



Placer County

Forces of Change Assessment

Prepared By:
Placer County
Public Health Division



Table of Contents

Background	1
Facilitators	1
What are Forces of Change?	1
Assessment Methodology	2
Findings.....	3
Forces of Change Matrix.....	3-5
Appendix 1 – Forces of Change Assessment Presentation.....	6
Appendix 2 – Forces of Change Brainstorming Worksheet	7

Background

On September 20, 2016, the Placer County Public Health Division hosted a local health system Forces of Change (FOC) assessment with a multidisciplinary group of community partners. This assessment is a part of the Be Well Placer initiative, a community-driven strategic planning process for improving community health that uses the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) framework. MAPP is not an agency-focused assessment process; rather it is a six-phase interactive process that can improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and performance of local public health systems. In accordance with this framework, Be Well Placer will incorporate the findings from the Forces of Change assessment with the three remaining assessments to identify strategic issues and formulate goals and strategies to address them.

Facilitators

Sarah Hagen, MS, CHES, Health Educator, Placer County Health and Human Services, Public Health Division

Jennifer Johnson, MPA, Public Health Associate, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Placer County Health and Human Services, Public Health Division

What are Forces of Change?

While not always obvious, the community and local public health system are constantly impacted by the greater environment. Shifts in the economy and government administration, technological advances, environmental instabilities, and social norm changes are all considered Forces of Change. Each of these factors has the ability to impact a community's way of life, both indirectly and directly.

Forces are a broad category of influences that include trends, factors, and events.

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

This Forces of Change Assessment focuses on identifying forces such as those described above, as well as other impending changes that affect the context in which the community and its public health system operate. This answers the questions: "What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of our community or the local public health system?" and "What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?"¹

¹ NACCHO, Forces of Change Assessment, <http://www.naccho.org/programs/public-health-infrastructure/mapp/phase-3-the-four-assessments>

Assessment Methodology

Placer County Health and Human Services Department staff and multidisciplinary community partners met for a 1½ hour session to conduct the Forces of Change Assessment. The goal of the assessment was to identify external forces (trends, factors, and events) that impact the health and quality of life of the Placer County community, as well as the opportunities created and threats posed with each of these forces. The assessment was conducted in three parts: 1.) identification of forces, 2.) categorization of forces, and 3.) identification of opportunities and threats.

To identify forces, participants were asked to think broadly and answer the question, “What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of our community or the local public health system?” Examples were provided to participants and the following three guiding questions were written on the board to assist with brainstorming:

- 1.) What events have occurred recently that may affect our community's health and wellbeing?
- 2.) What is likely to occur in the future?
- 3.) Are there any trends occurring that will have an impact?

Participants were asked to partner with the individual sitting next to them, brainstorm forces that most easily come to mind, and select their top three forces. Significant instruction was not given with regard to defining “top three.” Participants could use their own discretion to identify whether this meant the three most obvious, impactful, serious, etc. Everyone was provided a Forces of Change Brainstorming Worksheet to document notes from the discussion. (See Appendix 2). Each pairing was also provided three sticky notes and was instructed to write one force on each sticky note.

Following the identification of forces, each pair reported their selection to the group in a round-robin style. Participants were then asked to categorize each of their forces under one of the following six groups: 1.) Political, 2.) Economic, 3.) Legal, 4.) Social, 5.) Environmental, and 6.) Technological.

Once all forces had been categorized, participants evaluated each force individually through group discussion. The evaluation consisted of identifying threats posed and/or opportunities created for the Placer County community and local public health system should that force occur. Threats and opportunities were documented and compiled in a matrix which will be used along with the other three MAPP assessments during the strategic planning phase of the MAPP process.

Findings

Participants who attended the Forces of Change Assessment identified 14 unique forces worthy of discussion to identify threats posed and opportunities created. (Over 20 forces were initially identified, but some were combined to eliminate duplication.) The following table includes the final forces that were selected and threats/opportunities identified by the group.

Forces of Change Matrix

Category	Forces	Threats Posed	Opportunities Created
Political	Conservative Climate	Uncertainty surrounding funding sources	Increase transparency of public health program intentions
	Distrust of government	Public health interventions being perceived as intrusive	Strengthen community partnerships Engage the community in activities to change perception Craft interventions that balance public interest with individual autonomy
	Election Year	Funding decisions based on political expediency	Advocate for prioritizing funding for health interventions upstream
Social	Aging Population	Growing need for services among the elderly Lack of younger workers to drive economic growth Limited tax revenues from senior citizens	Support employment opportunities for young people Advocate for innovative solutions to help elderly population
	Reliance on law enforcement for social issues	Widespread negative perceptions and distrust of law enforcement	Educate on scope and limitation of law enforcement authority
	Increased demand for mental health services	Limited beds in hospitals for mental health patients Overwhelmed and underprepared healthcare system Heavy downstream focus	Reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues Collaborate with hospitals and other stakeholders to address the problem Advocate for more upstream intervention

Forces of Change Matrix Continued

Category	Forces	Threats Posed	Opportunities Created
Economic	State of the national and local economy	Negative public perception following economic downturn Housing displacement Risk of losing funding	Diversify workforce Prepare youth for the jobs of the future Innovate and prioritize more efficiently Bolster a local public health system that persists during a downturn
	Lack of affordable housing	Too much income spent on housing and less money available for other necessities Higher rates of homelessness Lack of economic diversity as lower income individuals are priced out Difficulty attracting professionals to the community More closing of neighborhood schools	Research forces affecting the housing market Educate people on housing rights Support affordable housing policies/ordinances Support private sector incentives to build affordable homes Develop and nurture relationships with pertinent stakeholders in planning and health sectors Promote social determinants of health and whole person care
	Access to health care	Poor health outcomes related to limited access to obstetrician care Lack of providers that accept Medi-Cal and Denti-Cal Healthcare industry driven by profit	Educate people on community resources for available health services Strengthen partnerships with community-based organizations Increase number of healthcare service providers (ex. dental assistants, physician assistants, etc.)
	Hospital/medical services market consolidation	Too many healthcare providers fall under the same decision maker Inability to tailor services based on population need	Strengthen partnerships with health care administration to ensure a shared vision is formed

Forces of Change Matrix Continued

Category	Forces	Threats Posed	Opportunities Created
Environmental	Climate Change/Global Warming	<p>Increased number of wildfires</p> <p>Poorer air quality</p> <p>Tremendous strain on resources fighting fires</p> <p>Prolonged drought</p>	<p>Increase awareness of community members about their impact on the environment</p> <p>Strengthen preparedness activities, particularly for vulnerable populations</p> <p>Partner with key environmental specialists to develop evidence-based interventions</p>
	Emerging Communicable Diseases	<p>Lack of preparation by healthcare providers to address these diseases</p> <p>Insufficient knowledge about courses of treatment</p>	<p>Strengthen surveillance systems to track disease progression</p> <p>Enhance communication system between healthcare providers, local public health department, and community</p>
Legal	Affordable Care Act	<p>Healthcare access disparities</p> <p>Limited providers taking ACA, Medi-Cal, or Denti-Cal</p>	<p>Develop and implement more community-based health interventions</p>
	Decriminalization of Marijuana	<p>Potential for increased mental health issues</p> <p>Uncertainty surrounding long-term effects</p> <p>Greater safety concerns</p>	<p>Educate in school, home, and community</p> <p>Engage community to understand the effects of marijuana</p> <p>Increase youth awareness by collaborating and engaging youth in prevention activities</p>

Appendix 1 – Forces of Change Assessment Presentation

FORCES OF CHANGE

ASSESSMENT

2016

County of Placer
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
PLACER COUNTY

OBJECTIVE

To brainstorm the *external forces* (good or bad) out of our control that affect our community and identify the associated threats and/or opportunities.

LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

TYPES OF FORCES

- **Trends** - Patterns over time - ex. migration in/out of community.
- **Factors** - Discrete elements - ex. proximity to large city.
- **Events** - One time occurrence - ex. wildfire, new policy.

What events have occurred recently that may affect our community's health and well-being?

What is likely to occur in the future?

Are there any trends occurring that will have an impact?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

CATEGORIES

- Political
- Economic
- Legal
- Social
- Environmental
- Technological

Force	Threat	Opportunity
Increased Mental Health Issues	Higher Demand for Services	Community-based Mental Health Services

IDENTIFYING THREATS & OPPORTUNITIES

NEXT STEPS

- Core team will compile results into a report.
- Report will be made widely available.
- Results will be used to inform health improvement planning

Appendix 2: Forces of Change Brainstorming Worksheet



Forces of Change Brainstorming Worksheet

This worksheet is designed for attendees to use in preparing for the Forces of Change brainstorming session.

What are Forces of Change?

Forces are a broad all-encompassing category that includes trends, events, and factors.

- **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, a rural 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

Think about external forces (good or bad) you cannot control that affect the local public health system or community. Use the questions below to guide you.

- What events have occurred recently that may affect our community's health and wellbeing?
- What is *likely* to occur in the future?
- Are there any trends occurring that *will* have an impact?

Using the information above, list brainstormed forces, including factors, events, and trends. Continue onto back page if needed.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____