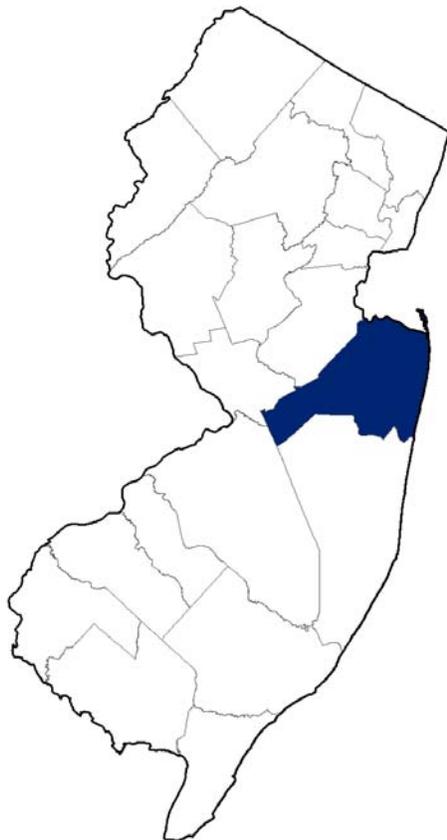


# Monmouth County, New Jersey

## Community Health Improvement Plan 2012-2016



*Produced By:*  
**The Health Improvement Coalition of Monmouth County**



*It is with great pride and commitment that we release this countywide Community Health Improvement Plan. Since 2005, numerous area agencies, organizations, healthcare providers, and individuals have collaborated to ensure that we all live in a community where all residents have the privilege of living a healthy life. Our mission statement is "To be a model community committed to empowering all residents to achieve optimum health." This current community plan is an updated report to one released in 2007. The 2007 plan spearheaded coalition activities that focused on increasing awareness of available healthcare services and treatment for substance abuse, promotions of transportation support for medical needs, and cultural competency materials for providers to name just a few.*

*Today, we celebrate our successes, but recognize there is much work to be done. We embark upon this five-year plan with a refined perspective of the health needs in our communities and with a solid partnership that can rely on over six years of stability. We encourage you to embrace the collective action around the community issues identified here. Whether through active participation in the coalition or through integration into your own organization's plans, our intent is to transform our community and your support is critical to that success.*

*Last, we extend special thanks to all of those organizations and individuals who have supported the coalition over the years. Specifically, we extend appreciation for those intimately involved in updating the most recent county health statistics and prioritizing the community needs that form the base of this plan. Those organizations are acknowledged later in this report.*

*In support of our community's health,  
~The Steering Committee, Health Improvement Coalition of Monmouth County*

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## A. From 2005 to Today

In the fall of 2005, dozens of community agencies, organizations, and concerned citizens convened with a commitment to improve the health and well-being of residents living in Monmouth County. The group identified an overarching mission for the work and focus moving forward. “To be a model community committed to empowering all residents to achieve optimum health,” has been the guiding force of the coalition ever since.

Today, in 2012, the partnership looks back at its numerous accomplishments and collaborative work that none of us could have done alone. Some of those accomplishments include:

- Assessments of county clinics to better understand accessibility barriers among the uninsured and underinsured in Monmouth County.
- The development of multi-lingual flyers that detail available healthcare services for those seeking free or reduced healthcare services.
- The creation of cultural competency manuals for area providers with the aim of improving awareness of cultural issues in healthcare delivery.
- Education to area agencies and organizations regarding the impact of healthcare reform.
- The identification of transportation options in the county and dialogue with county transportation agencies to maximize options for area residents.
- The development of a flyer that details area treatment options for individuals struggling with substance abuse.
- An updated resource manual for area seniors.

While the partnership has been successful in creating new networks of communication among agencies and celebrates the accomplishments above, there is much work to be done. For that reason, in 2011 the Coalition (Health Improvement Coalition of Monmouth County) charged itself with updating



existing health statistics and wellness measures and clarifying current community needs. This document serves as the compendium of work that has taken place over the past year and a half. Many of the ongoing community challenges, such as access to care for the uninsured and health inequities, will remain the focus of coalition activities. Beyond that, there are additional, focused, and current issues that are impacting this county every day. The Coalition commits to furthering its mission and to “moving the needle” of health outcomes in a positive direction.

## B. Community Health Profile

With the goal of updating the statistics on the health outcomes and risk factors for residents of Monmouth County, the Coalition gathered relevant countywide data. A “Secondary Data Profile” was prepared for the county that included data such as demographic and household information, mortality rates, communicable disease rates, and cancer incidence and mortality rates among others. Additionally, through support from Meridian Health System, the Coalition examined survey data from nearly 600 households as well as focus group feedback. These data sources were from a recent community health needs assessment. It is important to note that the statistics largely reflected countywide data. The Coalition recognizes that various demographic groups and geographic areas throughout the county reveal less favorable statistics. The Coalition is committed to ensuring that its efforts take health disparities and inequities into consideration. For copies of the full reports, please refer to [www.visitmonmouth.com/health](http://www.visitmonmouth.com/health) or [www.monmouthocean.healthforecast.net](http://www.monmouthocean.healthforecast.net).

### *Key Health Issues*

In June of 2011, approximately 30 members of the Coalition and other area agencies and organizations gathered to review the updated assessment findings and to prioritize key health issues. Following a research overview, participants openly shared what they perceived to be the greatest needs and areas of opportunity in the county. The following list was developed by the group. The list is in no particular order of importance.

1. Risk factors for heart disease
2. Obesity/overweight issues (for both adults and children)
3. Mental health (suicide rate among adolescents on the rise)
4. Substance abuse (teens, seniors, prescription drug abuse, to include tobacco use)
5. Access to primary care
6. Long-term management of chronic illness (self-management)
7. Domestic violence (teens, families)
8. Chlamydia incidence rates
9. Caregiving needs

10. Transportation barriers

11. Increased need for “bi-directional care” (blended primary and specialty care coordination; focus on whole-person wellness)

Attendees at the June meeting also completed an exercise to prioritize each of the above areas according to the severity of the issue and the ability to make a meaningful impact. The prioritization was an objective process whereby each attendee rated the 11 issues on a scale of “not at all severe” to “very severe” and “no ability to impact” to “significant ability to impact.” Taking the severity and impact ratings into consideration and evaluating existing initiatives and services in Monmouth County, the Steering Committee made the recommendation to focus on three key issues for the five-year Community Health Improvement Plan. These three key issues were rated among the highest for the severity of the issue within the county and also for the ability for the Coalition to make a meaningful impact on the outcomes associated with that issue. Coalition members adopted the three issues at a September 2011 meeting.

Risk factors for heart disease

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Obesity/overweight issues for children and families.

\*

Access to comprehensive healthcare

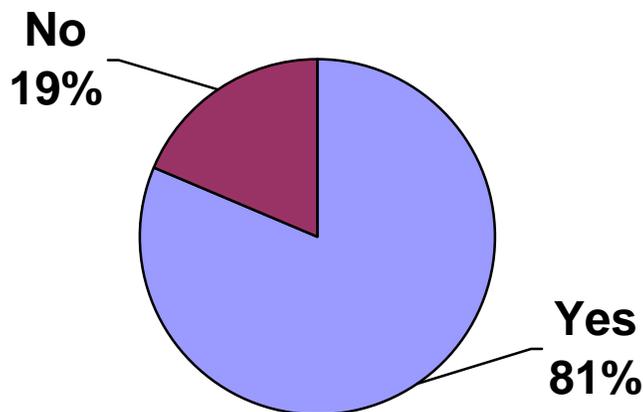
## C. Three Key Community Health Priorities

### 1. Risk factors for heart disease

*GOAL: To improve cardiovascular health in Monmouth County.*

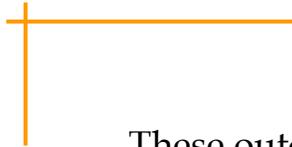
Diseases of the heart continue to be the number one cause of death in the county, with rates above both the New Jersey and U.S. figures. The African American mortality rates for heart disease are well above the other racial groups in the county and males are well above their female counterparts. As detailed in the chart below, 81.4% of adults in Monmouth County have at least one risk factor for heart disease. These risk factors include being overweight, smoking cigarettes, being physically inactive, or with high blood pressure or cholesterol.

#### Percentage of Adults With At Least One Cardiovascular Risk Factor



The Coalition will evaluate its progress in improving cardiovascular health by focusing on the following outcome measures.

- The percentage of adults who are screened for heart disease risk factors.
- The percentage of adults who report one or more risk factors for heart disease.
- The number of community outreach and education opportunities for prevention and management of heart disease.



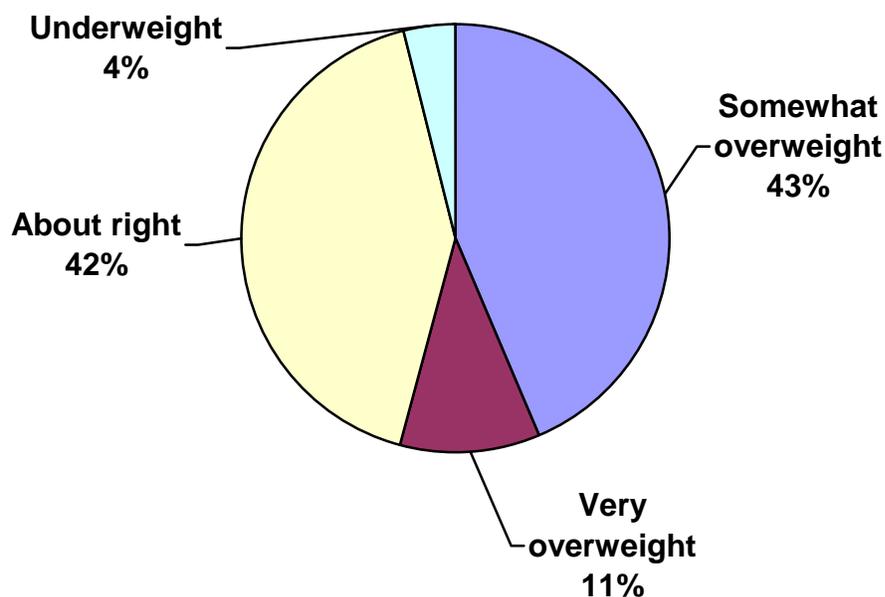
These outcomes will serve as a guiding force in developing interventions and implementation strategies for developing prevention measures and outreach opportunities with risk factors for heart disease.

## 2. Obesity/Overweight Issues for Children & Families

*GOAL: To reduce the prevalence of obesity in children and families living in Monmouth County.*

Although genetics likely play a role in whether or not someone becomes overweight or obese, a family's lifestyle also has a major impact on the chances of a young child or teenager being overweight. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years. Obesity is a well-documented risk factor for a number of preventable health issues, including heart disease and diabetes. According to recent statistics, 62.2% of adults and 28.7% of children (ages 6-17) in Monmouth County are overweight or obese. When referring specifically to obesity, one in four adults in the county is obese. Obesity is highest in the African American and Hispanic/Latino populations. As detailed below, the majority of adult residents in Monmouth County perceive themselves to be overweight.

### Self-Perceived Body Weight





The Coalition will evaluate its progress in improving obesity and overweight issues by focusing on the following outcome measures.

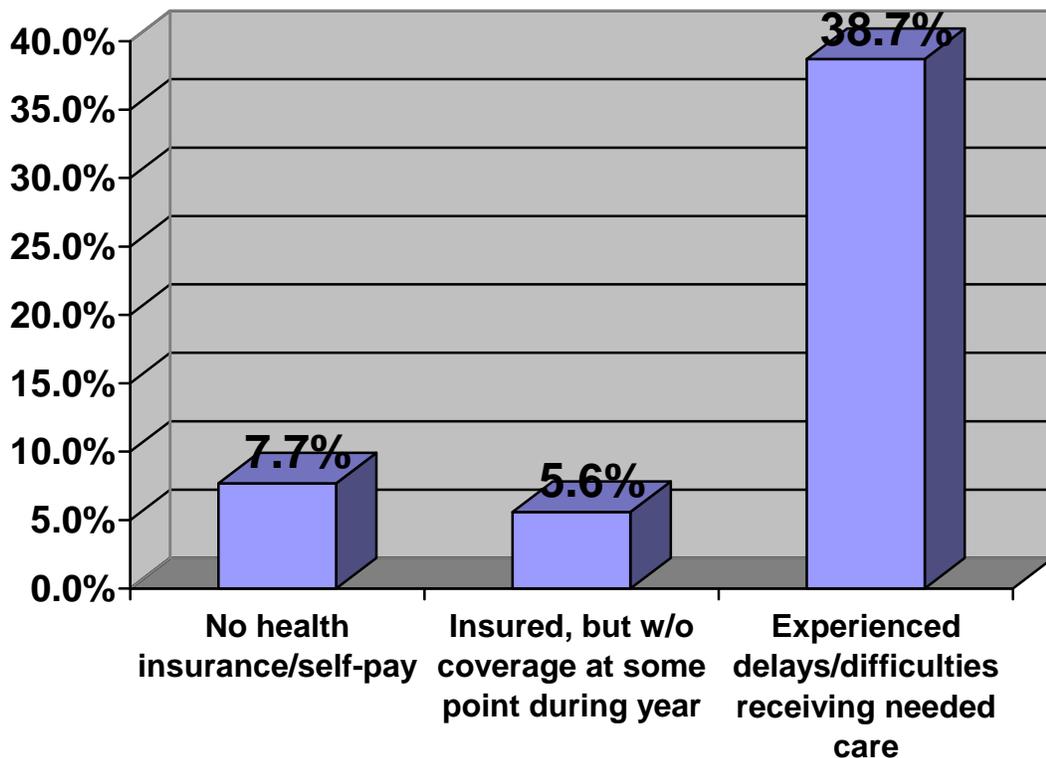
- The percentage of county schools that collect student BMI statistics.
- The number of schools with a BMI reporting mechanism for parents.
- The number of education programs for parents.

These outcomes will serve as a guiding force in developing interventions and implementation strategies for addressing weight issues in our county's children and families.

### 3. Access to Comprehensive Healthcare

*GOAL: To optimize the ability of county residents to access comprehensive healthcare.*

A healthcare issue that has clearly become more of a crisis with the economic downturn is access to care for the uninsured and underinsured. While as a whole, the majority of adults in Monmouth County are insured, many individuals in various parts of the county suffer with a lack of health insurance or have insurance accepted by too few providers (e.g. Medicaid). Additionally, the number of uninsured and underinsured has increased steadily each year. The chart below reveals a number of statistics related to access to healthcare in Monmouth County.





The previous county CHIP focused on access to care issues as well. The work of that group will continue, building upon existing initiatives, and focusing on new, emerging trends found in the recent assessment. While the availability of health insurance is a key component to access to care, many other factors are in play as well. The Coalition will continue to address barriers such as the availability of providers, transportation challenges, the proximity of free and reduced screenings, etc.

The Coalition will evaluate its progress in improving access to comprehensive healthcare by focusing on the following outcomes.

- By December 31 2017, decrease by 5% the number of residents who do not have a regular source of care.
- By December 31, 2017 decrease by 5% the number of hospitalizations for complications of diabetes.
- By March 31, 2017, decrease by 5% the number of emergency room visits by children with exacerbations of asthma.

These outcomes will serve as a guiding force in developing interventions and implementation strategies to ensure increased accessibility to health prevention and treatment for the uninsured and underinsured in Monmouth County.

## D. Call To Action

Ensuring that Monmouth County is a place where good health and well-being is afforded to all residents is a responsibility each of us bears. The issues facing our neighborhoods with childhood obesity, the inability to access affordable health prevention and treatment options, and the increasing risks many adults face with heart disease are serious, but preventable. The Coalition encourages all providers, agencies, organizations, businesses, and residents within the county to embrace this Call To Action. Together we can accomplish much more than any of us can do alone. The cost of not addressing these issues is much greater than any resources expended in working to improve our well-being. Please consider your role in helping us to achieve our mission of creating a model community for healthy living.

Moving forward, the intent is to work towards the stated goals for community health improvement through the development of workgroups around each of these key health issues. Specific implementation strategies and action plans will be developed with each of the three issues. At the same time, the Coalition will work to maintain the continuity of work conducted through the previous Community Health Improvement Plan, particularly the focus given to Access to Care issues within the county. Progress toward goal attainment will be measured on a regular basis through the objectives set forth in this plan. Evaluation will be a critical part of Coalition activities.

The Health Improvement Coalition of Monmouth County generally meets on a quarterly basis throughout the year. The Steering Committee and workgroups meet more regularly to accomplish the work set forth in this plan. The success of this plan and the implementation activities is dependent on the committed work of area providers, agencies, organizations, and concerned volunteers. Membership in the Coalition is an open door. We also encourage area organizations to utilize this document for internal planning, community outreach, and even grant procurement activities. If you are interested in being a part of the Coalition and/or serving on one of the individual workgroups, please contact Cathy Callamaras, Monmouth County Health Department, at 732-431-7456, [ccallamaras@co.monmouth.nj.us](mailto:ccallamaras@co.monmouth.nj.us) .

## E. Acknowledgements

Without the ongoing commitment of many individuals and organizations throughout Monmouth County and beyond, the Coalition would not be possible. Many have contributed to the conduct of the community health needs assessment and to the work of prioritizing and evaluating the key county needs moving forward. These organizations have been involved in various capacities since 2005. We would like to extend our appreciation and gratitude to the following organizations.

Acelero Head Start  
Advanced Studies in Medicine (ASiM)  
Allen Project, Inc.  
American Cancer Society  
American Red Cross  
Barnabas Health  
Bayshore Community Hospital  
Brookdale Community College  
CentraState Health System  
Central Jersey Family Health Consortium  
CJCNANBPW, INC.  
Coastal Habitat for Humanity  
Family Resource Network  
Freehold Area Health Department  
Freehold Community Counseling  
Freehold Regional High School District  
Hazlet-Aberdeen Health Department  
Humana  
Institute for Prevention, Barnabas Health  
Interfaith Neighbors  
Jersey Shore University Medical Center  
K. Hovnanian Children's Hospital  
Keansburg Resource Network  
Long Branch Concordance  
Long Branch Health Department  
Lunch Break/Red Bank  
Manalapan Health Department  
Mayors Wellness Campaign  
Meridian Health  
Middletown Township Health Department  
Monmouth Cares  
Monmouth County Community Development Program  
Monmouth County Department of Transportation



Monmouth County Division of Aging, Disabilities & Veterans Services  
Monmouth County Division of Mental Health & Addiction  
Monmouth County Division of Planning & Contracting  
Monmouth County Division of Social Services  
Monmouth County Head Start  
Monmouth County Health Department  
Monmouth County Human Services  
Monmouth County Medical Reserves Corp  
Monmouth County Office of Youth Services Planning  
Monmouth County Regional Health Commission  
Monmouth Medical Center  
Monmouth University  
New Hope Foundation  
New Jersey Department of Education  
New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services  
New Jersey Division of Prevention & Community Partnerships  
Planned Parenthood of Central New Jersey  
Prevention First  
Riverview Medical Center  
Salvation Army/ Asbury Park  
United Way of Monmouth County  
VNA of Central Jersey  
YMCA & YWCA  
"180 Turning Lives Around"