2014 Community Health Needs Assessment Results Released

Billings – At a press conference on Tuesday, January 21st, 2014, The Alliance (Billings Clinic, RiverStone Health and St. Vincent Healthcare) will release the results of the 2013-14 community health needs assessment. Overall, the physical health of Yellowstone County residents is trending downward since the 2005-06 assessment, while suicide rates remain steady and more adults are getting regular check-ups with their doctors. This is the third community health needs assessment (2005-06 and 2010-11) that Professional Research Consultants, Inc. has conducted on behalf of The Alliance.

The results were compiled using a 400-plus person telephone survey, several stakeholder focus groups, and existing state and national data. The assessment results compare the health status of Yellowstone County residents with that of Montana and the United States populations. Trending data from the two previous community health needs assessments is also included in the results.

While no single over-riding health issue emerged from the 2013-14 assessment, results indicate positive trends as well as opportunities for improvement. Some noted findings include:

- Yellowstone County fares better than the U.S. in: many access-to-care indicators, blood pressure screening, death rates for breast and colorectal cancer, pneumonia/influenza death rates, death rates for diabetes and heart disease, sexually transmitted diseases, violent crime and homicide rates, incidence of tuberculosis, and low birth-weight rates.
- Positive trends were found in: cholesterol screening, adults who had a routine check-up in the past year, current smokers, and deaths from cancer, cirrhosis/liver disease, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and pneumonia/influenza.
- Yellowstone County’s obesity rate (30+BMI) has increased almost 9 percentage points over the 9 years of trending. The current rate of 32.6 percent of the population is higher than Montana (24.6 percent) and the United States (29 percent). This rate also exceeds the Healthy People 2020 Goal of 30.5 percent. Trends indicate an increase in screen time, as well as a slight increase in those consuming five or more fruits or vegetables per day.
- 16.3 percent of residents report fair or poor physical health, compared to 17.1 percent in 2011 and 10.5 percent in 2005. This is similar, but slightly lower than Montana and similar, but slightly higher than the national rate.
- 10.6 percent of residents report fair or poor mental health, compared to 10.1 percent in 2011 and 6.9 percent in 2006. This is slightly lower than the national rate.
- A few of the negative trends found include: overall self-reported health status, death rates from kidney disease, death rates due to unintentional injury, obesity rates (BMI 30+), chronic alcohol use rates, drug-induced deaths, prevalence of high blood pressure, breast cancer screening, percent of births to unwed mothers, infant death rates, and influenza vaccination rates for those 65 and older.
• 16.7 percent of Yellowstone county adults are uninsured, with 32.8 percent of low-income adults without insurance. This compares to 24.1 percent of Montanans and 15.1 percent of US citizens.
• Low-income residents have a difficult time accessing care, understanding the health insurance marketplace/exchange, finding fresh produce, and meeting physical activity recommendations.

The 2005-06 assessment led to the formation of the Healthy By Design Coalition, a community-based committee focused on creating a culture of health and well-being. The coalition is currently working in the following areas: built environment, worksite wellness, health recognition, health equity, and healthy weight.

The 2013-14 community health needs assessment results will guide future Alliance and Healthy By Design projects. To that end, a community forum will be held on Tuesday, February 4, 2014 from 11am-1pm at the Billings Public Library providing Yellowstone County residents with an opportunity to learn more about the assessment results and provide input on future health initiatives and projects. Please contact Heather Fink at heather@healthybydesignyellowstone.org for more information.

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