



**ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
APRIL 2013**

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## **I. Executive Summary**

### **New Mission Statement:**

*To improve the quality of life for all St. Lawrence County residents by promoting health and safety through:*

- *Education;*
- *Preventing and controlling the spread of disease;*
- *Promoting healthy choices;*
- *Creating a healthier environment;*
- *Enhancing the development of infants and children;*
- *Supporting women's health;*
- *Public Health emergency preparedness.*

### **New Vision Statement:**

*A community of empowered people making healthy choices.*

### **Guiding Principles and Values:**

We will provide the best possible care to all St. Lawrence County residents without discrimination. We will prevent disease and disability through education and the use of sound, proven prevention methods. We will train, support and respect our staff as they are our most valuable resource and the key to our ability to deliver our mission and reach for our vision.

Our group developed five goals with 16 strategies to achieve these goals.

### **Strategic Issue #1: Programs and Services**

Goal: Ensure the ongoing availability of critical health information and services

Strategies:

1. Integrate education and outreach throughout all programs and services
2. Assess and stay current with public health needs
3. Promote and support current programs and services
4. Assess unmet public health needs

### **Strategic Issue #2: Human Resources**

Goal: Ensure a qualified and respected team of professionals

Strategies:

1. Develop a succession plan to prepare the organization for the loss of long-term knowledgeable and experienced employees
2. Create a new culture to meet our mission
3. Emphasize training

### **Strategic Issue #3: Organizational Identity and Public Relations**

Goal: Make our Public Health Department a strong and respected organization

Strategies:

1. Develop public relations and outreach plan that communicates our value and impact
2. Develop a strategic approach toward community collaborations
3. Engage Board of Health
4. Strengthen partnerships

### **Strategic Issue #4: Accreditation**

Goal: Achieve Federal Public Health Accreditation

Strategies:

1. Take steps to prepare for Accreditation
2. Apply for Accreditation

### **Strategic Issue #5: Alternate Funding**

Goal: Access funding sources to enhance programming that will not increase costs to the county

Strategies:

1. Explore grant opportunities
2. Seek other funding sources
3. Maximize funding allocations

## **II. Introduction and Overview**

The St. Lawrence County Public Health Department secured funding from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) for creating a strategic plan which is essential to pursue national accreditation. Accreditation requires creation of a Strategic Plan

for the Health Department. CITEC was hired to facilitate the planning process and the following Department members were selected to be on the core strategic planning committee.

- Sue Hathaway           Public Health Director (PHD)
- Anne Waite            Quality Assurance Coordinator/Compliance Officer (QA/CO)
- Deb Bridges            Fiscal Manager (FM)
- Rosemary Brown      Administrative Assistant (AA)
- Laura Duval            Director of Patient Services (DPS)
- Janine Giglio          Supervising Community Health Nurse of CHHA/EI  
(SCHN CHHA/EI)
- Laurie Maki            Supervising Community Health Nurse of Preventative Services  
(SCHN PS)
- Brandi Wells            Emergency Preparedness Coordinator (EPC)

One of the principal goals this group agreed to was to make sure we communicated with and involved the entire staff of the County Public Health Department to ensure that we received as much input and feedback as we possibly could. It was also important to the group that we receive input and guidance from the various stakeholders of the Health Department such as the County Board of Health and the County Administrator.

The resulting document reflects the strategic issues and priorities identified through the planning process.

### **III. Message from the Public Health Director**

The last two years have been very difficult for the department as budget cuts resulted in the loss of six programs and half of our staff. The biggest loss has been our Home Health Agency. All of us are grieving as we transition our patients to a private agency, close the doors on a service we've provided for 47 years, and say goodbye to valued coworkers. It has been a challenge for the strategic planning core team to grapple with our losses and begin to move forward. I want to commend the team for the excellent job they've done in working through their feelings and moving forward with the strategic planning process.

As the saying goes, when one door closes, another opens. Now we have the opportunity to step back and assess, refocus, re-energize and channel our resources in ways to better serve the residents of St. Lawrence County. Rumors that Public Health is dead aren't true and we're going to prove it! Public Health has evolved over hundreds of years because it's needed to improve the quality of life and extend the years of healthy productivity people should have. Our job now is to demonstrate our professionalism and knowledge, optimize the quality of our work, engage the assistance of the Board of Health, and collaborate with partners in the community to provide every resident with the opportunity to enjoy better health. The timing of the strategic planning

process couldn't have been better. It comes at a time when we're reorganizing and reinventing ourselves as the new Public Health that can better address the chronic disease issues that plague us today. 2013 is a year of new direction and new beginnings to move us toward the goals we outline in this plan.

## **IV. Department Mission and Vision**

### **Mission**

The mission statement for the Public Health Department explains its purposes as defined by regulation and understood by the County, staff, and public. The mission statement concisely communicates the overarching purposes that encompass all of the programs, services, and activities undertaken by the department. As part of this strategic planning process, the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department modified its mission statement slightly to better emphasize the Department's new roles and purposes.

### **New Mission Statement:**

*To improve the quality of life for all St. Lawrence County residents by promoting health and safety through:*

- *Education;*
- *Preventing and controlling the spread of disease;*
- *Promoting healthy choices;*
- *Creating a healthier environment;*
- *Enhancing the development of infants and children;*
- *Supporting women's health;*
- *Public Health emergency preparedness.*

### **Vision**

A key component of strategic planning is the development of a future vision. This vision reflects the Department's intentions, describe the way the organization will look in the future, and helps to position the Department to achieve its goals. The strategic plan is then developed from this vision to move the organization from its current position toward this vision.

Our County Public Health's vision statement reflects its shifting role from a provider of health services to an agency that engages the community in identifying health and environmental issues and concerns, developing a plan to address those issues and concerns, and working with the community members and providers to take individual and collective action.

## **New Vision Statement:**

*A community of empowered people making healthy choices.*

## **Guiding Principles and Values:**

We will provide the best possible care to all St. Lawrence County residents without discrimination. We will prevent disease and disability through education and the use of sound, proven prevention methods. We will train, support and respect our staff as they are our most valuable resource and the key to our ability to deliver our mission and reach for our vision.

## **V. SWOT Analysis**

SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This analysis is essential to understanding the current state of our organization so that we could then best map out the plan we need to pursue our new vision.

### **STRENGTHS**

1. Competent staff
2. Experience
3. Clients' belief in us
4. Flexibility
5. Survivors
6. People want to work here
7. Employee camaraderie
8. Strong network (community partnership and other counties)
9. Willingness to share information
10. Staff is willing to help one another
11. St. Lawrence County Board of Health is a new entity
12. Union

### **WEAKNESSES**

1. Lack of trust
2. Many management team changes (new, inexperienced, in new roles)
3. Fear of unknown
4. Lack of security
5. Lack of communication

6. Loss of experienced staff and historical knowledge
7. Resistance to change
8. Overload of work and changes
9. Grieving process/anger
10. Confusion
11. Processes not clear
12. More regulations and mandates
13. Educational and travel restrictions
14. Lack of support
15. Budget cuts
16. Public's lack of awareness of Public Health
17. Media – misinformation
18. Politics
19. St. Lawrence County Board of Health is a new entity
20. Union

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Promote our services
2. Focus on public health issues in St. Lawrence County
3. Increase our credibility
4. Improve processes
5. Gain stability
6. Regain trust
7. Move from reactive to proactive
8. Remove fear
9. Improve communication
10. Rebuild sense of unity
11. Pursue alternative funding
12. Training and education for staff
13. Improve perception of and respect for Public Health
14. To heal
15. Foster interest of staff in new things
16. Reenergize
17. Build a new culture

## **THREATS**



1. More budget cuts, (county, state, federal)
2. Privatization of services
3. Losing more staff
4. Losing skills with layoffs
5. Losing newer employees first with aging workforce
6. Doing more with less can create possible quality issues
7. Inability to respond adequately to public health emergencies
8. Increase of public health issues (new viruses, violence, etc.)

## **EXTERNAL TRENDS/EVENTS**

1. Increasing poverty due to lack of jobs and closure of businesses
2. Aging population with more chronic disease
3. Lack of access to healthy foods
4. Lack of easily accessible medical care
5. Decreasing funding from traditional sources

## **VI. Goals and Action Planning**

### **Our Strategic Issues, Goals, and Strategies**

We identified five Issues and Goals with a total of 15 strategies to move us towards our vision. In addition, we developed a work plan and a timeline that includes responsibilities and action steps for each strategy and corresponding action(s).

#### **Strategic Issue #1: Programs and Services**

Goal: Ensure the ongoing availability of critical health information and services

Strategies:

1. Integrate education and outreach throughout all programs and services
2. Assess and stay current with public health needs
3. Promote and support current programs and services
4. Assess unmet public health needs

#### **Strategic Issue #2: Human Resources**

Goal: Ensure a qualified and respected team of professionals

Strategies:

1. Develop a succession plan to prepare the organization for the loss of long-term knowledgeable and experienced employees

2. Create a new culture to meet our mission
3. Emphasize training

### **Strategic Issue #3: Organizational Identity and Public Relations**

Goal: Make our Public Health Department a strong and respected organization

Strategies:

1. Develop public relations and outreach plan that communicates our value and impact
2. Develop a strategic approach toward community collaborations
3. Engage Board of Health
4. Strengthen partnerships

### **Strategic Issue #4: Accreditation**

Goal: Achieve Federal Public Health Accreditation

Strategies:

1. Take steps to prepare for Accreditation
2. Apply for Accreditation

### **Strategic Issue #5: Alternate Funding**

Goal: Access funding sources to enhance programming that will not increase costs to the county

Strategies:

1. Explore grant opportunities
2. Seek other funding sources
3. Maximize funding allocations

## VII. Work Plan

Key:

Public Health Director	PHD
Quality Assurance Coordinator/Compliance Officer	QA/CO
Fiscal Manager	FM
Administrative Assistant	AA
Director of Patient Services	DPS
Supervising Community Health Nurse of CHHA/EI	SCHN CHHA/EI
Supervising Community Health Nurse of Preventative Services	SCHN PS
Emergency Preparedness Coordinator	EPC
Board of Health	BOH

Strategic Issue: Programs and Services			
Goal: Ensure the ongoing availability of critical health information and services			
Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame
1. Integrate education and outreach throughout all programs and services	1.1 Train staff to be strong health educators	SCHN PS EPC	Ongoing
	1.2 Integrate prevention and outreach strategies into all programs	Program Leaders	Ongoing
	1.3 Review and revise current approach toward health education	Program Leaders	December 31, 2013
2. Assess and stay current with public health needs.	2.1 Community health assessment	EPC	Every 4 years
	2.2 Monitor emerging health issues	SCHN PS	quarterly
3. Promote and support current programs & services	3.1 Create and implement outreach plans	PHD Program Leaders	December 31, 2013
4. Assess unmet public health needs	4.1 Develop relevant programs	PHD Program Leaders	Ongoing

## Strategic Issue: Human Resources

Goal: Ensure a qualified and respected team of professionals

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame
1. Develop a succession plan to prepare the organization for the loss of long-term knowledgeable and experienced employees	1.1 Identify vulnerabilities across all programs, services and specialized roles	Management Team Supervisors QA/CO	December 31, 2013
	1.2 Develop a plan to implement cross-training strategies where possible	Management Team Supervisors	September 30, 2013
	1.3 Review and Revise policies and procedures	Management Team Supervisors Program Leaders	December 31, 2013 and Annually
	1.4 Provide assistance and support to staff taking on different responsibilities	Management Team Supervisors	Ongoing
	1.5 Review and revise job descriptions and titles	PHD	June 30, 2014
	1.6 Create Leadership development plan	Management Team	December 31, 2014
2. Create a new culture to meet our mission	2.1 Convene staff to share new direction and expectations	PHD	June 30, 2013
	2.2 Establish meeting schedules and protocols to facilitate good communication	Management Team Supervisors	June 30, 2013
	2.3 Provide periodic training and ongoing support	Management Team Supervisors	Ongoing
	2.4 Engage all staff in taking responsibility for problem solving	Management Team Supervisors	Ongoing
3. Emphasize training	3.1 Develop training plan for staff	Management Team Supervisors	December 31, 2013

## Strategic Issue: Organizational Identity and Public Relations

Goal: Make our Public Health Department a strong and respected organization

Strategies	Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame
1. Develop public relations and outreach plan that communicates our value and impact	1.1 Promote public awareness of available services	All PH Staff Board of Health	Ongoing
	1.2 Consider testimonials when appropriate	Public Health Director	Ongoing
	1.3 Encourage collaborative relationship with local media	PH Director Board of Health	Ongoing
	1.4 Develop a system of reporting that demonstrates value and impact	Program Leaders QA Coordinator	June 30, 2014
	1.5 Identify communication strategies for a variety of audiences	SCHN PS EPC	June 30, 2014
	1.6 Increase communication and collaboration with the County Legislature	PH Director BOH	Ongoing
	1.7 Explore opportunities and policy changes for utilizing electronic and social media	SCHN PS EPC	Ongoing
	1.8 Provide public speaking training opportunities to staff	Management Team	June 30, 2014
2. Develop a strategic approach toward community collaborations	2.1 Identify, prioritize, and assign staff to participate in targeted activities	Management Team Supervisors Program Leaders	June 30, 2014
	2.2 Expand the role of the Department when appropriate	PH Director	Ongoing
3. Engage Board of Health	3.1 Encourage a greater public role	BOH President	Ongoing
	3.2 Define public health initiatives	BOH	Annually
	3.3 Educate policymakers and stakeholders	BOH	Ongoing
	3.4 Raise awareness of public health issues	BOH	Ongoing
4. Strengthen Partnerships	4.1 Identify and recruit community partners	All PH staff and BOH	Ongoing

<b>Strategic Issue: Accreditation</b>			
<b>Goal: Achieve Federal Public Health Accreditation</b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
1. Take steps to prepare for accreditation.	1.1 Appoint an Accreditation Coordinator and a multidisciplinary Accreditation Team	PHD	9/2013
	1.2 Complete prerequisites:		
	i. Community Health Assessment	EPC	11/2013
	i. Community Health Improvement Plan	EPC	11/2013
	i. Department Strategic Plan	QA/CO	5/2013
	1.3 Establish an electronic filing system for Accreditation documents	FM	9/2013
	1.4 Compile/create departmental documents to satisfy PHAB standards and measures	Accreditation Team	12/2014
2. Apply for Accreditation	1.5 Complete all items on the Accreditation Readiness checklists	QA/CO	12/2014
	1.6 Submit a Statement of Intent to apply for Accreditation to PHAB	QA/CO	12/2014
	2.1 Submit application	QA/CO	12/2015
	2.2 Select and submit documentation to support the standards and measures	QA/CO	2016
	2.3 Arrange for the PHAB staff site visit	QA/CO	2016
	2.4 Respond to PHAB team recommendations and Accreditation Decision	PHD	2016

**Strategic Issue: Alternate Funding**

**Goal: Access funding sources to enhance programming that will not increase costs to the county**

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
1. Explore grant opportunities	1.1 Identify sources of grants	Management Team Supervisors Program Leaders	Quarterly
	1.2 Create strategy for pursuing grants	Management Team Supervisors Program Leaders	December 31, 2013
2. Seek other funding sources	2.1 Identify sources of other funding	Management Team Supervisors Program Leaders	Quarterly
	2.2 Create strategy for accessing other funding	Management Team Supervisors Program Leaders	December 31, 2013
3. Maximize funding allocations	3.1 Review current funding allocations	FM Program Leaders	December 31, 2013