

The *Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County Community* has selected Preventive Health and Wellness as its designated work area after a year of research. This selection is consistent with the growing trend of public interest in preventive medicine and the realization that reduced utilization is the true answer to reducing health care costs. Control of those risk factors which lead to preventable health care expenditures can reduce health care costs greater than any service restriction plan yet attempted. Additionally, preventive health and wellness overlaps many of the other health concerns identified by Carroll Countians.

The list of possible projects is extensive. The challenge will be to systematically establish projects which can be successfully implemented. These projects should utilize existing programs and resources. Following an initial project, additional work groups and proposals can be implemented as resources are available.

This process will begin by establishing a work group which will have the responsibility of formulating an initial project while designing a "road map" for future projects. This is a formidable request of this work group, but it will help define the role of the Partnership in the future. I am pleased to report that Alva Baker, M.D., has accepted the responsibility of chairing this group. Other members of the Steering Committee will be appointed to this group, as well as additional members of the community. An initial report will be presented to the Steering Committee in September.

**Arthur N. Riley, Chair, Steering Committee**  
**Washington Heights Pharmacy**

The Steering Committee met on Thursday, March 20, at Copper Ridge, with the purpose of prioritizing health needs in the community based on the research findings. Michele Holleran, of Holleran Consulting, presented a research summary to help in the prioritization process. The attendees separated into four discussion groups and selected the top eight health topics to be addressed:



- Preventive Health/Wellness
- Access (to health care services)
- Mental Health
- Domestic/Interpersonal Violence
- Substance Abuse
- Elderly Health
- Heart Disease
- Cancer

Using the OptionFinder®, the Steering Committee selected **Preventive Health/Wellness** as the #1 topic to be addressed, followed by **Access**; they felt the two topics should be separate.

**Eileen Johnson, Partnership Assistant**

## REPORTS FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

**Dan Strayton, Health Unlimited**

On May 1 the *Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County Community* met at the New Windsor Conference Center to take the next step of establishing a vision statement and list of common objectives. The goal of this meeting was to involve all members of this Committee in the creation of a vision statement - a statement that ultimately determines the direction and courses of action to be taken by the forthcoming work groups. An initial work group is being developed to begin addressing the Partnership's primary focus of preventive health and wellness.

This all day meeting was divided into two sessions with distinctly different goals. It was the morning session that laid the groundwork for what would become our vision statement. This session began with an overview of our general topic (preventive health and wellness) by Jeanette Jenkins, of the Office of Health Policy, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Jeanette provided a brief overview of Healthy People 2000 and Healthy Maryland 2000 and their health promotion and disease prevention objectives. Three types of prevention were identified covering primary prevention (health screenings, proper diet and exercise, etc.), secondary prevention (medical treatment of conditions) and tertiary prevention (the management of irreversible, chronic diseases). The goal of the Healthy People programs is to improve the health of all citizens, especially the high risk and poorly served, through the identification and promotion of preventive health strategies aimed at controlling avoidable health problems and lowering health care costs. Areas of emphasis include cancer, heart disease, intentional/unintentional injuries, infant mortality, stroke, diabetes, cirrhosis, vaccination for preventable diseases and pneumonia/influenza. These avoidable health problems can be addressed through changes in lifestyle habits involving diet, exercise, alcohol consumption, smoking and immunizations.

It is precisely these areas which will need to be addressed by this Partnership dedicated to enhancing the preventive health and wellness of our community. This morning session also provided a Resource Inventory of organizations in Carroll County currently working in a number of these health care areas. This inventory, compiled from the Directory of Community Services for Carroll County by the Carroll County Public Library, demonstrated that lack of resources is not necessarily the problem in Carroll County. Rather, it may be more a lack of cohesiveness on the part of these organizations, a lack of education on the part of the public as to the existence of these valuable resources and a lack of accessibility/delivery of the services provided. Further discussions at the meeting clarified the fact that much of the problem in the delivery of these services is linked to a lack of time on the part of the members of our community.

It was at this point that Gail Griffith, Carroll County Public Library, led a visioning exercise designed to provide a groundwork for the formulation of a vision statement. The Committee was broken into four groups, each told to conceive its vision of the ideal healthy society. The results of this exercise were then presented to the group in a creative and artistic manner (signifying the use of the right side of our brain). The groups concocted a number of utopian-style societies and presented them in some artistic (a pine cleaner wagon wheel) and entertaining (sung to the

meld together to form the basis of our vision statement. This statement envisions a true community linked together by a central hub of services and organizations working together to promote common family values and provide a locally available, accessible, affordable and integrated health care delivery system. This community would be accentuated by a variety of safe activities for its citizens, citizens who are empowered to take control of their own health through the application of preventive health strategies.

This statement presents a challenging goal, not only for this Partnership, but for the community as a whole. If we can efficiently tap into our current resources and enlist the help of the business community, we will take a most positive step toward making this vision a reality.

**Rev. Gerald Fuss, Emmanuel United Church of Christ/Caring & Sharing Ministries of Northwest Carroll**

With “preventive health and wellness” and “access to health care” already identified as priority areas to be addressed by the Partnership, the morning of our retreat day was to help us envision what a healthy community looks like and to get creative ideas of things that may be envisioned for Carroll County residents. The leadership team put together our working vision statement, which was then affirmed by the group to help articulate the directions for development. The afternoon session was then dedicated to getting specific possibilities for things to be done in response to the vision.

It is agreed that many resources already exist and there are those ready to respond with education and service. What is still needed is more ready access to services and more aggressive identifying and addressing of the barriers that prevent people from obtaining the information and services they need. The busy lives of individuals and families, the reluctance of some to utilize available services in unfamiliar settings, economic limitations and the work and community centers with which people naturally identify are issues needing to be addressed.

Health issues of significant concern to be addressed by preventive health and wellness efforts include (but are not limited to) recognition of high blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes as they impact the risk of heart disease, stroke and many other physical ailments. Early screenings, detection of problems and educated management of health problems can help reduce risks, prolong life and enhance the quality of life. Lifestyle choices related to diet, exercise, safety and smoking all have a great impact on individual health.

There were strong indicators from the group that whatever is done in this area needs to *reach people where they are*. A model response might include centrally coordinated and planned health fairs which could be repeated in varied settings, conveniently located events at work places, in community centers and places of high traffic and visibility, events involving a wide variety of health, wellness education and health service opportunities. Opportunities would include blood screenings such as diabetes, cholesterol and PSA, as well as blood pressure checks and screenings for hearing/vision problems. Immunizations might be offered as well.

could reach many people and help to improve health or prevent some serious health problems. Issues of health insurance payment for screenings and how to serve those without insurance, but with financial needs, must be addressed.

**VISION STATEMENT**  
*A true “community” linked together by a central coordinating hub which promotes:*

- I. Family values and connections*
- II. Partnerships among organizations*
- III. Locally available, accessible, affordable and integrated health education and services for all*
- IV. Safe activities and facilities which enhance mind, body and spirit*
- V. Empowerment of individual responsibility for wellness*

One specific lifestyle choice the Partnership would like to see addressed is related to smoking and use of tobacco products. Of particular interest would be programs to aid in the cessation of smoking and those which reduce the number of teens who smoke. Other wellness related activities discussed include reaching persons with special needs (e.g., economic limitations, transportation problems, etc.), encouraging

development of fitness programs sponsored by community groups and churches, encouraging churches to explore “parish nurse” services, putting people in touch with resources relating health to spirituality, wellness festivals and helping people find wellness materials they will use (such as through the library or world-wide Web, etc.).

With selected areas on which to work and a number of great ideas to work from, work groups will now be responsible for further developing action plans and strategies in order to see them through implementation.

Helping people to recognize and accept responsibility for their health and wellness is a great part of our being able to fulfill the vision of a **Healthier Carroll County Community**. Watch for the action plans which come next. They will only be successful if they have your support and participation!

**Alva Baker, M.D., Work Group Chair  
Fairhaven/Copper Ridge**

After deciding at its March meeting to establish *Preventive Health and Wellness* as its first priority, the Steering Committee convened at an all day retreat on May 1 to do visioning and strategic planning for working on this goal. The Vision Statement developed is found on Page 1 of this Newsletter.

A work group has been established and given the charge of refining and tweaking the structure that was created at the Retreat. The work group members are:

Pat Donoho	Sue Ellen Jenkins	Karen Sullivan
Karen Feroli	Scott Jerome	Tricia Supik
Gerald Fuss	J. W. Long	Joyce Tierney
Darlene Goodnow	Dan Strayton	Art Riley
Marge Hoffmaster	Judy Stuart	

The Work Group will meet throughout the summer and will present its report to the Steering Committee at its meeting on September 11.

Speakers’ Bureau - A Speakers’ Bureau was organized to inform the community of the activities of the Partnership. Nine Committee members participated in a thirty minute training session on May 1. If your group/organization would like to schedule a speaker, please contact Eileen Johnson at 410-871-7121.