quality of life for County residents. The program's goal is to encourage more active transportation by providing increased access to walking and bike paths.

“Success depends on our ability to have real collaboration.”

– Leon Haynes, Executive Director of Hosanna House

“One thing we’re good at in Allegheny County is building bridges — working together.”

– Rich Fitzgerald, County Executive, Allegheny County



## Cross-Sector Partnerships

Public Health 3.0 involves bringing together leaders from all sectors that impact health. In Allegheny County, partnerships like these are key. For example:

- ACHD collaborates with the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health for data collection and analysis of health statistics.
- In the development of the [Plan for a Healthier Allegheny](#), ACHD worked with over 70 stakeholders from nonprofits and the public and private sectors. Additionally, the school system has played an important role in conducting outreach to youth in Allegheny County communities.

## Existing Data Resources

Data collection is an important component of developing and implementing effective public health interventions. In Allegheny County:

- ACHD has contracted with the Healthy Communities Institute to provide [Allegheny Community Indicators](#), an interactive dashboard that allows users to gather health information about the County.
- ACHD conducts primary data collection, including an Allegheny Health Survey modeled on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#). Data collected with the survey focus on a range of health behaviors essential to achieving positive health outcomes.

## Looking to the Future

Leaders from Allegheny County plan to continue their efforts to foster creative, productive partnerships between sectors that impact health — and ultimately, to improve health incomes in the County. For example:

- Ensuring that campaigns like *Live Well Allegheny* reach those affected by health disparities is a priority moving forward.
- Leaders emphasized the importance of including community members in future conversations about improving health. This aligns with a key component of Public Health 3.0: empowering the community to participate in finding solutions.

## Contact Information

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