

# STRATEGIES FOR A BETTER TOMORROW



Focus Group Report  
United Way of Marathon County

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# **STRATEGIES FOR A BETTER TOMORROW**

2008 Focus Group Report

United Way of Marathon County  
December, 2008

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*NOTE: Focus Group members are listed on the last page of each detail section*

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# Bring People and Resources Together

## Description for change:

United Way of Marathon County Board has adopted the following statement to describe its direction:

United Way is sharpening its focus by addressing the root cause of problems to create lasting change in people's lives.

We're becoming more focused in making strategic choices, which is critical, because needs are growing faster than resources.

Together with community partners, we will concentrate on preventing problems while maintaining a safety net for those in need.

We invite you and others to help by giving to United Way, advocating for change and volunteering in our community.

## Overview of Report:

The purpose of this report and project is to help United Way and the broader community select a limited number of issues and strategies to improve people's lives in Marathon County. In order to effectively address community issues that have proven to be challenging, it is necessary to establish goals and strategies that guide the investment of our limited resources.

United Way has stepped forward to take the lead by bringing people together and providing the necessary time, expertise and resources.

This report is the framework for United Way and the community to create a coordinated plan aimed at making meaningful improvements that address our key issues. The process for preparing the report required many hours of thoughtful participation from a broad group of people and experts who know about the issues and care about our community. Their facilitated dialogue built common understanding about what it takes to achieve our vision and advance action to create desired change in each of the four areas.

The members involved in the focus groups demonstrated extraordinary interest and dedication to improving our communities. Success on these issues will be a result of continued coordinated and focused action. The participation that each community member and group plays is essential to using this framework to build solutions and create lasting change.

# Focusing on Solutions

## Methodology involved:

1. Selection of the critical issues for this process was done by knowledgeable United Way volunteers who reviewed the issues and data about current United Way priorities. The four areas were:
  - Supporting Children in the Early Years
  - Helping Youth at Risk Develop and Achieve their Potential
  - Improving Families' Ability to Meet Basic Needs
  - Improving Health and Wellness
2. Discussion of the key elements of the change being undertaken by United Way with board members, volunteers and agency representatives.
3. Recruitment of knowledgeable representatives from the nonprofit, educational, governmental and business sectors to participate in each of the individual focus groups.
4. Participation and facilitated discussion with over 110 people divided into four different group sessions. Each group met 4 times for approximately 20 total hours. The groups utilized a proven framework for analyzing each of the broad focus areas and took the following steps:
  - Developing an aspirational vision statement
  - Identifying the most critical barriers to achieving the vision statement, and develop the Long Term Outcomes that are necessary to eliminate or overcome these barriers.
  - Identifying the most critical barriers to achieving the Long Term Outcomes, and from that list develop the Intermediate Outcomes that are necessary to eliminate or overcome these barriers.
  - Identifying the most critical barriers to achieving the Intermediate Outcomes, and the Strategies that are necessary to eliminate or overcome these barriers.
  - Assessing, reviewing and improving the group's statements and findings and prioritizing the strategies.

The getting focused inverted triangle below was frequently referenced to describe the steps in the process. In the context of this visual, groups were reminded that implementing the strategies to move toward success requires working in new ways with investments of time, relationships, technology, expertise, money and other resources.



### **This process operated under the following principles:**

The process discussion and work was guided by these points:

- Define the end – what we want to accomplish
- Push to address underlying issues, not only surface symptoms
- Stress facts, specificity and focus
- Emphasize that “success is good” -- goals need to be realistic and achievable
- Fewer is better
- Make conscious decisions
- Expect it to be messy (it’s difficult work)
- Write it in pencil (it is dynamic and changing environment and we learn as we go.)

# Focus Area Summary

## Supporting Children in the Early Years

**Vision** Our community values the importance of early childhood development and works together to ensure young children develop to their full potential.

- Goals** (*abbreviated statements*) Children in their early years are supported for optimal physical, social/ emotional and intellectual development by their:
- Parents having and using knowledge and resources to provide the support that is important for their development.
  - Families having access to quality early child care and educational programs.
  - Community which is willing to invest in programs that support young children.

### **Sample Strategies**

- Educate parents and businesses about the importance of and ways to support children.
- Coordinate resources and programs to be more strategic and collaborative in meeting the needs of families.
- Educate community leaders on the importance of early child development and develop an executive level leadership team that takes action.

## Helping At-Risk Youth Develop and Achieve their Potential

**Vision** Youth in Marathon County with at-risk factors are inspired & equipped to become positive, contributing members of the community.

- Goals** Youth with at-risk factors:
- Achieve educational/vocational goals necessary to become positive, contributing members of their community.
  - Develop the life skills necessary to become positive, contributing members of their community.

### **Sample Strategies**

- Share resources and coordinate efforts so that schools and community organizations work together to define respective roles in supporting at-risk youth.
- Expand utilization of programs in school and community settings which effectively educate families and youth in life skills.
- Connect youth with mentors or other role models who can help them see the value of education.

# Focus Area Summary

## Improving Families' Ability to Meet Basic Needs

**Vision** Families and individuals in Marathon County will be financially secure and stable in meeting their basic needs with hope & confidence for their future.

### **Goals**

- People who are able to work have the necessary resources to meet basic financial needs through coordinated programs and services.
- Families and individuals have food and reside in housing and neighborhoods that help meet their basic needs through coordinated programs and services.

### **Sample Strategies**

- Create and/or participate in collaborations to identify and pursue practical options for creating new jobs that match the skills and circumstances of local residents.
- Offer expanded and effective programming to educate residents about how to manage their financial resources more wisely.
- Expand our communities' housing subsidy programs and help local businesses and landlords navigate federal programs.
- Expand ready access to food programs through greater collaboration, innovative delivery systems and expanded resources.

## Improving Health and Wellness

**Vision** Residents have the resources, knowledge and support necessary to effectively meet their physical and mental health needs.

**Goals** (*abbreviated statements*) Residents in Marathon County improve and maintain physical, dental, behavioral and mental health because they:

- Understand the components of wellness and healthy living and know what services are available to help them take necessary action.
- Have access to necessary resources and services to meet their basic health needs.
- Have access to prevention and treatment programs to address behavior that is abusive to themselves and their families.

### **Sample Strategies**

- Identify the content of important health information and develop effective methods for delivering this information.
- Educate the public about physical, dental, behavioral and mental health needs in the community and encourage them to be supportive of those in need and the services they require.
- Educate the public about the dangers and consequences of substance abuse and how to prevent it.
- Offer prevention programs targeted to youth who are at-risk of becoming domestic abuse offenders based on established criteria.

# ■ Advancing the Common Good

*This report is to be used by the community  
as a call to action to*

## **LIVE UNITED**

*...to influence the condition of all.*

The identified strategies are the things that can be done to improve the education, income and health of our county's residents. These are the building blocks for a good life. By joining hands and working together we can improve our community.

Each of us can be part of the change---by giving, advocating and volunteering, we can LIVE UNITED.

### **Next Steps:**

United Way will use this report to restructure its work so that we are better positioned to make strategic choices and create lasting change.

Future action will include providing time, technology, expertise, and other resources in support of bringing people together to work for the common good.

As United Way looks to implement these changes, the core of the work will involve:

- Making strategic choices to narrow our focus
- Developing strong collaborative partnerships
- Setting measurements for success
- Aligning resources and energy with research based strategies which result in innovative and successful program development or expansion
- Delivering results

The benefit will be lasting change that will build strong, healthy and vital communities and a sustainable future together.

## Supporting Children in the Early Years—SUMMARY

**Vision:** Our community values the importance of early childhood development and works together to ensure young children develop to their full potential. \* indicates- top four strategies; (#) number of votes received when members picked their top 3 strategies.

<p><b>Long Term Outcome A:</b> Parents of young children have and use the knowledge and resources necessary to support the optimal physical, social/emotional and intellectual development of their children beginning with pre-natal care.</p> <p><b>Intermediate Outcome #1:</b> Parents understand and recognize the importance of developmental milestones (including social/emotional components) and help their children achieve them in their early years.</p> <p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• * Educate parents on the milestones and their role in helping their children achieve them, utilizing a variety of innovative venues, methods and techniques – such as a mass media campaign, classroom or one-on-one learning, outreach at neighborhood-based organizations (churches, nonprofit providers) and businesses. (8)</li> <li>• Expand programs that provide target populations with the skills and supports needed for being an effective parent. (3)</li> </ul> <p><b>Intermediate Outcome #2:</b> Community resources for parents to assist children in the early years are accessible, integrated and focused on prevention and are “family centered.”</p> <p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• * Provide a structure to implement a strategic plan for providing resources to parents of children in the early years with program delivery through individual agencies/providers. Empower an existing or emerging collaboration such as the Birth-6 Interagency Council to carry out this role. (12)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Long Term Outcome B:</b> Families are able to access quality early child care and educational environments (home-based, center-based, school-based and/or other community-based) that support the optimal physical, social/emotional and intellectual development of the child in the early years.</p> <p><b>Intermediate Outcome #1:</b> Parents understand and recognize the importance of quality early child care &amp; educational environments.</p> <p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate parents on the importance of, and how to recognize, quality early child care and educational environments, utilizing a variety of innovative venues, methods and techniques – such as a mass media campaign, one-on-one learning, outreach at neighborhood-based organizations (churches, nonprofit providers) and businesses. (1)</li> </ul> <p><b>Intermediate Outcome #2:</b> Early child care and education resources are expanded to provide greater options for individual family circumstances.</p> <p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a consensus on basic components of “quality” early care and education. (0)</li> <li>• Create/expand affordable quality early child care and education programs to meet existing gaps. (0)</li> <li>• Collaborate with child care providers to promote the expansion of 4 Year Old Kindergarten throughout the county. (0)</li> <li>• Advocate for the adoption of this outcome by existing or emerging collaborations, such as the Birth-6 Interagency Council. (0)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Long Term Outcome C:</b> Community members (businesses, educational systems, providers, civic organizations, government and individuals) invest in programs that provide opportunities for the optimal physical, social/emotional and intellectual development of the child in the early years.</p> <p><b>Intermediate Outcome #1:</b> Community members understand the importance of the economic and social benefits of investing in programs that provide opportunities for the optimal physical, social/emotional and intellectual development of the child in the early years.</p> <p><b>Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• * Educate community leaders and the broader public on the value of the economic and social benefits of investing in the child’s early development, utilizing a variety of innovative venues, methods and techniques - such as a targeted informational campaign and peer to peer learning. (12)</li> </ul> <p><b>Intermediate Outcome #2:</b> Community members work together to identify, support and implement programs and practices that maximize early childhood development.</p> <p><b>Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• * Create an executive-level leadership network for early care and education that is related to the work of existing or emerging collaborations, such as the Birth-6 Interagency Council. (12)</li> </ul>
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## Supporting Children in the Early Years—Detail Notes

### Vision

**Our community values the importance of early childhood development and works together to ensure young children develop to their full potential.**

### ***Long Term Outcome A:***

Parents of young children have and use the knowledge and resources necessary to support the optimal physical, social/emotional and intellectual development of their children beginning with pre-natal care.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Parents understand and recognize the importance of developmental milestones (including social/emotional components) and help their children achieve them in their early years.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Information not communicated effectively
  - Nobody ever told them in a way they would understand
  - Not communicated to match learning style
  - Conflicting information (from experts vs. peers)
  - Absence of ongoing communication/support network
  - Not reaching parents early enough with information
  - Parents don't feel comfortable in settings in which information is provided
  - Absence of role models in media and community
- Don't understand their role
  - Don't understand that they need to plan a central role as first teachers
  - Lack strong parent-child relationships
  - Surrender role (to others)
  - Don't understand what they can do
  - Don't understand what they can/need to do to insure quality out-of-home care
  - Changing rules for parenting (no spanking – but don't have tools to replace that)
  - Pal vs. Parent role
  - Might not agree with developmental indicators
  - People don't know what they don't know
  - Afraid to admit lack of knowledge – stigma attached to parent not understanding child development
  - Family or cultural influence
    - What they were taught contradicts this information
      - Cultural beliefs
      - Traditional child rearing practices
    - Larger family influence contradicts or does not support
    - Fathers not used to being responsible for child development
- Basic personal attributes
  - Literacy skills or educational level-- Maturity level of parents/ teen parents
- Unable to attend classes or educational opportunities
- Lack of support network (family or peers)
  - Lack of support network to assist parents in implementing what they learn
- Family mobility
- Lack of coordination and follow through between parents and out-of-home child care
- Lack of time

## **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Identify, adapt and implement promising practices related to educating parents about milestones based on research
  - Clear, consistent, repetitive message about what developmental milestones are, why they are so important and the parents' role in helping children achieve them (taking into account language and cultural considerations)
  - Different methods of delivering the message
  - Determining the right times to deliver the message (teachable moments), pacing the information (begin prior to parenthood)
  - Educate peer groups
  - Integrate information within the natural flow of family's life (as opposed to providing through a "course")
  - Explicitly utilize existing contact points for parents (hospitals, prenatal offices, etc)
  - Deepen understanding and connection between healthcare providers and early childhood resources
- Train community members to be able to effectively deliver consistent messages in appropriate ways and at appropriate times
  - Mainstreaming developmental milestones – so that community members help one another on a daily basis
  - Help parents connect with one another to create support networks (including things like picking up kids from childcare etc)
  - Including child care providers – so that there is strong communication and coordination between providers and parents

***Intermediate Outcome #2:*** Community resources for parents to assist children in the early years are accessible, integrated and focused on prevention and are "family centered."

## **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Coordination/Competition
  - Providers are in competition, concerned with turf and self-interest
  - There is not agreement between providers about information and practices
    - Different interpretations of "prevention"
    - Differing interpretations of "family centered."
    - Different philosophies about "child management" – Ex: some childcare providers may think talking to the parent about behavior issues (later) rather than dealing with them as they occur is OK
  - Religious organizations tend to be isolated from other programs
  - Provider funding sources have different/conflicting expectations and goals
  - There are not mechanisms for regular, consistent communication between programs/agencies
  - Collaborative structure (Birth to 6 Interagency Council, 4 Year old Kindergarten Program) not empowered
- Capacity
  - Lack of mental health screening and care for early childhood
    - Some early childhood mental health providers don't accept Badger-Care
      - Reimbursement rate is too low.
  - Programs are not varied/flexible enough to meet learning and personal needs of parents
  - Lack of funding
- External restrictions
  - Confidentiality requirements
  - Governmental programs are difficult for individuals to understand and access
  - Provider funding sources have different/conflicting expectations and goals

## **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Reconstitute and empower the Birth-6 Interagency Council so that there are compelling benefits to active participation (include prenatal focus)
  - Create inventory of who is doing what in this broad area
    - Including informal, church-based and home-based care
  - Create strategic plan with roles for individual agencies/providers
    - Address capacity issues within strategic plan - for example, include mental health screening and care for early childhood similar to vision and hearing screenings
    - Establish common standards, practices where possible.
    - Use the plan Reach has developed.
  - Funnel funding through the Council based on strategic plan?
    - Partnership funds through Univ. of Wisconsin or Medical College – for planning grant and implementation grant
  - Create governance structure
  - Staff the process

### **Long Term Outcome B:**

Families are able to access quality early child care and educational environments (home-based, center-based, school-based and/or other community-based) that support the optimal physical, social/emotional and intellectual development of the child in the early years.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Parents understand and recognize the importance of quality early child care & educational environments.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Lack of parental knowledge
  - Parents don't understand value of quality childcare – see it as baby sitting
  - Parents don't know how to recognize quality childcare (what to look for)
  - Perception that “one size fits all” (by parents and providers)
    - Some providers understand but lack necessary resources

### **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Tie educational efforts about early care and education to understanding of milestones and parental role in helping children achieve them – seamless educational campaign with Long Term Outcome A, Intermediate Outcome 1
  - Clear consistent messages
  - Delivered in variety of ways to match circumstances, learning styles of parents
  - Translating developmental milestones understanding into a childcare context
  - Educate parents about certification/licensing system, what it means and who is included
  - Deepen understanding and connection between healthcare providers and early childhood resources
  - Expand programs with successful track records
    - Possible example: UW-Extension parent education program to all parents (currently for first time parents)

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** Early child care and education resources are expanded to provide greater options for individual family circumstances.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Lack of enough quality early care and education options
  - High turnover in childcare community
  - Lack of benefits
  - Lack of knowledge for how to handle special behavioral issues
  - Lack of resources generally
  - Lack of childcare for children with special needs
  - Regulatory/licensing system doesn't focus enough on the developmental needs of the child
  - National association
  - Perception that “one size fits all” (by parents and providers)
    - Some providers understand but lack necessary resources
  - Special populations
    - Infant & toddler, special needs, sick child
- Parents have difficulty accessing
  - Cost
  - Particularly families who don't quite qualify for subsidy

- Hours & location
- For the young child could provide guidelines
- Parents don't have equal access to pre-K programming

**Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Research, adapt and implement promising practices from other communities
  - What efforts have been successful in expanding the amount of quality care
  - What efforts have been successful in increasing quality of care
  - Including identification of what constitutes "quality" early care and education, with variations between institutional care and home-based (or informal) care
  - Expand employer based-backup care options (for sick children, snow days etc)
  - Expand funding for sliding fee programs
  - Educate employers on benefits to them of expanding child care options
    - Explore possible matching funds programs (IDAs etc)
  - Identify ways of linking informal care providers to community educational activities for the kids being cared for
  - Ways to address infant-toddler and special needs population
  - Ways to address the needs of working parents (including shift work and weekend care)
- Integrate this subject into strategic planning process for Birth-6 Interagency Council
- Promote the expansion of 4 Year Old Kindergarten throughout the county – in a collaboration with child care providers
  - Implement county-wide kindergarten readiness measure

### **Long Term Outcome C:**

Community members (businesses, educational systems, providers, civic organizations, government and individuals) invest in programs that provide opportunities for the optimal physical, social/emotional and intellectual development of the child in the early years.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Community members understand the importance of the economic and social benefits of investing in programs that provide opportunities for the optimal physical, social/emotional and intellectual development of the child in the early years.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Knowledge and attitudes
  - Business & community feels a need to focus on productive workers – struggle with devoting resources to child needs of general employee population
  - Studies regarding value are recent and not well publicized
  - Communities and policy makers have been reactive and not proactive – focusing on the end, not the beginning
  - Hard to invest in long-term, instead of short-term results
  - Community members place sole responsibility on parents (don't accept the "It takes a village" approach)
  - Different ways in which cultural subgroups view their children and the importance of education
  - Employers not sufficiently family friendly in policies/practices (allowing time to be at home with sick kids, etc)
  - Lack of community "statement" to emphasize the importance or a structure/vehicle for people to participate, become involved
    - Statements have not come from sufficiently authoritative or sufficiently broad source
      - Early brain development educational effort from past
    - No concerted plan/effort to raise this to the forefront
  - Don't know the extent of the need

### **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- See earlier educational campaign for parents and child care providers – one overarching educational campaign with three components (parents, providers, public, business leaders, policy makers) – to achieve explicit community commitment to early care and education
  - UWMC – Center for Public Policy
  - Ruder Forum
  - Special focus on value to the business community
- Identify and recognize specific businesses that serve as role models for other business
  - For example, sponsoring business for community programming
  - Encourage civic and professional clubs to play a role in supporting efforts
  - Look outside county for role models

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** Community members work together to identify, support and implement programs and practices that maximize early childhood development.

**Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Coordination/working together
  - No mechanism involving high level leaders to share information and resources and set community policy
  - Individuals becoming less connected to one another and community (more isolated)
  - Piecemeal approach to dealing with children's issues – not really strategic
  - Number of agencies have lost leadership (downsizing due to inadequate resources)
  - Absence of new-technology strategies for improving coordination
  - Concerns about turf or self-interest
- Public Policy
  - Shift of resources toward after-effects (jails, etc) instead of causes/prevention
  - School schedules are not always compatible with needs of child at home
  - "invest in our community's future – invest in children" has disappeared
  - Investment in education but not in the right ways (buildings vs. programs)

**Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Create high level executive-level leadership network for early care and education
  - Communication/coordination/policy/support
  - Advisory Council composed of high level community leaders/policy makers (business community, government, other major institutions such as education and healthcare)
    - Tied to the Birth-to-6 Interagency Council
    - Assist in reconstituting Birth to 6 Interagency Council
- Work with businesses, public sector leaders to encourage foundations to support proven programs over the long haul
- Identify specific businesses to serve as role models for other business
  - For example, sponsoring business for community programming
  - Encourage civic and professional clubs to play a role in supporting efforts

**THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS:**

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## Helping At-Risk Youth Develop and Achieve their Potential —SUMMARY

**Vision:** Youth in Marathon County with at-risk factors are inspired & equipped to become positive contributing members of the community.

\* indicates- top four strategies; (#) number of votes received when members picked their top 3 strategies.

**Long Term Outcome #A:** Youth with at-risk factors achieve educational/vocational goals necessary to become positive contributing members of their community.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Families understand and value the importance of education, establish individual educational/vocational goals and provide the support to youth to achieve those goals.

**Strategies:**

- Create a more welcoming environment for parents in our schools. (0)
- Provide examples of how education has helped specific members of the community succeed.
- \* Connect youth with mentors or other role models who can help them see the value of education. (6)
- Assist parents in developing specific ways they can help their kids succeed in school. (3)

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** Schools and community organizations improve their ability to address the increasing and diverse individual needs of youth who do not fit the mainstream profile of students (learning disabilities, learning styles, behavior issues).

**Strategies:**

- Create one or more “community schools” that serve as community centers delivering priority services for the needs of youth and their families during and after school hours. (5)
- Expand alternative educational opportunities for students. (1)
- Provide information and training for teachers to address the increasing and diverse individual needs of youth who do not fit the mainstream profile of students. (0)
- Provide information and training for community organization staff and volunteers to address the increasing and diverse individual needs of youth who do not fit the mainstream profile of youth. (0)

**Intermediate Outcome #3:** Schools and community organizations have greater agreement about their respective roles in supporting youth with at-risk factors and increase collaboration and coordination consistent with those roles.

**Strategies:**

- Educate parents, teachers, students and other community members to understand different learning styles. (0)
- Share resources and coordinate efforts so that schools and community organizations work together to define respective roles in supporting at-risk youth. (10)

**Long Term Outcome #B:** Youth with at-risk factors develop the life skills necessary to become positive contributing members of their community.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Youth and their families have access to and utilize resources that help them overcome issues that limit the development of youth life skills.

**Strategies:**

- \*Expand utilization of programs in school and community settings which effectively educate families and youth in life skills. (5)
- Educate families about the variety of existing free and low-cost positive activities for youth in community. (0)

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** The broader community works together to engage youth in ways that relate to their interests and attributes, build life skills and help them gain a sense of community.

**Strategies:**

- Educate community members about the culture, circumstances and needs of youth with at-risk factors and their families. Possible steps might include educating small businesses and offering poverty simulations. (1)
- \* Create/expand coordinated opportunities for youth that attract youth with at-risk factors to participate in community activities. (5)

## Helping At-Risk Youth Develop and Achieve their Potential —Detail Notes

### Vision

Youth in Marathon County with at-risk factors are inspired & equipped to become positive contributing members of the community.

### **Long Term Outcome A:**

Youth with at-risk factors achieve educational/vocational goals necessary to become positive contributing members of their community.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Families understand and value the importance of education, establish individual educational/vocational goals and provide the support to youth to achieve those goals.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Parents own prior experience with school as kids
  - Parents are uneducated
  - Parents had bad experience in school and don't trust the system
  - Parents own experience is not consistent with changes in curriculum
  - Parents failed to achieve educational or life goals
- The way parents experience school currently
  - Parents experience relationship with school as adversarial rather than supportive
    - Parents feel threatened/insecure when contacted by school
    - Parents have expectations of school that are inappropriate
  - Educational system doesn't adjust to individual learning styles, so we leave some people out
  - Schools generally don't prioritize relationship with parents
- External factors
  - Absence of positive role models for how education is tied to success in life (and existence of specific examples of success without education)
    - Peer influence – not valuing school
  - Dysfunctional families
    - Substance abuse, physical and emotional abuse, etc
  - Economic condition affects their time and interest – focused on survival, in continual personal crisis
  - See themselves as 'outsiders' – don't expect to fit in
- Educational system doesn't prioritize counseling, so not funds to hire enough school counselors to work with kids and parents
  - Good trend: School counselors work with parents to help parents develop plans (beginning in 4<sup>th</sup>)
- Parents don't understand the various services that are available to help their child
- State funding formula

### **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Create a more welcoming environment for parents of at-risk kids
  - Establish positive contact earlier with parents
  - Parents nights – providing food
  - Invite parents to come in a group to teacher conferences
  - Serve dinner
  - Adapt parent relationship building lessons from alternative schools to conventional school settings (and from private schools)
- Provide specific role models for how education contributes to success in life
  - Develop parent mentorship programs (parent mentoring parents)
  - Local business/civic groups for recruiting mentors
  - Parent support network

- Educate parents to understand specific ways they can help their kids succeed in school
  - Parent network
  - Develop parent mentorship programs (parent mentoring parents)
  - Financial management
  - Educate parents about substance abuse and effect on education

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** Schools and community organizations improve their ability to address the increasing and diverse individual needs of youth who do not fit the mainstream profile of students (learning disabilities, learning styles, behavior issues).

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Learning style issues
  - At-risk learners are “whole-to-part” learners; but teaching tends to be “part-to-whole” learners (need to see reason/end)
  - At-risk learners need IMMEDIATE feedback
  - Lack of meaningful relationships between students and teachers
- Teacher skills
  - Teachers are not being educated to teach differently from the past
  - Instructors don’t understand how to effectively use technology
  - When teach in lecture style, 5% is learned, but when kids “do it” 95% is learned
  - Don’t understand how to deal with in-classroom behavior issues
- School system issues
  - Structure of classroom
    - Access to technology
      - If you have one-to-one computing ability you can meet the learning needs of any child
      - Not computers for all students in schools – affects the way kids learn
    - When teach in lecture style, 5% is learned, but when kids “do it” 95% is learned
    - Class size
    - Traditional school facilities are not conducive to learning for at-risk students (sterile environment)
    - Lack of ability to collaborate with outside agencies (ex: where forms required from outside agencies)
  - Schools are very institutionally conservative (resistant to changes)
  - Mandated testing
  - We undervalue some alternative forms of learning – movies and other visual aids
  - Difficulty of dealing with behavior issues – complex issues related to consequences or at-risk youth

### **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Support creation of “community school” that integrates community services
  - Train teachers
    - To teach to different learning styles
    - Change approach to behavior issues (restorative justice)
    - Flip rigor, relevance and relationships to relationships-relevance-rigor
    - Have real understanding of diagnosis for kids who have been diagnosed so that strategies can be developed for managing/dealing with that
  - Create mechanisms for at-risk kids to develop meaningful ongoing relationships with teachers and other adults
  - Restructure facilities/classrooms to facilitate different learning styles

- Focus on small learning communities so that relationships truly can come first
- Looping approach to build relationships
- Change ways we assess kids
- Formal partnership with other community organizations
- Offer programs that enable kids to recover from mistakes
  - Have real understanding of diagnosis for kids who have been diagnosed so that strategies can be developed for managing/dealing with that
- Train teachers
  - Understand and address differing learning styles
  - Utilize technology
  - Restorative justice model for behavior issues
  - Recognize sources of behavior (alcohol abuse or other traumas)

**Intermediate Outcome #3:** Schools and community organizations have greater agreement about their respective roles in supporting youth with at-risk factors and increase collaboration and coordination consistent with those roles.

**Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #3:**

*(NOTE: none developed)*

**Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #3:**

- Educate parents, teachers, students and other community members to understand different learning styles.
- Share resources and coordinate efforts so that schools and community organizations work together to define respective roles in supporting at-risk youth.

## **Long Term Outcome B:**

Youth with at-risk factors develop the life skills necessary to become positive contributing members of their community.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Youth and their families have access to and utilize resources that help them overcome issues that limit the development of youth life skills.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Don't have explicit instruction for adapting between business-type culture and neighborhood or home culture.
  - Eye contact, please/thank you, putting others' needs above yours, common courtesy, respect, language
  - Work ethic
  - Financial literacy
  - Conflict resolution skills
  - Skills are not always delivered at the time it is needed by students
    - At-risk kids may need more direct path to employment (with accompanying soft skills)
  - Sound healthcare practices
- Don't know about existing services
- Difficulty accessing services
  - Difficulty filling out forms
  - Don't recognize value of service
  - Aren't comfortable asking for help
  - Don't recognize they really need help
  - Language issue (for Asian population)
  - Families expect the worst
- Lack of learning life skills through informal experience with adult mentors, role models (hanging out only with peers and not adults)
- Family economics
- Traumas

### **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Support community programs that educate families and at-risk students in life skills
  - Get kids involved in volunteer activities that give them experience in real world situations and behaviors
  - Improve understanding of the features of the gap between at-risk kids' circumstances and business world (for example, ability to balance a checkbook is not relevant to poor family that doesn't have enough money to have a checking account)
  - Offer programs that enable youth to recover from their mistakes.
  - Involve youth in volunteer activities that give them experience in real world situations and behaviors.
  - Communicate the importance of relevant life skills in language and examples that resonate with families of at-risk youth.
  - Offer programs in locations and at times that are convenient for youth and their families.
- Support life skills instruction in school settings
  - Utilize community school structure to focus on life skills education for families as well as students
  - Enrichment program
  - Classroom instruction in life skills at lower grade level (Junior Achievement model as example)
  - Improve understanding of the features of the gap between at-risk kids' culture and circumstances and business world (for example, ability to balance a checkbook is not relevant to poor family that doesn't have enough money to have a checking account)

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** The broader community works together to engage youth in ways that relate to their interests and attributes, build life skills and help them gain a sense of community.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Community knowledge and attitudes
  - Community denial about substance abuse and other factors that affect at-risk youth
  - Lack of awareness about factors that affect at-risk youth
  - At-risk youth and their families are stigmatized and excluded
  - Lack of understanding of where youth are in their brain development (impulsive, reactive, literal portion of the brain)
- Limitation of community programs/systems
  - Economics – not enough free or low cost opportunities for positive engagement
  - Parents and kids lack of knowledge about existing free and low-cost opportunities
  - Lack of network of support
- Environmental context
  - Mobility of families
  - Public financial resources are more limited
  - Disconnection within neighborhoods
  - Generation gap inhibits communication and inclusion of youth

### **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Educate community about the culture, circumstances and needs of at-risk youth and their families
  - Focus on educating small businesses (more tied to community than large businesses)
  - Utilize poverty simulations – recruit people from businesses and churches
  - Utilize Ruby Payne work
- Support new or expanded opportunities for at-risk youth that will attract and enable them to participate in community activities
  - Identify at-risk youth interests (through conversations, surveys, etc)
  - Identify existing opportunities and gaps between those and areas of youth interest
  - Identify barriers (cost, transportation etc)
  - Possible examples of activities
    - Service learning activities
    - Encourage positive risk activities that are consistent with positive community participation.
    - Support positive youth development activities
- Educate families about existing free and low-cost opportunities for youth engagement in community activities
  - Through the schools, service providers, local media, community events, churches, library
- Explore potential for a coordinated community effort to engage at-risk youth in community activities

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## Improving Families' Ability to Meet Basic Needs --SUMMARY

**Vision:** Families and individuals in Marathon County will be financially secure and stable in meeting their basic needs with hope & confidence for their future. \* indicates- top four strategies; (#) number of votes received when members picked their top 3 strategies.

**Long Term Outcome #A:** People who are able to work have the necessary resources to meet basic financial needs through coordinated programs and services.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Residents of Marathon County have jobs that provide a living wage and benefits.

**Strategies:**

- Create and/or participate in collaborations to identify and pursue practical options for creating new jobs that match the skills and circumstances of local residents. (2)
- Create and expand educational/training programs that provide the skills needed to fill and hold existing jobs (including soft, life and language skills) that provide a living wage & benefits.
- Advocate for changes in those programs that may provide as disincentives to improved earned income. (1)

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** Residents of Marathon County have the financial literacy necessary to better meet basic needs with limited resources.

**Strategies:**

- Offer expanded and effective programming to educate residents about how to manage their financial resources more wisely. (1)
- Expand reasonable options for credit and reduce exploitive lending practices. (2)
- Provide incentive programs for people to manage their finances more wisely. (IDAs are one example) (2)

**Long Term Outcome #B:** Families and individuals have food and reside in housing and neighborhoods that help meet their basic needs through coordinated programs and services.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** More low & medium income residents have and maintain affordable (at or below 30% of income) code-compliant and, where appropriate, handicap accessible housing.

**Strategies:**

- Provide ways to help people reduce housing expenses, such as through joint living arrangements. (0)
- \* Expand our communities housing subsidy programs and help local businesses and landlords navigate federal programs. (10)
- Educate and assist property owners on maintaining homes, including increasing energy efficiency. (0)
- Provide programs to aid residents to stay in their homes, including reducing evictions and foreclosures or retrofitting housing to make it handicap accessible. (2)

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** People who do not have access to permanent housing have access to temporary code-compliant shelter.

**Strategies:**

- \* Continue/expand diverse appropriate shelter options including emergency, short-term, transitional shelter for individuals and families. (4)

**Intermediate Outcome #3:** Residents of Marathon County have food necessary to meet their basic health & nutrition needs.

**Strategies:**

- \* Expand ready access to food programs through greater collaboration, innovative delivery systems and expanded resources. (9)
- Develop and implement a community educational campaign to educate the public about healthy food choices. (0)

## **Improving Families' Ability to Meet Basic Needs—Detail Notes**

### **Vision**

**Families and individuals in Marathon County will be financially secure and stable in meeting their basic needs with hope & confidence for their future.**

### **Long Term Outcome A:**

People who are able to work have the necessary resources to meet basic financial needs through coordinated programs and services.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Residents of Marathon County have jobs that provide a living wage and benefits.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Jobs
  - Low wages for existing jobs
  - Absence of jobs that match existing skills/training
  - Inability to work due to lack of childcare
  - Lack of training/education appropriate to the existing (and future) options
  - Lack of motivation/desire to hold and keep a job
  - Lack of life skills to hold job
  - Criminal history
  - Drug use
  - Health and mental illness
  - Credit history
  - Legal status (immigration)
  - Language skills
  - Support structures for working from home
  - Layoffs, downsizing etc.
  - Transportation to jobs, to schools/training

### **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Create central inventory of employment opportunities that provide living wage & benefits as well as the skills needed to fill them.
- Define “living wage and benefits” based on cost of living in this area; for different types of families (single parent in particular)
- Educational/training programs that provide the skills needed to fill and hold existing jobs (including soft, life and language skills) are created/expanded.
- Expand employment opportunities that provide living wage & benefits that match the skills and circumstances of local residents.

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** Residents of Marathon County have the financial literacy necessary to better meet basic needs with limited resources.

**Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Information not readily available, not easily accessed
  - Not included in school curriculum
  - Lack of Individual counseling
  - Lack of basic budgeting and spending plan programs
  - People don't know how to identify needs vs. wants
  - People use inappropriate credit
- Information that is available is not delivered effectively
  - Lack reading, writing, comprehension skills
  - Some financial information is not written in way easy to understand
  - Not good role models in family
  - Changing attitudes toward credit
  - Deferred gratification issues
- Information content needs to be expanded (to include predatory lending etc)
  - Some financial information is not written in way easy to understand
- Predatory lending
  - Absence of alternatives to predatory lending
  - Exploitive offers are attractively marketed

**Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Create inventory of locations, hours, content of financial literacy programs.
- Identify national best or promising practices for financial literacy programs.
  - Content: Identify prototype of financial literacy programs
    - Content of financial literacy programs needs to be current and comprehensive (predatory lending, saving, credit score, different types of mortgage products, credit options, effect of interest, etc – adding new issues in timely manner)
  - Access: Identify proven delivery mechanisms, formats, etc.
    - In schools, teach simple concepts at early age (in school) and advanced concepts in older ages; work with Junior Achievement
    - Train volunteers to coach/mentor individuals and families
- Support programs that utilize promising practices and creation of consistent delivery of consistent content.
- Expand reasonable options for credit and reduce exploitive lending practices.

### **Long Term Outcome B:**

Families and individuals have food and reside in housing and neighborhoods that help meet their basic needs through coordinated programs and services.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** More low & medium income residents have and maintain affordable (at or below 30% of income) code-compliant and, where appropriate, handicap accessible housing.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Rent and mortgage payments too high
  - Basic cost of housing
    - Maintaining code compliance
    - Land
    - Debt
    - Taxes
    - Utilities
    - Insurance
- Utility costs are high
- Inadequate housing subsidies
  - Almost impossible to provide housing for exceptionally low income without significant subsidies
  - Limited resources for Section 8 (443 on waiting list)
  - Community development funds limited to Wausau
- Tax credit housing is difficult to develop
- Expectations do not match realistic options
  - Individual spaces vs. group housing
  - Ownership vs. rental
- Occupancy regulations (for group housing)
- Inability to move market housing into subsidized housing
- Some affordable housing is too small for families
- Older housing is not maintained adequately
- Not meeting needs of low income
  - More profitable to develop high end housing than multi-family housing
  - Landlords prefer higher income tenants because they are seen as more stable
  - Developers make more money by building more expensive housing
  - Municipalities get more taxes from higher cost housing
  - Absence of nonprofit affordable housing developer
- Landlords not knowledgeable (about codes and how to maintain property properly) and don't live here

### **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Develop a share-a-home program
- Encourage local government to seek more housing subsidies
- Encourage local government to help local businesses navigate federal programs
- Educate property owners on maintaining homes, including increasing energy efficiency
- Create/expand program for assisting property owners to maintain homes

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** People who do not have access to permanent housing have access to temporary code-compliant shelter.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Only one shelter (other than domestic violence) (17-18 single male, 17-18 single female, 5-6 family + motels; range of programs – up to 3 months)
  - Randlin Home provides some shelter and works on self-sufficiency issues for veterans and special population (hardest to work with)
- Domestic violence shelter has to rely on domestic violence shelters in surrounding counties
- Lack of capacity for all types of shelter
- Eligibility requirements prevent some from access
- Village of Weston considering pulling license on mobile home park
- Resistance to expansion/development of shelter facilities
  - Neighborhood opposition
  - Fear of drawing more homeless to community

### **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Expand and support existing shelter facilities for (Salvation Army, Domestic Violence and Randlin Home)
  - Conduct educational campaign on need and value of shelter – especially transitional program
- Continue to support homeless programs that place overflow/ineligible homeless in motels

**Intermediate Outcome #3:** Residents of Marathon County have food necessary to meet their basic health & nutrition needs.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #3:**

- Healthy food can be more expensive
- Lack of knowledge
  - Lack of understanding of what is a healthy meal
  - Lack of knowledge for preparing healthy meals
  - Junk food more readily available and promoted heavily
- People are not participating in food programs
  - We expect parents to feed their kids, so families don't participate in school food program
  - Pride and stigma
  - WIC program is cumbersome (purchasing requirements)
- Limited options for shopping
- Transportation to food sources, jobs, service agencies and schools/training
  - Public transportation has limited routes, hours
    - Limited to urban areas
    - Limited routes within metropolitan areas
  - Not enough buses are accessible for people with disabilities
  - Public transportation is too expensive for some people
  - Cost of purchasing and owning (fuel, insurance and repairs) car
- Lack of culturally familiar food at pantries
- Lack of capacity in hot meal delivery programs with expanding need as elderly population grows

### **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #3:**

- Develop community marketing plan to educate the public
  - Enlist the media and key distribution points
  - Educate the community about the growing need for food and what they can do to help (work with local media, local grocery stores etc)
    - Donate food (including idea of picking up an extra product when buying own groceries)
    - Volunteer
  - Educate the community about healthy food choices
    - Make materials being developed on healthy food choices available on a widespread basis to distribution points
- Institutions assist clients in applying online for “food share” while at the agency (food pantries, churches, library, etc.)
- Support and expand existing food pantries
  - Financial support
  - Food drives for specific types of food
  - Expand food pantry delivery programs
- Expand specific bus routes to longer hours to enable access to super markets

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## Improving Health and Wellness

**Vision:** Residents have the resources, knowledge and support necessary to effectively meet their physical and mental health needs.\* indicates top strategies: (#) indicates number of votes received when members picked their top 3 strategies.

**Long Term Outcome A:** Residents of Marathon County understand the components of wellness and healthy living and know what services are available to take necessary action to improve and maintain physical, dental, behavioral and mental health.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Accurate information about the components of wellness and healthy living is available and delivered effectively.

**Strategies:**

- \*Identify the content that needs to be communicated to individuals and families with physical, dental, behavioral and mental health needs and develop effective methods for delivering this information. Examples include information on prenatal care, immunizations, physical and mental health screenings, drug and alcohol use, recognizing signs of abuse, etc. (5)
- \*Educate the public about physical, dental, behavioral and mental health needs in the community and encourage them to be supportive of those in need and the services they require. (6)
- Expand collaboration and consistency in the delivery of information. (3)

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** Marathon County provides a supportive environment to assist in motivating people to have healthy behaviors.

**Strategies:**

- Provide specific incentives for residents to change their behavior. (2)
- Remove specific, identifiable barriers that impede healthy behavior. (1)

**Long Term Outcome B:** Residents of Marathon County have the necessary resources and services available to access quality physical, dental, behavioral and mental healthcare necessary to meet their basic needs.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Residents of Marathon County have improved access to acquire necessary healthcare, with an emphasis on preventative, dental, behavioral and mental healthcare.

**Strategies:**

- Identify and implement viable approaches that lead to providers accepting more preventative, dental, behavioral and mental health patients. (2)
- Work with businesses to redesign benefit packages to reimburse for preventative care, dental, behavioral and mental health care and work with their employees to make sure employees understand their benefits. (0)
- \*Expand collaboration, coordination and consistency among providers to improve access such as; developing a coordinated transportation system, expanding hours of operation and improving cultural and language competencies. (4)
- Increase opportunities for care coordination/case management, where possible and appropriate. (3)
- Promote policy changes to allow for more affordable insurance products for small businesses or other uninsured populations. (0)

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** Residents of Marathon County have improved access to acquire necessary acute and chronic illness and disease management.

**Strategies:**

- Identify and implement viable approaches that lead to providers accepting more patients. (1)
- Work with businesses to redesign benefit packages to promote health and work with their employees to make sure employees understand their benefits, and appropriate utilization of services. (0)
- Expand collaboration, coordination and consistency among providers to improve access such as; developing a coordinated transportation system, expanding hours of operation and improving cultural and language competencies. (0)
- Utilize patient visits to address substance abuse, mental health, and domestic abuse issues. (0)
- Increase opportunities for care coordination/case management, where possible and appropriate. (2)
- Promote policy changes to allow for more affordable insurance products for small businesses or other uninsured populations. (0)

## Improving Health and Wellness

**Long Term Outcome C:** Residents of Marathon County have improved access to prevention and treatment programs related to behavior that is abusive to themselves and their families.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Residents of Marathon County have access to prevention and treatment programs related to abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

**Strategies:**

- Expand employer understanding about the importance of the process for screening and referring employees with substance abuse issues. (2)
- \*Educate the public about the dangers and consequences of substance abuse and how to prevent it. (3)
- Pilot SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment) at a limited number of primary care clinics. (2)
- Work with businesses to redesign benefit packages to include adequate substance abuse coverage and work with their employees to make sure employees understand their benefits, and appropriate utilization of services. (0)
- Provide support for additional counselor training.
- Support alternative sentencing programs. (0)

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** Residents of Marathon County have improved access to prevention and treatment programs related to domestic abuse, child abuse and elder abuse.

**Strategies:**

- Educate the community about the extent and danger of domestic abuse and how to respond to it. (1)
- \*Offer prevention programs targeted to youth who are at-risk of becoming perpetrators based on established criteria. (5)
- Change state policy about how we deal with child welfare reports (mandate earlier intervention). (0)
- Collaborate with healthcare providers and others to educate and screen families about domestic abuse issues. (3)
- \*Support successful intervention and treatment programs. (6)

## **Improving Health and Wellness—Detail Notes**

*Note: The Health Focus Group had a compressed timeline as it spun out of the Basic Needs group.*

### **Vision**

**Residents have the resources, knowledge and support necessary to effectively meet their physical and mental health needs.**

### **Long Term Outcome A:**

Residents of Marathon County understand the components of wellness and healthy living and know what services are available to take necessary action to improve and maintain physical, dental, behavioral and mental health.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Accurate information about the components of wellness and healthy living is available and delivered effectively.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #1:**

(These barriers were from the Youth at Risk Group)

- Physical and mental health is not emphasized enough in school to enable youth to understand its importance
  - Educators are evaluated on other things – test scores of students
  - PE is ineffective
  - Mental health is thought of as a deficit, instead of as an asset
  - Mental health not treated comparably to physical health
- Physical and mental health is not emphasized enough in community to enable youth to understand its importance
- Information on physical & mental health is not provided in effective manner
- Mental health is thought of a deficit, instead of as an asset
- Lack of access to medical professionals who help them understand what it means
- Inability or unwillingness to recognize mental illness or physical addiction
- Mental health not treated comparably to physical health
- Reduced time that kids are allowed to be kids
- Media portrays a simplistic and unrealistic image of what it means to be healthy
  - For example, Thin = health
- Media makes unhealthy behavior attractive
  - Smoking
  - Fast food
  - Unsafe sexual practices

## **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Identify the content that needs to be communicated to individuals and families with physical and mental health needs and develop effective methods for delivering this information (for example prenatal care, immunizations, physical and mental health screenings, drug and alcohol use, etc.)
  - Assess existing information & conduct a gap analysis
    - Accuracy and completeness of information about what constitutes physical & mental health
    - Accuracy and completeness of information about existing services
    - Cultural & language specificity
    - Readability (grade level)
    - Delivery method and timeliness
  - Identify specific methods for addressing gaps identified
- Educate the public about physical, dental, behavioral and mental health needs in the community and encourage them to be supportive of those in need and the services they require.
- Improve collaboration and consistency in the delivery of information (both about physical, dental, behavioral and mental health & about existing services)

***Intermediate Outcome #2:*** Marathon County provides a supportive environment to assist in motivating people to have healthy behaviors.

## **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #2:**

*(NOTE: No barriers are listed for this outcome due to time constraints.)*

## **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Provide specific incentives for residents to change their behavior.
- Remove specific, identifiable barriers that impede healthy behavior.

### **Long Term Outcome B:**

Residents of Marathon County have the necessary resources and services available to access quality physical, dental, behavioral and mental healthcare necessary to meet their basic needs.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Residents of Marathon County have expanded opportunities to acquire necessary healthcare, with an emphasis on preventative, dental, behavioral and mental healthcare.

#### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Willing providers (to accept new patients, to accept Badger Care, to accept Medicare, etc)
- Health insurance limitations
- Hours of operation
- Location/transportation
- Language& cultural limitations of providers
- Money
- Unwillingness to invest in community and preventative healthcare (when we save \$ as result of preventative programs, there is resulting reinvestment in prevention)
- Lack of coordination/collaboration inhibits taking advantage of existing opportunities
- Reluctance to serve particular populations - stigma

#### **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Identify and implement viable approaches that lead to providers accepting more dental and mental health patients.
  - Possible example: Provide positive incentives (monetary and nonmonetary) to providers to cover expenses when they accept more dental and mental health patients who do not have conventional insurance.
  - Address reluctance to serve particular populations (aside from financial issues)
- Work with businesses to redesign benefit packages to reimburse for preventative care and mental health care and work with their employees to make sure employees understand their benefits.
- Improve collaboration, coordination and consistency among providers regarding the knowledge and delivery of services. Examples include:
  - coordinated transportation system for accessing services,
  - expanded hours of operation and
  - cultural and language competence
- Increase opportunities for care coordination/case management, where possible and appropriate.

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** Residents of Marathon County have improved access to acquire necessary acute and chronic illness and disease management.

#### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Out of pocket costs for patients
- Lack of or inadequate insurance
- Lack of care coordination
- Cost of living
- Increasing shortage of healthcare workers (physicians and nurses)
- Lack of coordination, advocacy and support for patients who are managing illness
- Attention and financial resources are driven by this month's fashionable disease
- Transportation & hours of operation

## **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Identify and implement viable approaches that lead to providers accepting more patients.
  - Possible example: Provide positive incentives (monetary and nonmonetary) to providers to cover expenses when they accept more dental and mental health patients who do not have conventional insurance.
  - Address reluctance to serve particular populations (aside from financial issues)
- Work with businesses to redesign benefit packages to promote health and work with their employees to make sure employees understand their benefits, and appropriate utilization of services.
- Improve collaboration, coordination and consistency among providers regarding the knowledge and delivery of services. Examples include:
  - coordinated transportation system for accessing services,
  - expanded hours of operation
  - cultural and language competence
  - utilizing patients visits to address substance abuse, mental health, and domestic abuse issues
- Increase opportunities for care coordination/case management, where possible and appropriate.
- Promote policy changes to allow for more affordable insurance products for small businesses.

### **Long Term Outcome C:**

Residents of Marathon County have improved access to prevention and treatment programs related to behavior that is abusive to themselves and their families.

**Intermediate Outcome #1:** Residents of Marathon County have access to prevention and treatment programs related to abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

### **Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Knowledge & attitudes
  - Stigma associated with seeking help
  - Culture embraces drinking and smoking
  - Lack of alternative coping skills/methods for stress
  - People may have access initially, but treatment needs to be long-term
- No inpatient facilities
- Provider limitations
  - Inadequate number of well trained, effective ATOD counselors
  - Misdiagnosis of underlying issues
- Financial barriers
  - Lack of screening and early identification
  - Individual lack of funds to pay for services
  - Insurance policies do not cover, or limit coverage
  - Lack of funding for programs
- Transportation and hours of service
- Co-morbidity with mental health issues
- Narrow focus of modalities
- Don't have adequately effective solutions

### **Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #1:**

- Help employers understand value and process for screening and referring employees with substance abuse issues.
- Educate the public about the dangers and consequences of substance abuse and how to prevent it.
- Pilot SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment) at limited number of primary care clinics.
- Work with businesses to redesign benefit packages to include adequate substance abuse coverage and work with their employees to make sure employees understand their benefits, and appropriate utilization of services
- Provide support for additional counselor training.
- Support alternative sentencing programs.

**Intermediate Outcome #2:** Residents of Marathon County have improved access to prevention and treatment programs related to domestic abuse, child abuse and elder abuse.

**Barriers to achieving Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Attitude & knowledge
  - Victims and others don't recognize domestic abuse
  - Fear
  - Disclosure increases risk
  - Stigma
  - People don't think it's important – it's internal family business
  - Corporal punishment is seen as OK
  - Culture – for example, women and children are personal property
  - Ignorance or misinformation among other service providers (healthcare providers, etc)
  - People don't believe the victim
- Don't hold perpetrators accountable
- Lack of resources for treatment focusing on the perpetrator
- Lack of laws that support intervention for child abuse
- Lack of prevention programs
- Inadequate shelter facility – needs to expand
- Funding

**Strategies or ideas for addressing barriers to accomplish Intermediate Outcome #2:**

- Educate the community about the extent and danger of domestic abuse and how to respond to it.
  - Educate the community (parents, neighbors, etc.) about what to do when there are signs of abuse.
  - Update education programs (in schools, churches, etc.) about abuse and who to contact
  - Educate the community that domestic violence is both common and unacceptable
- Offer prevention programs targeted to youth who are at-risk of becoming perpetrators based on established criteria.
- Change state policy about how we deal with child welfare reports (mandate earlier intervention).
- Collaborate with healthcare providers and others to educate and screen families about domestic abuse issues.
- Support successful intervention and treatment programs.

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