

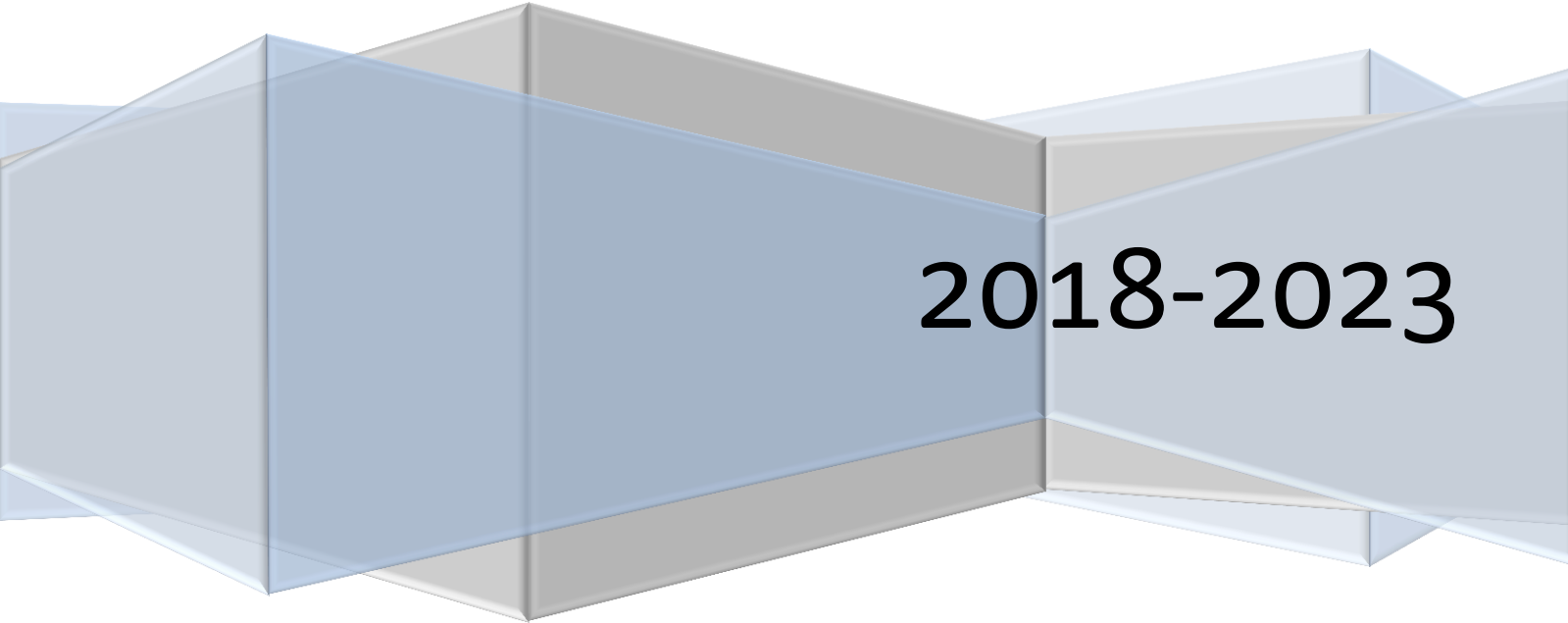


Kittitas County Health Network

Kittitas County Community Health Improvement Plan

A plan for improving health, well-being and
quality of life in our community

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2018-2023

Table of Contents

The Kittitas County Health Network.....	1
Community Health Improvement Project.....	2
Community Health Assessment Work Group.....	3
Community Health Vision & Values.....	4
Kittitas County Demographics.....	5
The Health of Kittitas County.....	6
Strategic Issues.....	9
Goals and Strategies.....	10
Kittitas County Community Health Improvement Plan.....	11
Alignment with State and National Priorities.....	13
Sustainability.....	20

Kittitas County Health Network

In 2016, Kittitas Valley Healthcare (KVH) sponsored a grant writer to apply for funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) for the planning of a local health network. The group of people that worked on the grant application were local health care and social service providers interested in improving the health of the county through systems change, population health initiatives, and cross sector collaboration. Many of these community partners had already been working together informally to coordinate care for community members who were high users of the emergency medical system in the county.

During the grant writing process, HopeSource was identified as the agency that would initially support the grant project through staffing and resources management. The grant committee also identified that a comprehensive community health assessment (CHA) and community health improvement plan (CHIP) should be used to inform the planning process for a new local health network. The Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) was engaged to lead and facilitate this process. The Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) framework was chosen as the assessment method for the planning grant.



KCHN, Planning Grant Oversight

Susan Grindle, *HopeSource, Project Director*
Sandra Freitas, *HopeSource, Project Coordinator*

KCHN, Board of Directors

Rich Elliot, *Kittitas Valley Fire and Rescue*
Jenna Hyatt, *Central Washington University*
Michael Maples, MD, *Community Health of Central Washington*
Kevin Martin, MD, *Kittitas Valley Healthcare*
Lisa Martin, PhD, *Valley Psychological Services*
Teague McKamey, *Aging and Long Term Care*
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Erika Quinones, *Community Health of Central Washington*
Sarah Rogala, *Department of Health and Social Services*
Polly Sams, *Kittitas Valley Healthcare*
Bruce Tabb, *Elmview and City of Ellensburg*
Clint Thompson, *Community Health of Central Washington*
Kevin Walsh, MD, *Community Health of Central Washington*
Liz Whitaker, RN, MN, *Kittitas County Public Health Department*

Community Health Improvement Project

The community health improvement project is a comprehensive approach to assessing community health and developing and implementing action-plans to improve community health through community member and partner engagement. The community health improvement project includes two distinct yet connected processes:

- ❖ The community health assessment process engages community members and partners to collect and analyze health-related data and information from a variety of sources. The findings of the community health assessment inform community decision-making, the prioritization of health problems, and the development and implementation of a community health improvement plan. The results of the community health assessment can be found in a separate document “2017 Community Health Assessment: The Health of Kittitas County” available at: <https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/health/reports>
- ❖ The community health improvement plan strategically outlines the community health priorities (based on the community health assessment and community input.) The plan also includes how the priority issues will be addressed to improve the health of the community.

This document presents the Kittitas County Community Health Improvement Plan which was developed by the Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) and the Community Health Improvement Plan Work Group. The plan was largely informed by the results of the community health assessment. KCPHD and the Work Group followed the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) framework to create the plan which included:

- ❖ Developing strategic issues based on the community health assessment findings;
- ❖ Prioritizing issues that need to be addressed in order to achieve the community health vision;
and
- ❖ Identifying overarching goals and strategies to accomplish those goals.

Support for this project was provided by a combination of funds from a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Planning Grant and in-kind resources donated by the Kittitas County Public Health Department, Kittitas Valley Healthcare, and Kittitas Valley Fire and Rescue.

Community Health Improvement Plan Work Group

The community health improvement plan (CHIP) is the result of the hard work and input from several sources including public health department staff, community health partners, and Kittitas County residents. The CHIP work group is considered a part of the Kittitas County Health Network organizational structure. Members met over the course of six months to prioritize strategic issues for the plan as well as create goals and strategies to address those issues.

CHIP Work Group Participants

Jim Armstrong	<i>Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce</i>
Emily Brown	<i>Merit Resource Services</i>
Steve Chrisman	<i>Central Washington University</i>
Amy Diaz	<i>Kittitas Valley Healthcare</i>
Sandra Freitas	<i>HopeSource, Kittitas County Health Network</i>
Deb Gauck	<i>Community Member, Grant Writer</i>
Sue Gunn	<i>Comprehensive Healthcare</i>
Kasey Knutson	<i>Kittitas County Public Health Department</i>
Norah Lagos	<i>Community Health of Central Washington</i>
Tristen Lamb	<i>Kittitas County Public Health Department</i>
Chelsey Loeffers	<i>Kittitas County Public Health Department</i>
John Littel	<i>Kittitas County Housing Authority</i>
Kevin Martin, MD	<i>Kittitas Valley Healthcare</i>
Lisa Martin, PhD	<i>Valley Psychological Services</i>
Teague McKamey	<i>Aging and Long Term Care</i>
Laura Osiadacz	<i>Kittitas County Commissioner</i>
John Raymond	<i>HopeSource</i>
Ann Riley	<i>Kittitas County Community Network</i>
Bruce Tabb	<i>Elmview, City of Ellensburg Mayor</i>
Kevin Walsh, MD	<i>Community Health of Central Washington</i>



Community Health Vision & Values

The vision and values statements were formed by consensus during several meetings of a work group created by the Kittitas County Health Network and facilitated by the Kittitas County Public Health Department to work on a Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). These statements are used to guide the community health assessment and improvement planning work by creating areas of focus and scope for the long health improvement journey ahead.

Vision

“All people in Kittitas County are supported in achieving health and wellbeing.”

Values

- **Equity**
All people have the resources and opportunities they need to lead a healthy life.
- **Engagement**
All people are invested in the health of the community and participate in their own health outcomes.
- **Empowerment**
All people have accurate and current information regarding individual and community health allowing them to make informed decisions.
- **Safety**
All members of the community feel neither fear nor threat to their personal well-being.
- **Collaboration**
All people make Kittitas County safe and healthy by working together to coordinate services.
- **Sustainability**
Policies, programs, and services are designed to create long term solutions for health.
- **Growth**
Resources that support healthy choices are consistently provided throughout the lifespan of all people.
- **Prevention**
All people have access to the resources they need to prevent injury and disease.
- **Connection**
All people recognize the relationship between social determinants of health, and environmental, mental, and physical health.
- **Exploration**
All people continuously look for ways to improve what isn't working in our health system while maintaining what is.

Kittitas County Demographics

This Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) encompasses the geographic area of Kittitas County which is located in central Washington State. Kittitas County's 2,297 square miles and 42,785 residents span from the top of Snoqualmie Pass in the Cascade Mountains to the Columbia River. The county is comprised of several rural and small, but growing communities. It is home to a medium-sized university which has significant impact on the county's demographics from age distribution to income levels to racial and ethnic diversity.



The county seat is located in Ellensburg, the largest town with a population of 20,326 which includes over 10,000 students attending the Central Washington University (CWU) campus. Other incorporated towns include Kittitas, Cle Elum, South Cle Elum, and Roslyn. Unincorporated communities include Easton, Thorp, Ronald, Liberty, Snoqualmie Pass, and Yantage. Kittitas County is largely a rural county with 44% of the population living in unincorporated areas compared to 37% statewide. Population density is about 18 persons per square mile compared to 101 statewide. However, Kittitas County is also one of the five fastest growing counties in the state with a 22.6% increase in population between the years of 2000 and 2010. The median household income in Kittitas County is lower than both Washington State and the United States. Although the county is not as racially and ethnically diverse as many communities in Washington, about 11% of the population reports a race or ethnicity different than white or Caucasian.

The Health of Kittitas County

The CHIP was informed by the Kittitas County Community Health Assessment which was conducted from July to December of 2017. Results were compiled and analyzed over a period of three months and the final report was published in May 2018.

The Community Themes and Strengths Assessment

The Community Themes and Strengths Assessment (CTSA) was comprised of a community-wide online survey and several polls conducted on-site at agencies and community events.

"How is quality of life perceived in our community?"

- *Overall, a large majority of residents (70%) reported being satisfied with the quality of life in Kittitas County. However, residents with lower income levels were less likely to report being satisfied than those with higher income levels.*
- *According to many community members, more activities for all age groups, more affordable housing, increased health care services, and increased access to retail services would improve the quality of life in Kittitas County.*

"What is important to our community?"

- *Although this question was asked in different ways of different populations, some clear themes for most Kittitas County residents are concerns about mental health and substance abuse, chronic disease, housing, and poverty.*
- *Residents who participated in the online and in-person surveys felt that alcohol and drug abuse are the most common health risk related behaviors in our community, followed by poor eating habits and being overweight.*
- *Money, work, and health concerns are the primary contributors to stress among most residents of Kittitas County. University students also report school being a high contributor of stress.*

"What assets do we have that can be used to improve community health?"

- *Residents describe Kittitas County as being a safe community, a good place to raise children with abundant outdoor recreational opportunities.*
- *Community partners and residents identified a strong willingness to collaborate and supportive community networks as strengths of Kittitas County.*

The Community Health Status Assessment

The Community Health Status Assessment collects available data on the disease and death rates in our county as well as health risk behaviors, the physical environment, social economic factors, and clinical care. The data was collected to create a snapshot of health in our county.

"What does the health status of our community look like?"

- *Vital records data show Kittitas County residents are living longer overall and have a life expectancy of 82 years (from birth).*
- *Death certificate data shows higher rates of mortality than the state in the areas of cardiovascular disease, malignant neoplasms (cancers, tumors), accidents and suicide.*
- *Hospitalization data shows higher rates of hospitalization than the state for injury and poisoning, diseases of the musculoskeletal system, respiratory diseases and neoplasms.*
- *People are not getting enough required cancer screenings but the rates of diabetes monitoring are better than the state and nation. Kittitas County residents are active compared to the state and nation but a large percentage (40%) of our county is overweight or obese.*
- *In our physical environment, recreation access is good; however, extended periods of drought and wildfire are becoming more common.*
- *There are food access issues for those with lower incomes and the number of fast food establishments per capita is inordinately high.*
- *The indicators for socio-economic factors show that our high school graduation rate is high and steady (82%) and unemployment rates are low.*
- *Kittitas County ranks second worst in the state for severe housing problems.*
- *We have a large percentage of families with young children in poverty and there is a large gap in income equality, however, community data may be influenced by the presence of the university.*

The Forces of Change Assessment

The Forces of Change Assessment uses a brainstorming method conducted with local public health system and community members to identify factors, trends, and events that impact the residents and healthcare system of Kittitas County.

"What is occurring now or might occur in the future that affects the health of our community or the local public health system?"

- **The biggest factors** impacting Kittitas County's health are being a rural area with healthcare and mental health provider shortages, having a large older adult population, a large university student population, a significant amount of families in poverty, and lower median per capita and household incomes.
- **Current trend data** shows rapid population growth, a decline in unemployment but increase in wage gaps, increasing number of children in poverty, increasing rates of chronic disease, increase in mental health and substance abuse related issues (especially alcohol and opiates). There has been an increase in the insured population; however, there is also an overall increase in preventable hospital stays. The increase in wildfires and drought also may compromise the livability of the area.
- **Events** are significant national, state and local one-time occurrences that can shape the trajectory of Kittitas County's health outcomes and where resources are allocated. The events in the past five years that are noted to have had major impacts on the community are wildfires,

closure of Kittitas Valley Rehab, the sale of Shady Acres mobile home park, legalization of marijuana, change in immigration policies, changes in hospital administration and change in national healthcare policies.

"What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?"

- **Opportunities** currently available to combat these issues are *new collaborative health agency partnerships, the newly designated 1% tax fund dedicated to building affordable housing for vulnerable populations, changes in Medicaid funding and support from regional health initiatives, as well as city and county governments awareness of issues and willingness to collaborate on solutions.*
- **Threats** to progress are *the speed of change outpacing solutions, the lack of financial support to address social-economic factors related to health, and an overwhelmed healthcare system that cannot meet the rising tide of patients.*

The Local Public Health System Assessment

The Local Public Health System Assessment is a questionnaire tool designed to identify strengths and weaknesses of the local public health system. The LPHSA tool is a report card of how well the entire local public health system (public health, hospital, law enforcement, government, non-profits, etc.) works together to meet the health needs of its community.

"What are the components, activities, competencies, and capacities of our local public health system?" and "How are the Essential Services being provided to our community?"

- *Overall, Kittitas County LPHS scored the equivalent of a B- in system function and service delivery. The LPHS is maintaining essential service delivery at an adequate level but there is plenty of room for improvement.*
- *Areas of priority that need to be developed (lowest score but high importance) are improving current health information sharing technology, mobilizing partnerships, increasing personal health services, assuring linkage to health services, and evaluating the quality of services.*

In Summary:

Kittitas County is a safe and close-knit community that is loved by many of its residents. However, the quality of life here is different for individuals in lower income brackets. Rapid population increase, income inequity, health and mental health provider shortages are large drivers in the poor health outcomes of the county. Resident and community partner concerns regarding healthcare access, housing, mental health, substance abuse, obesity and poverty are validated by data. The Kittitas County local public health system needs to strengthen linkages to services, evaluation of services and community partnerships in order to get ahead of healthcare access issues, and meet the unique needs of a rural community.

Strategic Issues

All results of the four MAPP assessments were compiled in January of 2018. Results were reviewed by the CHIP work group to identify areas of community health improvement. Work group members were asked to identify areas of convergence in the four assessments and identify major issues based on current data, resident and community partner support for the issue, and capacity or momentum to address the issue. After conversation, several key community health issues were brought to light:

- *Lack of providers—dental, mental health, and health care*
- *Issues with access to care (linkage to services, insurance)*
- *Better communication needed between health providers*
- *Behavioral health needs (mental health and substance abuse) are increasing*
- *Concerning youth mental health trends (depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation)*
- *Higher rates of suicide than the state (common in rural areas)*
- *Low financial security (lack of jobs, high stress, low income)*
- *Higher education levels but disparities between those with degrees and those without*
- *Low incidence of premature death*
- *Good access to recreational opportunities*
- *Stress, housing, and poverty are high concerns*
- *Concerns about accessing health care and other services*
- *Shortage of affordable and safe housing*
- *Lack of child care availability*
- *Good sense of community and community resilience*
- *Food insecurity and obesity issues*
- *Generally good quality of life, but not for everyone*
- *Excessive drinking is a concern (binge drinking, alcohol related accidents)*
- *Increase in the number of children in growing up in poverty*
- *Low teen pregnancy rates overall but ethnic disparities exist*

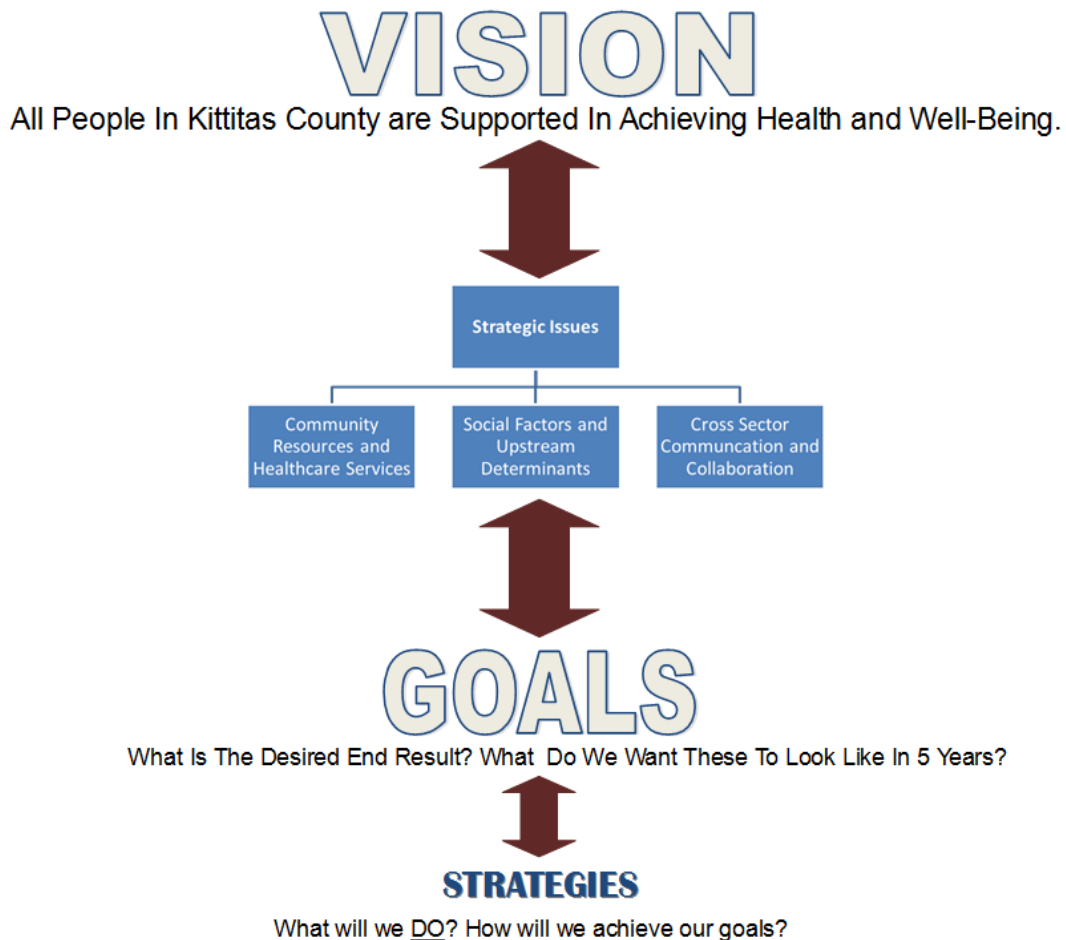
Once the summary information was reviewed, the work group used a series of criteria questions to narrow down the issues to **three priority strategic issues**. Strategic issues are the critical challenges that must be addressed in order for a community to achieve its vision. They are overarching questions that guide and align goals and strategies with the community health vision. Strategic issues in the MAPP process lead to actions that are cross cutting across several different community issues.

- ❖ **Strategic Issue 1:** How can we improve the delivery of current community resources and health care services?
- ❖ **Strategic Issue 2:** How can we address social and upstream factors to improve health outcomes in our community?
- ❖ **Strategic Issue 3:** How can we adequately sustain collaborative community health improvement efforts and increase cross sector communication?

Goals and Strategies

The goals of the CHIP are the broad long-term aims and the desired result associated with the strategic issues. In other words, if we want to make progress on the strategic issue, what should the issue look like in five years. The strategies are the specific patterns of action, decisions and policies that guide the local health system towards that goal. Prioritization criteria were used to choose the goals and strategies that would align with the strategic issues. Criteria included cross sector collaboration, health equity, policy/system/environmental changes, positive community engagement, evidence based, resources required, barriers to implementation, and support from the community and the public health system.

What do we want for our Community ? What are we aiming for?



Kittitas County Community Health Improvement Plan

Strategic Issue 1: How can we improve the delivery of current community resources and health care services?

This issue came about from concerns about the *lack of health care providers*, the need for *coordinated care* and services and *better communication* among service providers, concerns about *frequent users of emergency health care services*, and unmet *behavioral health and chronic disease management needs*. The goals and strategies of this issue focus on developing a *system of care coordination* in our community.

- GOALS:**
- ❖ People in Kittitas County get the services, care, and resources they need in the most efficient manner.
 - ❖ Services and care are expanded and provided in a manner that overcomes organizational boundaries.

Strategy #1: Develop a county-wide care coordination system among local cross sector partners.

Strategy #2: Implement a Digital Health Commons project in collaboration with the Greater Columbia Accountable Community of Health

Strategic Issue 2: How can we address social and upstream factors to improve health outcomes in our community?

This issue arose from the recognition that *poverty, unemployment, education, housing, access to child care, stress, and childhood trauma* are all concerns in our community that can lead to negative health outcomes. Additionally, we need to strengthen community systems and policies to better support working families and other community members. The goals and strategies of this issue focus on increasing awareness of *social factors of health and the impact of childhood trauma* on health, increasing *work place wellness* efforts in the community, establishing *partnerships and cross sector opportunities*, and engaging community partners to address the *lack of child care options*.

- GOALS:**
- ❖ Different sectors in Kittitas County are aware of how social factors and trauma affect health and well-being.
 - ❖ Strengthen cross sectoral systems and policies that support community members and address social and upstream factors of health.

Strategy #1: Increase awareness of social factors of health and implement trauma-informed policy and practices across organizations in Kittitas County.



Strategy #2: Implement workplace wellness practices and policies in Kittitas County.

Strategy #3: Implement policy and systems change with cross sector partners to increase child care options in Kittitas County.

Strategic Issue 3: How can we adequately sustain collaborative community health improvement efforts and increase cross sector communication?

This issue focuses less on actual health issues, but rather recognizes that if we as a community are to *sustain community health improvement efforts*, we need to focus on *sustainability and systems for increased communication*. Goals and strategies for this issue are around *sustainability* for the Kittitas County Health Network as the lead agency for community health improvement, and *increasing communication and information exchange among community partners*.

GOALS:

- ❖ The Kittitas County Health Network has a long term “backbone” organization, a sustainability plan is implemented, and members are committed to community health improvement.
- ❖ Information exchange between all community partners allows for easy, timely, and increased communication.

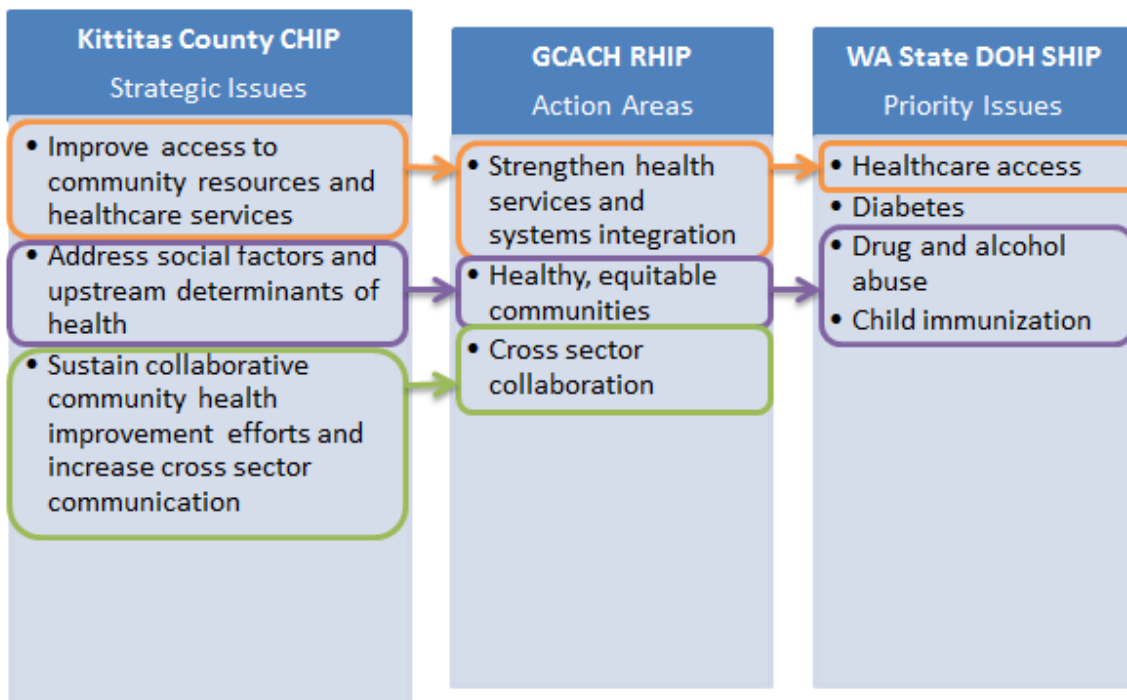
Strategy #1: Establish an organizational infrastructure for KCHN which follows the collective impact model and includes backbone support.

Strategy #2: Increase the capacity of KCHN to achieve its mission and implement the CHIP by creating and implementing short term and long term sustainability plans.

Alignment with State, Regional, and National Priorities

The Kittitas County Health Network will be using the CHIP as a strategic path forward. During initial planning phases the CHIP work group looked at the regional, state, and national health improvement plans to ensure that there were areas of alignment. The Kittitas County CHIP aligns closely with Greater Columbia Accountable Communities of Health (GCACH) Regional Health Improvement Plan (RHIP). The RHIP Action Areas are aligned with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Culture of Health Action Framework, which is a nationally adopted construct for population health improvement in communities both large and small. The Washington State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) is focused on more specific health issues; however, there are several areas of overlap with the CHIP and the RHIP. Healthcare access is a statewide issue that is affecting both rural and urban communities. The issue of drug and alcohol abuse is considered a health risk behavior that can contribute to Adverse Child Experiences, a significant contributor to adverse health outcomes.

RWJF Culture of Health Framework	
Overall Outcome: Improved population Health, Well-Being and Equity	
❖	Action Area 1: Making Health a Shared Value
❖	Action Area 2: Fostering Cross Sector Collaboration to Improve Well-being
❖	Action Area 3: Creating Healthier, More Equitable Communities
❖	Action Area 4: Strengthening Integration of Health Services and Systems



Sustainability

When the first Kittitas County CHIP was completed in 2012, the county lacked lead agencies to implement the strategies. The lack of a formal structure hindered the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the CHIP. Although parts of the 2012 CHIP were implemented, the efforts lacked coordination and communication among key community partners.

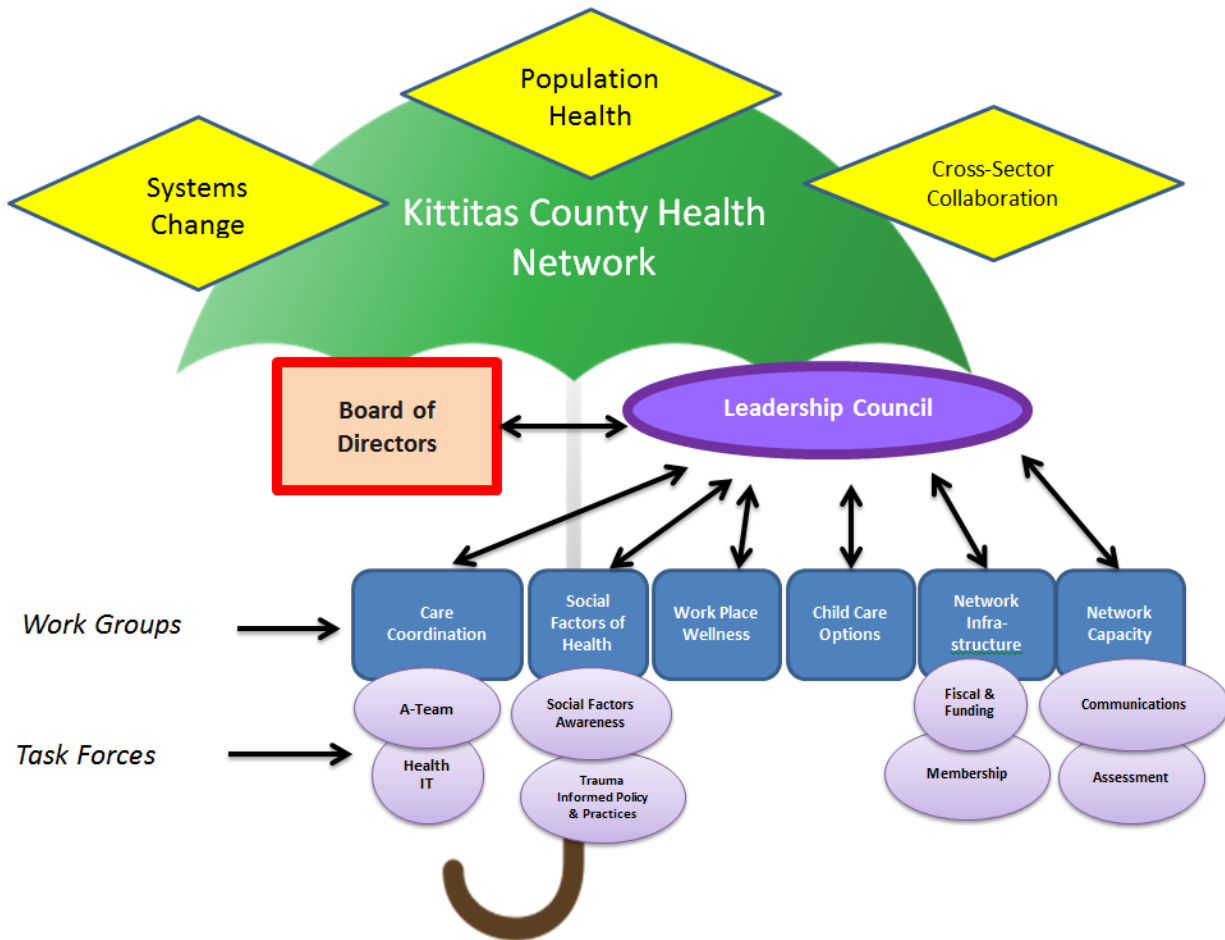
The network planning grant required that the CHIP document become the strategic plan for the newly formed Kittitas County Health Network (KCHN). During the MAPP process, and as partners were engaged to complete the CHA and the CHIP, the KCHN was described as the lead organization for the effort. During the planning grant, KCHN obtained 501c3 non-profit status, developed a community engagement and membership plan, and was awarded \$30,000 of annual funding through the Greater Columbia Accountable Communities of Health. At the end of the grant period, KCHN remained committed to overseeing implementation of the CHIP.

Implementation progress will be overseen by KCHN and evaluated semi-annually. KCPHD will assist KCHN with evaluation by collecting and storing data from the work groups and task forces. There will be opportunities to make minor updates to the CHIP implementation plan during the progress monitoring and a complete CHA/CHIP update will occur at the mid-point of the five year implementation cycle (late 2020/early 2021). A new CHA/CHIP process will be initiated in 2022 with the goal of having a new CHIP in 2023 (see timeline below.)

Kittitas County CHIP Implementation Timeline	
July 2018	CHIP implementation begins
January 2019	Semi-annual progress evaluation
July 2019	Semi-annual progress evaluation
January 2020	Semi-annual progress evaluation
July 2020	Semi-annual progress evaluation & mid cycle CHA/CHIP update
January 2021	Semi-annual progress evaluation & mid cycle CHA/CHIP update
July 2021	Semi-annual progress evaluation
January 2022	Semi-annual progress evaluation
July 2022	Semi-annual progress evaluation & begin new CHA/CHIP process
January 2023	Semi-annual progress evaluation
July 2023	New CHIP implementation begins

KCHN began the Action Cycle of the MAPP process in July 2018. The graphic below illustrates how the KCHN will oversee and coordinate implementation of the CHIP through the leadership council. As noted by the arrows, bidirectional communication flows between the Board of Directors and the Leadership Council, as well as between the Leadership Council and the work groups. The Kittitas County Public Health Department will facilitate the Leadership Council. Work groups and task forces will be formed to implement the strategies in the CHIP. KCPHD will also monitor implementation progress, track performance measure data, and conduct ongoing evaluation of the overall process. A part time KCHN staff person will be hired to provide administrative assistance to the Leadership Council’s overall work and its implementation of the CHIP. Each work group will have a designated chair and vice chair and/or a lead agency and vice chair. Detailed action plans, measurable objectives, and performance measures will be developed by the work groups and added to the CHIP as an addendum. Various cross sector partners will play roles either as lead or partnering agencies in the implementation of the CHIP strategies.

Kittitas County Health Network CHIP Implementation Structure





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