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Background

The Better Health Partnership is a non-profit regional health improvement collaborative in Northeast Ohio, and they are dedicated to enhancing health outcomes and reducing disparities for:

- infants, pregnant individuals, children, and adults facing complex health and social challenges

The Better Health Partnership is collaborating with MetroHealth to assist with the Cuyahoga County Community Health Assessment (CHA). This assessment utilizes a systematic process to collect and analyze community-wide data to identify the prioritization of health needs and issues within the community.

Population

The Better Health Partnership seeks to gather primary (e.g., surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews) and secondary data for Cuyahoga County, which has over 1.2 million residents, including urban, suburban, and rural populations. Of the 1.2 million residents, the high-priority communities that require extra attention for this CHA include:

- Infants & Pregnant Individuals
- Children & Adolescents
- Adults & Aging Population

Lessons Learned

1. How to conduct a literature review on multilevel data collection related to county assessments and reports
2. Understand how key informant interviews are integral to addressing the key health needs and social determinants of health within a community
3. Working alongside experts like Chris and Kirstin allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of Cuyahoga County's health needs and fostered a sense of shared responsibility to ensure that the results are actionable and impactful
4. Effective data collection not only informs better decision-making but also ensures that all voices, particularly those from vulnerable communities, are heard and addressed in health planning.

Learning Objectives

1. **Understand Community Health Needs:** Develop background knowledge of Cuyahoga County's previous Community Health Assessments and identify the key health issues and social determinants affecting the county's population.
2. **Perform Data Analysis and Literature Review:** Examine the fourteen largest counties in Ohio to provide a literature matrix documenting how these counties collect primary and secondary data.
3. **Exploring Comparative Insights:** Review the fourteen largest counties in Ohio to assess how their health topics, community health needs, and social determinants of health are being categorized across counties to gain a deeper understanding of regional prioritization of needs.
4. **Community Engagement:** Meet with Key Informants within the county to develop actionable strategies to address health needs and disparities.

Methods

This two-pronged project focused on supporting the Cuyahoga Community Health Assessment by conducting literature reviews and community key informant interviews. To better understand current best practices, the literature review focused on how other counties' CHAs are structured. Key focus areas include:

- Categorization of health topic labeling and the defined measures of Social Determinants of Health.
- The methods associated with collecting primary and secondary community data.
- Utilization of CHA data to provide health interventions, community engagement, and policy recommendations.

Interviews were conducted with Key Informants in the community to gather localized insights. These interviews focused on:

- A broad view of the key health issues and community needs in Cuyahoga County.
- Community perspectives on existing programs and future directions

Activities

This practicum is intended to assist the Better Health Partnership in gathering primary and secondary data, engaging key stakeholders, and synthesizing multilevel county data. Key activities include:

- **Key Informant Interviews:** I was provided with a list of potential Key Informants and interviewed them to collect qualitative data on top health priorities, community needs, and outreach initiatives.
- **Literature Review:** Reviewed existing Community Health Assessments (2017-2023) from fourteen Ohio counties (i.e. Franklin, Hamilton, etc.), focusing on health topic categorization, data collection methods, and top social determinants of health.
- **Data Analysis and Reporting:** I analyzed qualitative and quantitative data from key informant interviews and health reports to report back to my facilitator.

Deliverables

With my work focusing primarily on qualitative and quantitative data collection, the practicum component of this project will yield:

1. **Key Informant Interview Summaries and Insights:** Performed key informant interviews that capture qualitative and quantitative data from community leaders within Cuyahoga County. Transcribed and synthesized the data these informants provided so that this information can be used to inform the CHA's recommendations and ensure that the voices of those directly involved in the community are heard.
2. **Meta-Analysis of Data Collection Methods Across Ohio Counties:** Provided multiple reports on the data collection, prioritization of health needs, and the social determinants of health across 15+ counties in the state. Based on this research, my reports provide insight into how other highly populous counties are collecting data, integrating SDOH factors, and how they identify prioritized groups of individuals.

Public Health Implications

- The findings from the key informant interviews and the data collected are instrumental in shaping future interventions and policies that prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable populations within the county. By identifying these health prioritizations and the social determinants of health that contribute to poor health outcomes, our work will ensure that health interventions will address the needs of those who are disproportionately affected by health disparities.
- The Community Health Assessment will help guide targeted public health interventions and aims to address the root causes of health inequities and access to care.
- Comparing data collection and analysis methods across Ohio counties offers valuable insight for improving Cuyahoga County's assessment and will ensure that public health data is more inclusive and representative of the communities within the county.

Acknowledgments

I would like to sincerely thank Chris Mundorf and Kirstin Craciun for their guidance and support, and for allowing me the opportunity to collaborate with them on the Community Health Assessment for Cuyahoga County.