

# TOLLAND COUNTY COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

**April 2013**

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~ Somers ~ Stafford ~ Tolland ~ Union ~ Vernon ~ Willington ~



Eastern Highlands Health District



**NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

# Tolland County Community Transformation

April 2013

A message from the Director of Health:

We are proud to present Tolland County's Community Health Needs Assessment overview and the vision for the Community Transformation initiative.

For the past 17 months a dedicated team of community partners have come together to help identify and review data, dig into the story behind the data, and identify what community changes we can embrace to change the impact of chronic disease in our community.

Chronic disease – like diabetes, asthma, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease are a significant part of our healthcare expenses, and are impacted by the policies and environment in the communities in which we live. The CDC funded the Community Transformation initiative in 38 states, and our Tolland County initiative is one of five counties in Connecticut working on Capacity Building since 2011.

This summary is just a glimpse into the comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment that has been conducted across Tolland County and the types of policy, systems, environmental changes and targeted programming that can make significant improvements for all who live, work, and play in our community.

We look forward to continuing our work with our valued partners as we **Build a Healthy Community!**

Robert Miller, MPH, R.S.  
Director of Health  
Eastern Highlands Health District

## Center for Disease Control and Prevention

### Investments in Community Health:

#### Community Transformation Grant Program

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues its long-standing dedication to improving the health and wellness of all Americans through the Community Transformation Grant (CTG) Program. CTG is funded by the Affordable Care Act's Prevention and Public Health Fund. CDC supports and enables awardees to design and implement community-level programs that prevent chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.

The CTG program is expected to improve the health of more than 4 out of 10 U.S. citizens—about 130 million Americans.

#### Chronic Disease in the United States

The chronic disease burden in the United States is substantial and growing at a significant pace. More than half of American adults have at least one chronic disease. These diseases lead to lost productivity, reduced quality of life, and premature death.

In the United States, 7 out of 10 deaths are caused by chronic diseases each year, which contribute to roughly three quarters of the \$2.5 trillion spent annually on health care. Seventy-five cents of every dollar spent on medical costs in this country is being used to treat chronic diseases and associated risk factors.

#### Focusing on Priorities for Healthier Living

CTG is working to create healthier communities by making healthy living easier and more affordable where people work, live, learn, and play. Awardees are improving health and wellness with strategies that focus on areas such as—

- Tobacco-free living.
- Active living and healthy eating.
- Clinical and community preventive services to prevent and control high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Examples of community interventions include—

- Increasing access to physical activity through quality physical education instruction in schools.
- Increasing access to healthy foods by supporting local farmers and developing neighborhood grocery stores.
- Protecting people from secondhand smoke exposure.
- Promoting improvements in sidewalks and street lighting to make it safe and easy for people to walk and ride bikes.

Twenty percent of all CTG program funding is directed at programs and policies in rural or frontier areas.



# The Impact of Chronic Disease

## According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

- 7 out of 10 deaths among Americans each year are from chronic diseases. Heart disease, cancer and stroke account for more than 50% of all deaths each year.
- In 2005, 133 million Americans – almost 1 out of every 2 adults – had at least one chronic illness.
- Obesity has become a major health concern. 1 in every 3 adults is obese and almost 1 in 5 youth between the ages of 6 and 19 is obese (BMI  $\geq$  95th percentile of the CDC growth chart).
- About one-fourth of people with chronic conditions have one or more daily activity limitations

## Health Equity and Social Determinants of health:

The social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age (including the health system). These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources. The social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities - the unfair and avoidable differences in health status. (WHO)

## Tolland County is above the national benchmark for preventable hospital stays

(Hospitalizations for conditions – often chronic diseases - that could be managed in an out-patient setting)

70% of chronic disease is preventable through

Early screening  
Healthy eating  
Active living  
Tobacco-free living

Chronic diseases account for 3 out of every 4 dollars spent on health care



Community Transformation concentrates on the causes of chronic disease. This is a community issue that will take many partners and a concerted effort to change policies, systems, and the environment, as well as focused programming and interventions to create a healthier community for all Tolland County residents where they live, work, grow and play.



# Why We Need To Invest in Tolland County

**FACT:** 67% of Tolland County's 2012 kindergarten children are 'normal' weight, 30% are overweight or obese.

**FACT:** Eight towns have K-12 students passing all four physical fitness test components at less than 65%.

**FACT:** Based on '07-'09 BRFSS\* data, Tolland County had the lowest percentage of adults in CT achieving physical activity recommendations.  
\*CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

## HEALTH EQUITY MATTERS:

Economic security and education outcomes are closely tied to health indicators in Tolland County that are below (worse than) the state average.

## Challenges

**6.4% of the county's population lives in poverty**  
Tolland County is largely rural (6 of 13 towns have populations fewer than 10,000)

### Access to healthy food is limited:

- 5 Tolland County towns have no grocery store
- Of the 13 grocery stores in the county, only 9 accept WIC vouchers

### Access to healthcare is limited:

- Tolland has a PCP ratio double the national goal of 631:1
- No family practice medical provider in 6 towns
- No pediatric medical provider in 5 towns

## Health Outcomes & Status

- The use of the ED in Tolland County is double that of the state for acute MI and coronary heart disease.
- The use of the ED by the Hispanic population is multiple times higher than the state Hispanic use of the ED for all reasons.
- The hospitalization rate for Hispanic population is 3 times that of the state rate among Hispanics.
- Tolland County has higher rates of death from cardiovascular disease among non-Hispanic whites than the state rate.
- Stafford and Vernon stand out for the number of categories that rank below the state average (lowest health outcome scores & life expectancy scores) on the Health Equity Index.



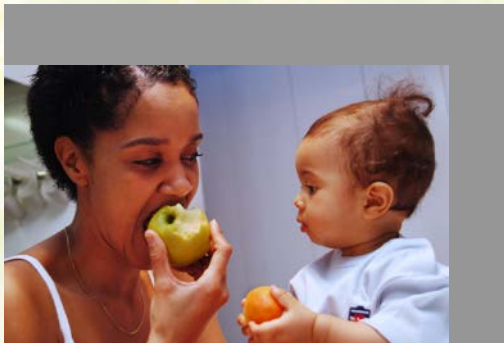
# What We Can Do

## Examples of Key Strategies to Transform Tolland County



Our Vision:  
Building Healthy Communities

*“Making the healthy  
choice the easy choice.”*



### Strategies to increase access to Healthy Eating & Active Living

- ❖ Safe Routes to School
- ❖ Work with early care (pre-K) providers to increase policies and practices that align with recommendations
- ❖ Increase opportunities for physical activity in communities and worksites through community-wide campaigns, incentives, and access to facilities and places
- ❖ Healthy Dining Certification

### Strategies to promote Tobacco-Free Living

- ❖ Smoke-free multi-unit housing policies
- ❖ Expanded access to smoking cessation programs/meds
- ❖ Tobacco-Free Parks & Worksite Campus policy & signage

### Strategies to increase use of High Impact Quality Clinical Preventative Services

- ❖ CT HEARTSafe designation for towns and worksites
- ❖ Live Well program (Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Program)
- ❖ Increase capacity of Community Health Workers
- ❖ Blood pressure self-monitoring program
- ❖ Medical screening van staffed in partnerships with local medical providers, Social Services, and Community Health Workers



*Building capacity for Community Transformation has been a community-wide effort.*

Thank you to the community members from many agencies and organizations who, combined, contributed over 1,000 hours to our Community Transformation process:

**American Lung Association, NE**

Andover Schools

**Ashford Recreation**

Ashford Schools

**Bolton Recreation**

Bridge Family Center

**Central Area Health Education Center**

**Chaplin CREW**

Chaplin Schools

Chatham Health District

Columbia Schools

**Coventry Parks & Recreation**

Coventry Schools

**Coventry STEPS**

ECHN Child & Adolescent Behavioral Health

**ECHN Women's Services**

Ellington Schools

**ERASE**

Family Affirmation Center

Hampton Scotland SRC

Hebron Schools

**Mansfield / Windham School Garden**

**Mansfield Advocates for Children**

Mansfield Children Community Coop

Mansfield Discovery Depot

**Mansfield Human Services**

Mansfield Mt Hope

Mansfield Oak Grove

**Mansfield Parks & Recreation**

Mansfield Public Library

Mansfield Schools

Mansfield Senior Center

Mansfield Town Planner

Mansfield Willow House

**North Central District Dept. of Health**

**Region 19 BOE**

Rockville General Hospital

Scotland Schools

**Stafford Early Childhood Collaborative**

Stafford Schools

**Tolland Family Resource Center**

**Tolland Recreation**

**Tolland Schools**

Tolland Youth Garden Initiative

**UConn Club Sports Program**

UConn EFNEP

United Way

Vernon Discovery

Vernon Foodshare & VCN

Vernon Kid Safe

Vernon Schools

**Vernon YSB**

**Visiting Nurse and Health Services of CT**

**VNA East**

Willington Schools

**Willington Youth, Family & Social Services**

**Willington Recreation**

**Bold denotes members of the Tolland County Community Health Response Team (CHART)**

For more information or to request a copy of the Tolland County Community Health Needs Assessment, contact:

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