

# Harford County Local Health Improvement Coalition

January, 2014

## Welcome to the Harford County's Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) Winter Update!



Harford County's Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) workgroups are continuing their work to improve the health of Harford County residents. See an update below of the workgroup's most recent initiatives.

At the fall LHIC meeting, participants were given a chance to provide feedback on the direction of the local health improvement process to date. Results of a survey found that 94% of members believe the LHIC has made good progress on improving the health of local residents and **97%** agreed that the improvement process is focused on the correct strategies: **obesity, tobacco and behavioral health.**

Key ideas given on how to strengthen local efforts include increasing the presence of health care providers, faith-based and minority groups, schools, youth and other community members in the work of the Coalition. Another common theme was the need to increase communication and outreach to the public.

Here are a few ways the LHIC will be doing so in the coming year:

- **The Tobacco Workgroup** is expanding its anti-tobacco media campaign, with an emphasis on the dangers of second-hand smoke. To have an online presence, the group has placed banner ads on [The Dagger](#) and [Harford's Heart](#).
- The **Community Engagement** group will sponsor training for local pediatricians on how to discuss obesity with parents of young children. The group is also continuing to recruit restaurants for the Healthy Harford Restaurant Designation Program and local organizations interested in building community gardens.
- The **Behavioral Health Workgroup** will host a suicide prevention webinar for primary care physicians. In addition, they will promote community education efforts such as the Drug Enforcement

Administration's (DEA) [Target America](#) and Office on Mental Health's Town Hall meeting.

In addition, the Coalition identified access to health care services as an important public health issue that it will explore in the upcoming year. The County's Community Health Improvement Plan will be updated and revised to reflect topics discussed at this meeting.

## Local Health Updates

[Maryland Health Connection](#), the State's Benefit Exchange developed through Health Care Reform, is now up and running. Navigators are available through the Community Action Agency and Assisters are available through the Health Department to provide in-person assistance with applications and enrollment. [Click here to access the Assister's community calendar.](#)



## Data Update

In the April edition of the LHIC e-newsletter, a vital statistics report was shared noting that the County and State infant mortality rates were on a decline. New information available from the Maryland Vital Statistics Administration shows that between 2011 and 2012, Harford County's rate of infant mortality rose from 3.7 to 5.3, while the State rate decreased from 6.7 to 6.3. Although an increase was seen locally, the overall number of infant deaths remains relatively low in the County (14 deaths in 2012 vs. 10 deaths in 2011). [View the full report here.](#)

## Stay up to date

- **Local Health Improvement Coalition** meeting dates and past minutes are available on the Harford County Health Department's [website](#).
- **Healthy Harford** - for the latest information on health and wellness in Harford County, "like" Healthy Harford on [facebook](#), or visit their [website](#).
- **State Health Improvement Process** - stay up to date on health outcome data at the SHIP [website](#).



Public Health

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Harford County Health Department