



# Kankakee County Health Assessment Forces of Change Report

2014

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Assessment Methodology .....	4
Executive Summary .....	5
Cross-Cutting Forces of Change.....	6
Conclusion .....	15

## Introduction

In 2014, the Kankakee County Partnership for a Healthy Community continued on a journey started in 2011 to use the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) process to develop a Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan. MAPP is a collaborative community-driven strategic planning framework that assists communities in developing and implementing efforts around the prioritization of public health issues and the identification of resources to address them as defined by the 10 Essential Public Health Services. The 2014-2015 Community Health Assessment is Kankakee County's second iteration of the MAPP process.

Within the MAPP process, there are four assessment tools. One of these assessment tools is the Forces of Change Assessment (FOCA). The FOCA is aimed at identifying forces – such as trends, factors, or events – that are or will be influencing the health and quality of life of the community and the work of the local public health system.

- **Trends** are patterns over time, such as migration in and out of a community or a growing disillusionment with government.
- **Factors** are discrete elements, such as a community's large ethnic population, an urban setting, or the jurisdiction's proximity to a major waterway.
- **Events** are one-time occurrences, such as a hospital closure, a natural disaster, or the passage of new legislation.

During the FOCA, participants answer the following questions:

- What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of our community or the local public health system?
- What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?<sup>1</sup>

Forces to be considered should include the following categories of influence:

- Social
- Economic
- Political
- Legal
- Environmental
- Technological
- Ethical
- Scientific

The group may also identify other categories of forces of change specific to the county.

## Assessment Methodology

On October 14, 2014, the Kankakee County Partnership for a Healthy Community convened to participate in the Forces of Change Assessment. A neutral facilitator from the Illinois Public Health Institute guided participants through the following process:

1. The definitions and components of the Forces of Change Assessment were reviewed.
2. Participants engaged in a discussion to identify forces across the eight categories of influence.
3. Forces were sorted under the major categories of influence and listed on flip charts around the room.
4. Participants were divided into small groups and assigned two categories of influence to discuss.
5. Each small group brainstormed and listed relevant threats and opportunities for each of the forces identified under the assigned categories of influence.
6. Small groups then took turns reporting out a brief summary to the large group describing the opportunities and threats they identified for each of the forces they discussed. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and add comments as needed.
7. Identified forces and associated opportunities and threats were compiled and shared electronically with additional Kankakee County Partnership for a Healthy Community collaborative members for review and input.
8. Cross-cutting themes were identified and approved by the Kankakee County Partnership for a Healthy Community.

## **Executive Summary: Core Issues Emerging from the Forces of Change Assessment**

The Forces of Change identified in this assessment represent important issues affecting Kankakee County, and their potential implications on the health and quality of life of community members and on the local public health system.

The analysis of potential forces from all categories explored by members of the Kankakee County Partnership for a Healthy Community for the Forces of Change Assessment resulted in the following major cross-cutting themes:

- Local and State Fiscal Challenges**
- Education and Workforce Development**
- Sustainable Energy Development**
- Low Homeownership Rates**
- Transportation Expansion**
- Changing Demographics**
- Affordable Care Act and Changing Health Care Landscape**
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse**
- Legalization of Marijuana**
- Establishment of the 211 Human Services Resource Line**
- Increased Connectivity**
- Chicago Bears Training Camp**

These cross-cutting themes are described in detail on the following pages.

# Cross-Cutting Forces of Change in Kankakee County

## State and Local Fiscal Challenges

Severe budget shortages at both the state and local level constitute a major threat to Kankakee County's local public health system. The state of Illinois now has a budget deficit of nearly \$45 billion, making its fiscal crisis the worst in the nation<sup>2</sup>. As a result, the state is very slow to pay its bills to agencies providing services on its behalf. A 2009 national study by the Urban Institute on nonprofit government contracting found that Illinois has the worst late payment rate in the country, with 83% of organizations reporting late payments as a problem. 81% of Illinois organizations surveyed reported that the state's payments fail to cover the full cost of contracted services<sup>3</sup>. As a result, many Illinois nonprofits have been forced to scale back their services, freeze or reduce employee salaries, or reduce their staff size. At the same time that many nonprofits are scaling back, however, demand for services is increasing due to growing economic hardship for many Illinois residents. Increased demand coupled with diminishing financial resources have created significant challenges for many nonprofit agencies. This growing burden highlights the need for nonprofits to explore other potential sources of financial support, including foundation, corporate, or private giving.

Illinois also has a serious problem with delaying payments and reimbursing far below the cost of care to Medicaid providers. As of 2014, the state has \$1.9 billion in unpaid Medicaid bills<sup>4</sup>. This slow pay/no pay problem is increasingly discouraging doctors from accepting Medicaid, who cannot afford the high cost of treating Medicaid patients given the increasingly complex paperwork requirements and little chance of being reimbursed in a timely manner. Providers' growing reluctance to accept new Medicaid patients is a significant problem in the context of growing numbers of Medicaid enrollees due to Medicaid expansion.

Kankakee County also faces increasingly serious budget shortfalls. Despite growing deficits, Kankakee County residents recently voted overwhelmingly against a referendum to raise the county's sales tax by 1% to 7.25%, which would have generated an estimated \$7.7 million per year to support public safety in the county<sup>5</sup>. The rejection of the proposed sales tax increase will likely result in slower emergency response times and an estimated 40 layoffs among county law enforcement. Kankakee voters also rejected a referendum for a 1% sales tax earmarked for school facilities.

Dwindling budgets and growing community need for services are substantial burdens for Kankakee County's hospitals, health department, clinics, schools, and non-profit social service organizations. The scarcity of resources in the context of growing demands highlights the need for collaborative partnerships to apply for joint funding and align efforts for improved outcomes through shared implementation and measurement.

## Education and Workforce Development

Partnership members reported that Kankakee County is currently facing challenges in securing and maintaining a sufficiently skilled workforce to meet the level of demand from local employers. Companies have generated a high demand for workers, but many are struggling to find properly qualified employees to meet this need. This lack of skilled workers creates a serious threat to the local economy, as it may result in companies leaving the area or deciding not to locate in Kankakee County.

Kankakee has a unique opportunity to attract new industries and employers given its low tax rate. low

cost of living and its geographic location near Chicago and the proposed third regional airport and Illiana Expressway. Forbes Magazine recently released a report ranking Kankakee County 105th in a list of the “Top 200 Best Small Places for Business and Careers”, ninth in the nation for the cost of doing business, and second among Illinois small cities for projected job growth<sup>6</sup>. A recent report from the Milken Institute also indicates an upward trajectory for growth, ranking the Kankakee area 42<sup>nd</sup> nationally among Best Performing Small Cities in 2013, up from 121<sup>st</sup> the previous year.<sup>7</sup> Kankakee County has the potential to be well positioned for future economic growth if proper investments are made to strengthen and develop the local workforce.

The most critical workforce need for the county is to increase educational attainment of its community members by reducing high school dropout rates. The county’s graduation rates are lower than the state average, and there is a substantial disparity in graduation rates for low-income students<sup>8</sup>. Kankakee County could address declining educational attainment and job readiness through investing in job readiness and vocational training programs at high schools and in the community. However, declining funding for community programming makes these efforts challenging. Engaging local businesses in collaborative efforts to create vocational training opportunities to build the skills local employers need would help to improve economic development of the county and improve earning potential and quality of life for Kankakee County residents.

The Economic Alliance of Kankakee County is a key partner in efforts to improve economic and workforce development in the community. The Economic Alliance is a public/private partnership that works to attract new businesses and industries to the area and retain industries and employers currently located in Kankakee County. The Economic Alliance can play a key role in coordinating educational and vocational training opportunities in partnership with local colleges that will strengthen the county’s economy and increase earning potential and access to good jobs for residents. The newly unified Kankakee County Chamber of Commerce can also play an important role in growing and sustaining economic growth in the area and raising Kankakee County’s profile as a business-friendly community through networking, marketing, and advocacy. The Grundy Livingston Kankakee Workforce Board is another key partner in local economic and workforce development. The workforce board is comprised of area industries as well as public sector and social service agency representatives from across the three counties, and works to meet the local businesses’ demand for skilled workers and as well as individuals’ need for education, job training, and employment. These groups can be leveraged as important partners in improving personal wealth and socioeconomic status of Kankakee County community members.

While educational attainment is a challenge for Kankakee County community members, area colleges such as Olivet Nazarene University and Kankakee Community College (KCC) have experienced increased enrollment in recent years. The growing presence of higher education in the area is a community asset, and can be leveraged to attract new industry to the area, and also to attract new graduates from these universities to stay in the area so they can contribute to the economic growth of the county. Threats that undermine the opportunity to leverage these community resources include Kankakee County’s image as an unsafe community, which could deter students from choosing these schools and limit growth, and the lack of state and community member support for these institutions, which has limited their growth. Partnership members underscored the importance of these institutions as key community assets in driving economic growth and development in the area.

## Sustainable Energy Development

Partnership members identified sustainable energy technology as a key area of opportunity for economic and industry growth in Kankakee. Kankakee Community College is a nationally recognized leader in renewable energy technology and has invested heavily in developing training in preparation for the expansion of sustainable energy utilization. KCC has one of the top ranking renewable energy training programs in the country<sup>9</sup>. In 2014, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity provided \$5 million to build the Advanced Technology Education Center on KCC's campus, which further enhances KCC's capacity for clean energy education<sup>10</sup>. KCC's investment in clean energy technology contributed to Microsoft Corporation and EDF Renewable Energy's decision to establish a 175 megawatt wind project in the county<sup>11</sup>. The project is expected to generate new jobs and tens of millions of dollars over the life of the project, and may attract further green industry to the area, realizing the Economic Alliance of Kankakee County's vision to make the county a green technology and renewable energy hub. Because green energy technology is likely to be a key area of economic and job growth in the future, Kankakee County should create programs to ensure that local community members in need of education and vocational skill development have access to training opportunities in this field by creating linkages with local high schools and workforce development programs.

## Low Homeownership Rates

Low homeownership and high foreclosure rates have been a subject of growing concern in Kankakee County. Homeownership is an indicator of family and community stability, and is frequently correlated with longer community residency, greater civic investment and community participation, and increased property values<sup>12</sup>. Homeownership has also traditionally conferred substantial financial benefit to homebuyers, creating greater economic stability for families. In contrast, communities with high rentership rates are traditionally associated with higher levels of transience, lower civic participation, less concern for property maintenance, and lower economic stability.

Kankakee County has a 31% rentership rate, far higher than adjacent counties, and twice the rate of neighboring Will County. Homeownership is particularly low in the city of Kankakee, where 50% of housing is renter-occupied<sup>13</sup>. Financial hardship is a significant deterrent to homeownership in the community. While many renters cannot afford homeownership, others can afford to buy homes but may need incentives and assistance in navigating the home buying process. The community has put forth substantial effort to address low ownership rates in the area, offering classes and resources to first-time home buyers, partnering with local banks to increase access to home loans for buyers who can afford them, and incentivizing home purchases for first-time buyers by offering \$2,500 towards their down payment. Kankakee has also applied for funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program to facilitate the purchase, rehabilitation, and reselling of foreclosed and abandoned properties to reduce falling neighborhood property values<sup>14</sup>.

Local employers are also invested in strengthening community stability through increasing homeownership in Kankakee. Riverside Medical Center, one of Kankakee County's largest employers, recently announced a plan to encourage employees to move to the city of Kankakee by offering a \$2,500 incentive for the purchase of a home within the city, which could be used in combination with the city's \$2,500 incentive for first-time home purchasers<sup>15</sup>. City Mayor Nina Epstein is a strong proponent of the incentive program and is working with other companies to expand it. Other major employers in the city considering offering similar incentives to their employees include Presence St. Mary's Hospital, the Kankakee School District, and the City of Kankakee.

## Transportation Expansion

One of Kankakee County's defining characteristics and biggest assets is its location just 60 miles south of Chicago via Interstate 57, making it geographically and strategically well-positioned as a transportation hub. Two major projects are currently being proposed to further develop transit in the south suburban region, which include the creation of a new expressway to link interstates across the region and the creation of a third Chicagoland airport. Both of the proposed transit expansion projects are controversial, bringing the potential for economic expansion and new jobs, but also increased sprawl and pollution. Former Governor Quinn was a strong proponent of both projects during his administration, but the fate of both projects remains unclear as Governor Rauner enters office.

### Illiana Expressway

The Illiana Expressway is a proposed 50 mile transportation corridor linking Interstate 55 in Illinois to Interstate 65 in Indiana. The joint project between the Illinois and Indiana Departments of Transportation recently received federal approval to move forward with land acquisition to construct the four-lane toll road, which would be the third east-west expressway to connect northeastern Illinois and northwestern Indiana. Advocates of the Illiana Corridor claim that the expressway will serve as a major trucking route and will substantially improve regional mobility and boost regional economic development. According to projections by the Illinois and Indiana Departments of Transportation, the project is expected to create thousands of jobs and increase the region's long-term economic output by \$4 billion<sup>16</sup>. Opponents of the expressway argue that these projected benefits are unsubstantiated and claim that the proposed route is unlikely to spur economic growth or address regional congestion challenges. Further, while the Illinois Department of Transportation is exploring public-private partnership funding structures, opponents claim that the project exposes the state to considerable financial risk, likely substantial public subsidies totaling over \$1 billion<sup>17</sup>. Opponents to the expressway also argue that the project would have severe ecological and economic consequences on the surrounding communities, as proposed routes would destroy thousands of acres of productive agricultural land, pollute local waterways and wetlands, compromise air quality, and threaten the habitat of threatened and endangered species in the area<sup>18</sup>.

One of Governor Rauner's first actions after taking office was to issue an executive order suspending all planning and development of major interstate construction, pending thorough review and cost benefit analysis. Governor Rauner's new appointee to lead the Illinois Department of Transportation, Randy Blankenhorn, has expressed serious concern regarding the prudence of the Illiana Expressway in the past, which may indicate that plans to build the expressway are unlikely to move forward under Governor Rauner's term<sup>19</sup>.

### Peotone Airport

A second proposed project to substantially increase the south suburban region as a transportation hub is the possible development of a third Chicagoland airport to supplement Midway and O'Hare in Chicago. The proposed third airport would be built in Peotone, which is 20 miles north of Kankakee<sup>20</sup>. The state recently spent \$34 million in a land acquisition purchase to add to previously purchased land for the airport. While supporters believe the Peotone Airport would boost the regional economy, create jobs, and relieve congestion at O'Hare and Midway, airline industry representatives firmly oppose the plan to create a new airport, saying that a third regional airport is unnecessary and would create too much competition. Community opponents of the Peotone airport believe that the airport would cause unnecessary destruction to farmland and would increase air, water, and noise pollution in the area. There is also concern that the airport would require substantial taxpayer support, which may be a poor investment given the lack of demand for the airport. As support for the project appears to be waning,

alternatives that have been proposed in the project include reconfiguration of O'Hare to increase capacity, or expansion to existing regional airports in Gary, Rockford, and Milwaukee.

## Changing Demographics

### Aging Population

Over 13% of the population in Kankakee County is 65 or older, and over 6% of residents are over 75<sup>21</sup>. Aging adults living on fixed incomes with limited access to transportation can be vulnerable to isolation, elder abuse, and victimization from predatory lending or fraudulent programs that target older adults. Partnership members suggested that the community needs safety and elder abuse education programs for seniors, programs that assist seniors in navigating and selecting social benefits, and more social outlets and opportunities for seniors to prevent isolation.

### Growing Proportion of Single Parent Families

Partnership members perceived a growing presence of single parent families in the community, which may raise the need for supportive community programming, as single parents have fewer resources and time for childrearing, and may be more likely to experience income stress. Partnership members noted that there are childcare resources for teen parents, but cautioned that much of the funding for these programs has dried up in recent years, making these services more difficult to access. They also mentioned that there is a new community program that supports single parents that are first time home buyers to help them access loans. Kankakee Community College also has special programs that single parents and income-stressed families can qualify for that make it easier to go back to school or access job training.

### Growing Latino Population

There is also a growing proportion of Latino community members in Kankakee County. 9% of Kankakee County residents are Latino, and the proportion of residents of the city of Kankakee with Latino heritage has more than doubled since 2000, from 9% to over 19%<sup>22</sup>. While this population continues to grow, there is still a need to increase bilingual and culturally appropriate services in the community, especially in health care facilities and schools. Partnership members reported that health care providers are required to have language lines to translate information to patients, but some providers still may be using family members to translate communication between the patient and provider. Relying on family members for interpretation is a particular problem in the schools, where Partnership members reported that children are still generally the primary interpreters for their parents. To address this, schools need more bilingual staff and language interpreters, though funding shortages make this difficult.

While there is still a gap in services for non-English speakers, Partnership members did report that they perceive the community to be increasingly integrated, so progress is being made. One example of an important community service now offered in Spanish is the first-time home buyer classes, which are designed to help encourage homeownership and increase financial literacy among community members.

## Affordable Care Act and Changing Healthcare Landscape

### Electronic Medical Records (EMR)/ Health Information Exchange (HIE)

Partnership members discussed the transition to Electronic Medical Records (EMR) and the Health Information Exchange (HIE) as important steps in creating increased efficiency in the health care system and better care coordination for patients. Electronic Medical Records allow patients greater participation

in their health care because they have access to the information in their medical charts and can correct inaccurate data. The Health Information Exchange presents an opportunity to do population health research with greater efficiency due to increased access to data, which could inform improvements to public health and the health care system. While EMR/HIE have the potential to reduce costs, increase efficiency, and improve the patient experience in the health care system, the potential threats to confidentiality posed by these technological advances could potentially undermine these improvements. EMR/HIE present new threats to HIPPA and have incited controversy regarding whether sensitive information is adequately protected. HIPPA violations result in both legal and monetary penalties within the health care system, and have ethical implications for individual privacy that could result in discrimination.

### **Telemedicine**

Telemedicine is another new development that is changing the health care landscape. Telemedicine uses technology, including email, video calls, and smart phones to facilitate remote access to health care providers. Patients can interface with providers from their homes, which can reduce costs and increase convenience, leading to potentially improved care. Telemedicine can be useful for patients living in rural areas or areas with limited access to specialty providers, and for patients for whom transportation to medical visits is difficult. Riverside Medical Center has begun to utilize telemedicine to improve patient access to neurosurgeons by through a secure skype-style interface. By providing a neurosurgery physician's assistant onsite for the physical components of a patient exam and teleconferencing the neurosurgeon in, the cost of care is reduced and the neurosurgeon can see a greater number of patients.

While telemedicine has the potential to improve the cost, convenience and quality of health care delivery, there are also concerns that the lack of face to face interaction between patients and providers could have potential negative implications, including care that feels less personal, or an increased possibility of miscommunication. There are also challenges regarding access to telemedicine, as this form of care requires that patients have technological devices that may be less accessible for rural or low-income patients, or for patients that do not feel comfortable navigating digital technology.

### **Accountable Care Entities and Medicaid Expansion**

Accountable Care Entities and Medicaid expansion are also changing the health care delivery system. However, while they were designed to increase health care access and quality, participants cautioned that some critical resources are missing that would help to ensure their success. Medicaid expansion increases the number of people who should be able to access care at no cost, but the insufficient number of providers that accept Medicaid has not been addressed, so newly covered individuals often still lack access to care and must continue to depend on the ER as their primary source of care. Partnership members emphasized the need to ensure that providers are available to meet the increasing demand for care, and underscored the need for improved Medicaid reimbursement to encourage providers to accept new patients.

### **Mental Health and Substance Abuse**

Mental illness and substance abuse are growing concerns, both locally and nationally. Rising rates of mental illness and substance abuse, coupled with a lack of resources to address these issues, have resulted in overcrowding of jails.

#### **Lack of Mental Health Safety Net**

In the absence of safety net services or appropriate health care to prevent and treat mental illness, jails

are increasingly used to house individuals with mental health problems. Jails are an inappropriate solution to the growing prevalence of mental illness because they cannot provide treatment for individuals and because they criminalize individuals in need of medical attention. Further, jails are very costly to maintain, so using jails to house individuals is an inefficient use of taxpayer resources. Opportunities to address this problem include community education to increase awareness of mental health issues, training for law enforcement on how to appropriately respond to individuals with mental health issues, and programs that offer alternatives to jail. Partnership members expressed concern over what one individual termed "grow your own mental health." The lack of safety net resources and health care system infrastructure to support mental health in the United States make it very challenging for communities to prevent and address the growing mental illness and substance abuse epidemics. The community has tried to provide the best mental health care possible given the patchwork system it must operate within.

In response to growing demand for mental health care, Riverside Medical Center recently opened the Crisis Residential Clinic (CRC) in Kankakee to provide a better rehabilitation environment for people who otherwise would have turned to an Emergency Room for care and would have required a multi-day stay for de-escalation. Riverside has also recently expanded its inpatient Behavioral Health services by adding a 13 bed unit for seniors aged 65 and older.

#### **Heroin Abuse**

A related problem is the growing prevalence of heroin abuse in Kankakee County. Kankakee County and other counties throughout Chicagoland have seen a sharp increase in heroin use in recent years, mirroring the national trend in growing opioid use. 26 heroin overdose deaths were reported for Kankakee County in 2013, the highest number in recent history<sup>23</sup>. Growing community concern led to the county holding a community forum on heroin in 2014 to discuss ways to address this increasing epidemic. Partnership members reported that while heroin use was previously perceived as largely a problem among youth, there is growing awareness that heroin abuse is cutting across all segments of the community. Much of the rise in heroin abuse has been linked to development of addictions to prescription pain medications. When individuals develop dependencies on pain medications and can no longer access them through prescriptions, they frequently turn to heroin, which is easier to access. Because of this link, Electronic Medical Records present the opportunity to detect drug-seeking behavior and identify individuals at risk of developing an addiction so they can access help. Another effort that is underway to address this issue is providing law enforcement and fire fighters with Narcan, a drug that can reverse the effects of an overdose. Kankakee is working on getting first responders access to this medication and training them to administer it when they arrive on the scene of an overdose. Partnership members also identified the need for educational messaging among heroin users to make them aware of the dangers of mixing alcohol and heroin, which can be lethal when used in combination. Kankakee County can also continue to support free needle exchange programs, which are critical in preventing the spread of HIV and other blood-borne diseases like Hepatitis<sup>24</sup>.

#### **Tobacco Abuse**

Kankakee County continues to have much higher rates of tobacco use than the state average. 27% of Kankakee County adults report that they are smokers, compared with 18% of Illinois adults, and 17% of adults in neighboring Will County. Half of Kankakee County adults report having been smokers at one time. While Kankakee County has higher rates of smoking than neighboring counties, Kankakee smokers are more likely to have attempted to quit in the past year. 82% of Kankakee smokers reported a recent attempt to quit<sup>25</sup>. The high rates of tobacco usage, coupled with the high rates of attempts to quit, indicate that tobacco prevention and cessation should be a continued area of emphasis among Kankakee County healthcare providers and the health department.

## Legalization of Marijuana

The possible legalization of medical marijuana is a force that could have both positive and negative implications for the community. Legalization may lead to improved health for people that need marijuana for treatment for chronic conditions and pain, but also may lead to increased substance abuse if people get prescriptions that are not medically necessary. Medical marijuana presents a potential economic development opportunity for the area if businesses licensed to grow medical marijuana come to the area, but the legalization of medical marijuana may also necessitate additional training for law enforcement to ensure that they understand how to enforce the new rules around legal possession of marijuana.

## Establishment of the 211 Human Services Resource Line

A new community resource Partnership members identified is the development of a 211 line and website for Kankakee County community members, which was launched in early 2015. The 211 line is part of a nationwide effort among the United Way to link people to information about how to access human services, including food pantries, employment and vocational training, housing, resources for families experiencing domestic violence, and volunteer opportunities. The 211 system will be an easily accessible resource for Kankakee County residents that will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and will be staffed by people familiar with human service resources that can provide accurate, confidential information for people in need. The 211 system presents the opportunity for community members to get quicker, better access to the services they need in a crisis.

## Increased Connectivity

We live in an increasingly connected society, but some people do not have the same access to digital technology that makes connectivity possible. Differential access in rural areas and among community members who cannot afford digital technology or do not know how to navigate digital information is known as the digital divide. Age, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment are all factors that contribute to the digital divide. As digital information becomes increasingly integrated into our lives, the challenge of limited access among some community members is a growing concern. The shifting emphasis toward digital information sharing and connectivity facilitates rapid communication and easy access to a wealth of data and information, but those who lack the tools, knowledge, or desire to use digital technology may be left out. Because digital communication is an increasingly important aspect of societal participation, lack of access as a result of the digital divide can be a barrier to getting information about employment, housing, health care, and social opportunities. As digital technology becomes increasingly central to the sharing of information and opportunities in our society, it is important to ensure that access to digital information is equitable for all community members. Libraries, schools, and community centers are good resources for providing access to digital communication and for helping community members learn how to navigate digital technology.

## Chicago Bears Training Camp

The Chicago Bears Training Camp is a substantial source of community pride and identity for the Kankakee County area. Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais has been home to the Bears Training Camp for 13 years<sup>26</sup>. The future of the camp's location in Kankakee County was recently under threat when the Chicago Bears requested improvements to practice facilities totaling over \$1 million. In an effort to retain the camp, the Kankakee County Convention and Visitor Bureau Board voted and

unanimously approved a \$500,000 commitment to fund upgrades to training facilities. Local philanthropic efforts, ONU alumni, and a new local tax have raised additional funds for capital upgrades. In response, the Bears have committed to a contract to remain in Kankakee for the next ten years. Community leaders from both business and local government as well as community residents have been very vocal in their support for the training camp, and have demonstrated a commitment to keep the camp in Bourbonnais for years to come. The Bears' commitment to keeping the training camp in Kankakee County is beneficial for the community because it brings money into the area, increasing the number of patrons at local businesses when tourists visit. The Bears Training Camp also markets the Kankakee County area, increasing the community's profile and recognition across the state and the region. A potential threat presented by the Camp is that increased traffic from visitors puts pressure on infrastructure, so special accommodations must be made to support increased numbers of people in the area when the camp is in session. Many community leaders feel that the gains Kankakee County experiences from tourism to the area are well worth the costs to keep the camp local.

## **Conclusion: Cross-Cutting Themes throughout the Forces of Change Assessment**

The forces of change identified by Partnership members represent key issues that will have important implications for the local public health system and the health and quality of life of Kankakee County residents.

- **Local and State Fiscal Challenges**
- **Education and Workforce Development**
- **Sustainable Energy Development**
- **Low Homeownership Rates**
- **Transportation Expansion**
- **Changing Demographics**
- **Affordable Care Act and Changing Health Care Landscape**
- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse**
- **Legalization of Marijuana**
- **Establishment of the 211 Human Services Resource Line**
- **Increased Connectivity**
- **Chicago Bears Training Camp**

Throughout the assessment dialogue, several key themes emerged as issues driving the forces of change cited above. Key challenges cited in Kankakee County's 2012 Forces of Change Assessment still remain the most pressing issues for the community, including budget shortages, low educational attainment, unemployment, low homeownership rates, and high rates of mental illness and substance abuse<sup>27</sup>. Local and state fiscal shortages have created a challenging context in which to address these issues. Low community support for schools, public safety, and higher education in the county have further challenged community development and community health improvement. Kankakee voters recently strongly rejected proposals to raise taxes to support education and law enforcement, preferring to keep the tax rate low. While low taxes have reduced the financial resources available to address community challenges, the low tax rate also may also contribute a competitive edge to the county in attracting new industries who can spur job growth and economic development. Possible expansion of the area as a transportation hub through the proposed Illiana Corridor and the South Suburban Airport may also have a positive financial impact. Efforts to transform the area into a green energy hub have the potential to attract new industry and job growth. Substantial investment has been made to make Kankakee County business-friendly, and the extension of the contract to retain the Chicago Bears Training Camp in Bourbonnais will continue to raise the county's profile throughout the region, and strengthen community pride and identity.

As Kankakee strives to fuel economic growth, investing in community wellbeing will be central to developing a thriving county. Improving educational attainment, supporting homeownership, developing a skilled workforce, and linking citizens to supportive community services are critical steps to creating a stronger Kankakee County.

## **Appendix 1: FOCA Worksheet**

***What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of our community or the local public health system?***

***What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?***

### **What are Forces of Change?**

Forces are trends, factors or events that are or may be influencing the health and quality of life of the community and the work of the local public health system assessment.

- **Trends are patterns over time**, such as migration in and out of a community or a growing disillusionment with government.
- **Factors are discrete elements**, such as a community's large ethnic population, an urban setting, or a jurisdiction's proximity to a major waterway.
- **Events are one-time occurrences**, such as a hospital closure, a natural disaster, or the passage of new legislation.

### **How to Identify Forces of Change**

Use the questions below to help spur ideas of specific factors, trends or events that are or may likely affect the local public health system or community.

1. What has occurred recently or may occur in the future that will likely affect our public health system or community?
2. Are there any trends occurring that will have an impact? Describe the trends.
3. What forces are occurring locally? Statewide? Regionally? Nationally? Globally?
4. What characteristics of our community may pose an opportunity or threat?
5. What may occur or has occurred that may pose a barrier to achieving the shared vision?
6. During other MAPP activities or discussions, what potential threats or opportunities were discussed that should be considered?

### **What Kind of Areas or Categories Are Included?**

Forces of change typically emerge in the following categories:

- social
- economic
- political
- technological
- environmental
- scientific
- legal
- ethical

### Forces of Change Brainstorming Worksheet

Forces of Change (Trend, Events, Factors)	Potential Threats Posed to the LPHS or Community	Potential Opportunities Created to the LPHS or Community	Questions/More Info Needed
Example: Rapidly growing Latino population	Lack of culturally relevant health information; lack of Spanish speaking providers and limited forms in Spanish	Enriching the diversity of our community; partnership with other organizations to update materials	What language services are provided by hospital that may be able to be leveraged?



## Appendix 2. Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> National Association of County and City Health Officials. Forces of Change Assessment Overview. <http://www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/mapp/framework/phase3FOCover.cfm>
- <sup>2</sup> Urban Institute. 2012. National Study of Nonprofit-Government Contracting. <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412227-National-Study-of-Nonprofit-Government.pdf>
- <sup>3</sup> Urban Institute. 2012. National Study of Nonprofit-Government Contracting. <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412227-National-Study-of-Nonprofit-Government.pdf>
- <sup>4</sup> Heartland Institute. 2014. <http://news.heartland.org/newspaper-article/2014/11/18/medicaids-low-and-slow-payments-squeeze-care-access-poor>
- <sup>5</sup> The Daily Journal. 2014. [http://www.daily-journal.com/news/local/public-forums-to-discuss-tax-referendum/article\\_2bb36476-2176-5f91-8ced-d0659c3a4c31.html](http://www.daily-journal.com/news/local/public-forums-to-discuss-tax-referendum/article_2bb36476-2176-5f91-8ced-d0659c3a4c31.html)
- <sup>6</sup> Economic Alliance of Kankakee County. 2014. <http://www.kankakeecountyed.org/news-media/forbes-ranks-kankakee-county-ninth-nationally-in-cost-of-doing-business-second-in-illinois-for-job-growth>
- <sup>7</sup> Milken Institute. 2013. Best Performing Cities 2013. <http://assets1b.milkeninstitute.org/assets/Publication/ResearchReport/PDF/Best-Performing-Cities-Report-2013.pdf>
- <sup>8</sup> Illinois Poverty Report. 2014. <http://ilpovertyreport.org/county/kankakee-county#.VIIYx0v7puY>
- <sup>9</sup> Southtown Star. 2014. <http://southtownstar.chicagotribune.com/news/30575993-418/first-community-college-to-win-energy-award-inspires-stories-of-second-chances.html#.VK7ZPSvF91Z>
- <sup>10</sup> Economic Alliance of Kankakee County. 2014. <http://www.kankakeecountyed.org/tag/16-kankakee-community-college>
- <sup>11</sup> EDF Renewable Energy. 2014. [http://www.edfre.com/about/press/edf\\_renewable\\_energy\\_and\\_microsoft\\_corporation\\_break\\_ground\\_on\\_the\\_pilot\\_hi/](http://www.edfre.com/about/press/edf_renewable_energy_and_microsoft_corporation_break_ground_on_the_pilot_hi/)
- <sup>12</sup> Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University. 2013. <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/jchs.harvard.edu/files/hbtl-04.pdf>
- <sup>13</sup> US Census. 2013 American Community Survey. <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>
- <sup>14</sup> City of Kankakee. [http://www.citykankakee-il.gov/CDA/NSP2\\_PROGRAM\\_SUMMARY%5B1%5D.htm](http://www.citykankakee-il.gov/CDA/NSP2_PROGRAM_SUMMARY%5B1%5D.htm)
- <sup>15</sup> The Daily Journal. 2014. [http://www.daily-journal.com/news/local/riverside-to-offer-to-its-employees-who-move-to-kankakee/article\\_c5bf6d67-cb01-5e42-a9b3-68392fffd5ce.html](http://www.daily-journal.com/news/local/riverside-to-offer-to-its-employees-who-move-to-kankakee/article_c5bf6d67-cb01-5e42-a9b3-68392fffd5ce.html)
- <sup>16</sup> Illinois and Indiana Departments of Transportation. 2014. <http://www.illianacorridor.org>
- <sup>17</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. 2013. <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/131806/staff+rec+doc.pdf/921c6499-e32e-4811-83c3-fdf772bbf8c7>
- <sup>18</sup> Openlands. 2014. <http://www.openlands.org/illiana>
- <sup>19</sup> WBEZ. Rauner puts Illiana Expressway on Hold. <http://www.wbez.org/news/rauner-puts-illiana-expressway-hold-111394>
- <sup>20</sup> South Suburban Airport. 2014. <http://www.southsuburbanairport.com/LandAcquisition/LA-home.htm>
- <sup>21</sup> US Census. <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>
- <sup>22</sup> US Census. <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>
- <sup>23</sup> The Daily Journal. 2014. [http://www.daily-journal.com/news/local/deadly-dilemma-community-facing-rise-in-heroin-use-deaths/article\\_b164140a-dd9f-587d-a686-fec69615f48b.html](http://www.daily-journal.com/news/local/deadly-dilemma-community-facing-rise-in-heroin-use-deaths/article_b164140a-dd9f-587d-a686-fec69615f48b.html)
- <sup>24</sup> World Health Organization. 2004. [http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/prev\\_care/en/effectivenesssterileneedle.pdf](http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/prev_care/en/effectivenesssterileneedle.pdf)
- <sup>25</sup> Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2006-2012.
- <sup>26</sup> Economic Alliance of Kankakee County. 2014. <http://www.kankakeecountyed.org/tag/15-bears-camp>
- <sup>27</sup> Kankakee County Forces of Change Assessment. 2012. <http://www.kankakeehealth.org/files/mapp-iplan/Forces%20of%20Change%20Assessment%20Worksheet%20-%20Kankakee.pdf>