Licking County
Health Department
Strategic Plan 2011-2014
Introduction:
In 2009, the Licking County Health Department (LCHD) established a strategic plan in order to set organizational goals and guide the department in protecting the public health of the citizens residing in the Licking County General Health District. The cycle of the plan was to last from 2009 through 2012. In 2010, LCHD began a community health improvement process by conducting a local public health system assessment. Conducting this assessment led to the development of the Licking County Community Health Improvement Committee (CHIC), and the committee members committed to completing the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) process. CHIC members reviewed the data obtained after conducting the four MAPP assessments and developed a countywide community health improvement plan (CHIP). As a result LCHD revised its strategic plan in order to align with the CHIP and to be on the same cycle.

Mission:
Preventing disease, promoting healthy lifestyles, and protecting the environment for the residents of the Licking County Combined General Health District.

Vision:
Healthy people living in healthy communities.

Core Values:

Professionalism
LCHD staff strives to conduct themselves in a professional manner in order to properly serve the citizens of Licking County. The staff is comprised of highly qualified individuals who further their development as members of the public health community through their participation in educational opportunities related to their job duties.

Customer Service
LCHD, in keeping with its Mission and Vision, is responsible for protecting the public health of the citizens of Licking County. In order to do so the department responds to the concerns and inquires of its constituents in a timely manner.

Integrity
LCHD conducts itself in an ethical and transparent manner. The staff understands that this is a necessity in order to maintain the public’s trust and approval.

Dedication
LCHD’s staff is committed to providing the citizens of Licking County with the absolute finest services in order to protect their public health.
External Impacts:
The most significant external force that could potentially impact LCHD and public health in Ohio is the uncertainty related to the state of Ohio’s budget. There is currently a large shortfall in the budget, and proposed significant cuts to local governments and public health are proposed. Local health departments in Ohio receive a minimal amount of direct state funding, however it is uncertain how the proposed cuts may affect future grant funding levels.

An additional significant issue is the pending Public Health Futures report being commissioned by the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners. It is currently unknown what recommendations the report will make, but there may be a reduction in the number of LHDs in the state which will impact each LHD regarding staffing and services provided. This will also impact the citizens accustomed to receiving services at their current level. In addition, the Ohio General Assembly may also take further action related to the report including potential changes to how public health levies are funded and the makeup of the current Public Health Council at the state level. LCHD currently does not have a levy in place, but this situation will need to monitored. The more significant issue is the PHC, which provides oversight to ODH related to rule revision and adoption. Without this local public health voice the rule adoption process may change drastically.

Strengths and Weaknesses:
During the March 2011 strategic planning meeting, the BOH discussed LCHD’s strengths and weaknesses. Strengths of the department included:

- Experienced staff that successfully conducted a large scale immunization effort during the 2009-2010 H1N1 pandemic.
- Established collaborative community health improvement process.
- Willingness to improve the department and the department’s services.
- Overall departmental fiscal management.

Weaknesses discussed by the BOH included:

- Lack of standardization in the department’s Environmental Health programs, specifically food safety.
- Lack of large scale flu clinic offerings.
- Lack of an established facility in the western portion of the county.

Of these issues, the most pressing was the lack of a facility in the western portion of the county. A population shift is currently ongoing, and the western half of the county is growing due to the growth of the city of Columbus and its suburbs. LCHD needs to work to increase its identity in this part of the county in order to remain relevant during the population increase.
In February 2013, the BOH reviewed the department’s strengths and weaknesses again. Strengths identified were:

- Forward thinking management and staff.
- Improvement in response time by the Environmental Health staff.
- LCHD’s clinical services.
- LCHD’s Dental Sealant Program.
- Overall departmental fiscal management.
- Progress made toward national accreditation.
- Continued successful merger with the City of Newark’s health department.
- Expansion of private insurance billing.

The weaknesses identified by the BOH were:

- Promotion of services to rural areas.
- Need to improve LCHD’s clinic space.
- Building security and access.
- Need to continue standardizing services.

**Departmental Goals for 2013:**

The BOH discussed this information and provided guidance regarding LCHD’s goals for 2013. The goals for the year are as follows:

- Complete renovation of the department’s clinic areas.
- Continue to research and implement an electronic health record system.
- Secure a lease agreement with the Licking County Commissioners regarding LCHD’s continued use of the 675 Price Road facility.
- Implement a sewage treatment system operation and maintenance program.
- Continue reviewing options to expand services to the Pataskala area.

**Overarching Strategic Goal:**

After collecting and analyzing primary and secondary data as part of the LCHD’s community health assessment and community health improvement initiatives, LCHD has developed an overarching strategic goal that will address the most prominent public health issue in Licking County. This goal was approved by the BOH in April 2013. The goal is as follows:

*By 2023, reduce the adult smoking rate in Licking County from 26% to 13%.*

The goal aligns with Healthy People 2020, the Centers for Disease Control’s Winnable Battles, and the National Prevention Strategy. In addition, based on the data collected as part of LCHD’s Community Health Assessment, Community Themes and Strengths Assessment, and the County Health Rankings reducing the adult smoking rate in Licking County will improve
multiple negative health outcomes in Licking County. Implementing initiatives to lower the adult smoking rate will have the following impacts:

- Reduce incidences of Cardiovascular Disease, Cancer (All Sites), Coronary Heart Disease, Lung Cancer, and Stroke, which are the top 5 causes of death in Licking County.
- Reduce incidences of Lung Cancer, which is the most prominent cancer in Licking County.
- Reduce the number of infants born with Low Birth Weights and Very Low Birth Weights.
- Reduce non-smokers’ exposure to secondhand smoke and its associated health consequences.
- Reduce the cost of healthcare for individuals and employers.
- Reduce the amount of litter in Licking County.

In order to achieve this goal, LCHD will implement a variety of interventions throughout its operation, which will include each of its divisions. The department will also work on initiatives in collaboration with its community partners and the Licking County Community Health Improvement Committee as well.

**Strategic Priorities:**

In March 2011, the Licking County Board of Health (BOH) held a special meeting in order to discuss LCHD’s strategic plan. During this meeting the board reviewed the CHIP and the department’s current strategic priorities. As a result, LCHD has developed this document containing five (5) strategic priorities designed to address the major public health issues in Licking County and promote public health in general.

The BOH held an additional special meeting in February 2013 to review department’s progress regarding the goals and objectives of the plan, as well as to determine if any items needed to be added to the plan. The items added to the plan are contained in the Departmental Goals for 2013 section of this document. Some items in the plan have been completed, and the BOH determined these items would be categorized as such.

**Strategic Priority 1: Meet and exceed our customers’ public health needs**

LCHD is dedicated to a customer first approach to public health. Taking a customer first approach instills within the staff the importance of treating our customers with respect and not only meeting but exceeding their needs and expectations. Doing so increases our customers’ satisfaction level, and more importantly it improves their public health. Below are the initiatives LCHD will undertake to achieve this strategic priority:
Strategic Priority 2: Increase county residents’ awareness of LCHD programs and services
In order to better protect the public health and improve the quality of life of the residents of the Licking County Combined General Health District, LCHD will increase its profile within the district in order to better promote its services. In increasing participation in LCHD programs, the department will increase its impact on its constituents and ultimately increase their overall health. Below are the initiatives LCHD will undertake to achieve this strategic priority:

- Review options to improve service delivery in western portion of Licking County
- Increase impact of community outreach activities (Completed)
- Establish a high profile offsite flu clinic
- Evaluate the need to expand the department’s clinical services

Strategic Priority 3: Address data driven community health issues
LCHD is committed to using data to address the most prominent public health issues facing its constituents. This will insure the department dedicates its resources in the most effective manner possible in order to best address these issues. Below are the initiatives LCHD will undertake to achieve this strategic priority:

- Reduce the adult smoking rate from 27% to 23% in Licking County
- Reduce the percentage of adults overweight or obese from 40% to 38% in Licking County
- Institute a Comprehensive Cancer Control (CCC) program in order to reduce the impact of cancer in Licking County
- Reduce the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases
- Utilize data from electronic inspections to develop training opportunities for regulated entities

Strategic Priority 4: Increase departmental efficiency and performance by applying quality improvement principles
LCHD has adopted a quality improvement approach to public health. This process allows for the continual monitoring and improvement of processes throughout the department. As LCHD continues to apply QI methods in each division, a culture of quality will be developed and
sustained. This will result in improved service delivery and a more efficient use of departmental resources. In order to enhance its quality improvement efforts, LCHD developed a QI plan. The plan will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and necessary changes to the plan will be implemented as needed. The initiatives listed below are contained in the QI plan:

- Hold monthly QI Council meetings and complete a minimum of 4 QI projects each year (Completed)
- Review options to improve employee time tracking (Completed)
- Combine storage or ordering of medical supplies (Completed)
- Increase billing related to BCMH program
- Establish use of electronic health records throughout departmental operations
- Develop departmental orientation program for new employees (Completed)

**Strategic Priority 5: Strengthen the public health system in Licking County through collaborative efforts with public health partners**

Developing and maintaining partnerships allows the public health system as a whole to work together to address prominent public health issues in Licking County. In working together as partners, agencies can increase their impact beyond their traditional constituents. This approach not only increases the impact on the community, but also allows for the identification of broader public health issues affecting the community. Below are the initiatives LCHD will undertake to achieve this strategic priority:

- Continue coordinating the community health improvement process and organizing quarterly meetings of the Licking County Community Health Improvement Committee
- Establish working relationships with faith-based organizations
- Organize a meeting for agencies serving the elderly population to identify gaps in services
- Facilitate the delivery of free dental care to low income adults at a facility located in Licking County (Completed)

**Evaluation:**

LCHD will conduct semi-annual evaluations of the progress made toward achieving the priorities set forth in this plan. In order to effectively evaluate the plan, LCHD has developed an accompanying action plan document. This document contains activities, responsible parties, timelines, and evaluation measures related to the department’s strategic priorities. Conducting evaluations using this format will provide an accurate depiction of the progress made toward addressing the priorities and also will assist in identifying areas in need of improvement.

The evaluation results will be provided to each member of the administrative team as well as the Licking County Board of Health. If progress is not being made as planned the necessary actions
will be taken to make the necessary improvements. This plan may be revised to include additional priority areas identified as part of LCHD’s commitment to continuing the community health improvement process and assessing the public health needs within the Licking County General Health District.