

# An Introduction to Community Health



# Background

Community Health workers are called upon to help individuals and families identify the different elements of health in their environment, provide information encourages healthy behaviors and support the collective actions that improve health for everyone.

# After this training, CHWs will be able to...

- Describe the characteristics of a community
- Define community health and public health
- Discuss the differences between community health and personal health
- Describe factors that affect community health
- Discuss Healthy People 2020 and how its goals are related to community health

# What is Health?

“ Health is the complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

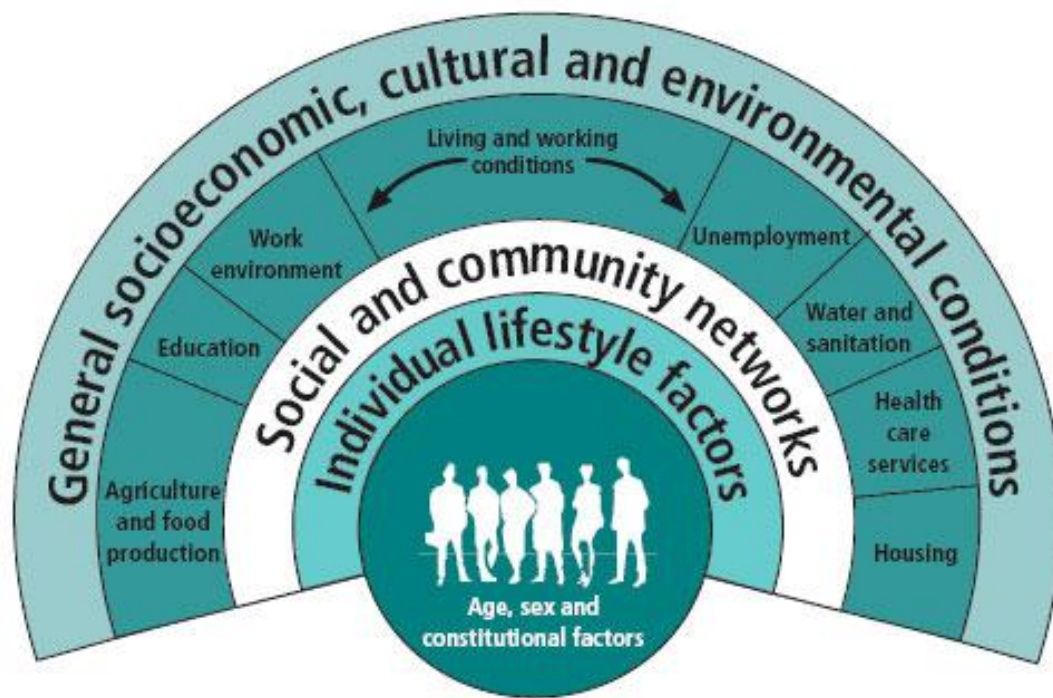
- World Health Organization (WHO) circa 1946

# Health Activity

| Physical | Mental | Social |
|----------|--------|--------|
|          |        |        |

# Factors that Determine Health

- Genetics
- Environment
- Social Circumstances
- Behavioral Choices
- Availability of quality health care



# What is Community?

A group of people who have common characteristics; can be defined by location, race, ethnicity, age, occupation, interest, or other common bond.

Name 3 communities you belong to.

# Characteristics of Communities

- Membership
- Community symbol system
- Shared values and norms
- Mutual influence
- Shared needs and commitment
- Shared emotional connection

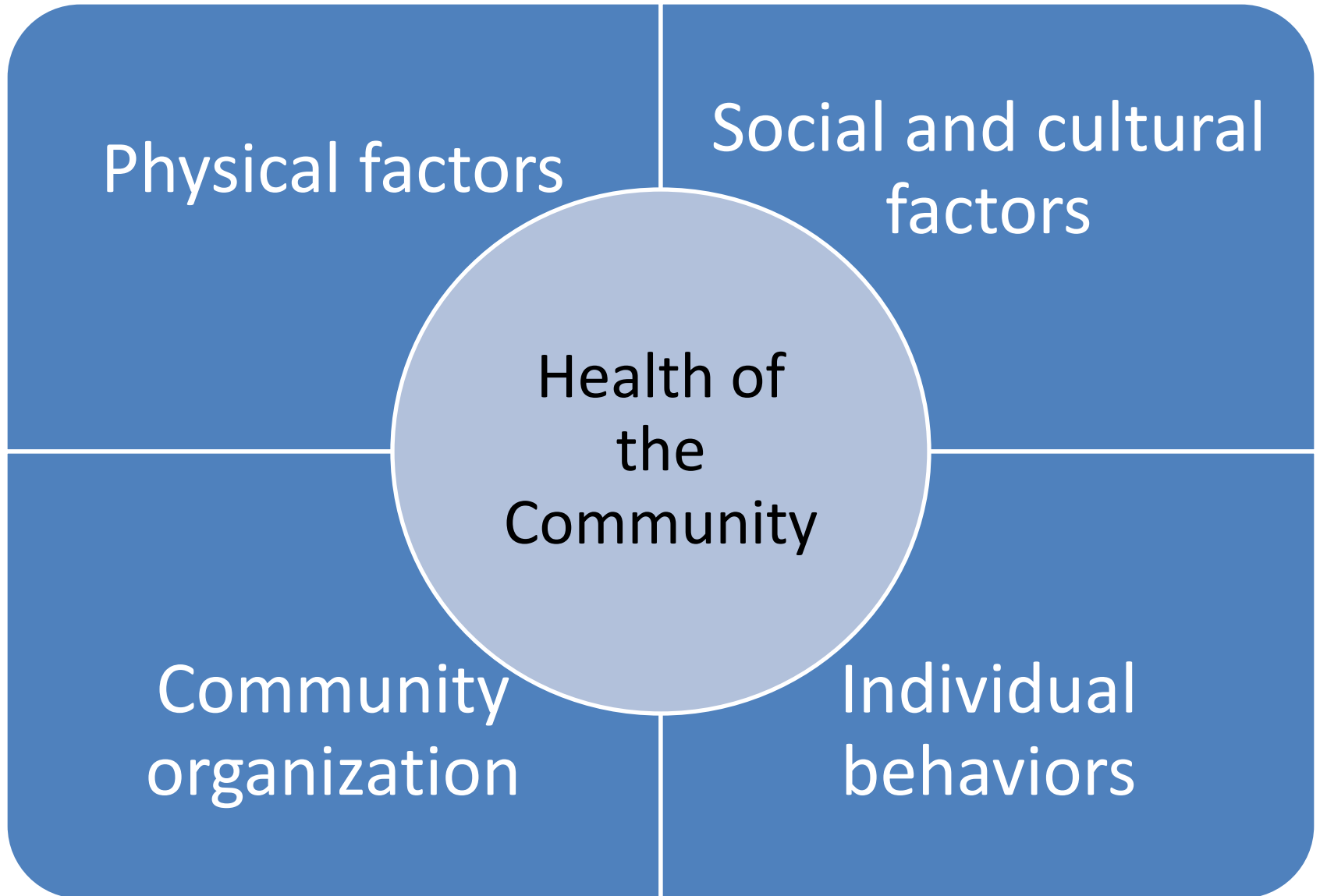
# Community Health vs Public Health

- Community Health
  - The health status of a defined group of people and conditions to promote, protect, and preserve their health.
- Public Health
  - What we as a society do collectively to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy.

# Community Health vs Personal Health

- Personal health activities
  - Individual actions and decision making that affects the health of an individual or his or her immediate family members or friends.
- Community health activities
  - Aimed at protecting or improving the health of a population or community.

# Factors Affecting Community Health



# Factors Affecting Community Health

- Physical factors – geography, environment, community size, industrial development
- Social and cultural factors – beliefs, traditions, and prejudices; economics, politics, religion, socioeconomic status, social norms
- Community organization – identify problems, mobilize resources, work toward change
- Individual behaviors – takes the effort of many to improve community health

# Physical Factors

- Geography – health problems can be directly influenced by its altitude, latitude and climate; place matters
- Environment – the quality of our environment is directly related to how we take care of the environment; communities are affected unequally (environmental justice)
- Community Size – the size of a community can have both a positive and negative impact on health
- Industrial Development – provides community with resources; laws controlling negative impacts are usually passed after community has suffered

# Social and Cultural Factors

- Beliefs – is smoking really bad for you?
- Traditions – influences types of food and services available
- Prejudices – health disparities; institutional racism affects health
- Religion – some actively address moral and ethical issues such as abortion, premarital sex, homosexuality

# Social and Cultural Factors

- Economy – an economic downturn means fewer dollars for health care and social services
- Politics – people in political office can improve or jeopardize health of their constituents
- Social Norms – generalized peer pressure; example – smoking in public places
- Socioeconomic status – defined by education, employment, or income

# Community Organization

- Process through which communities identify common problems/opportunities, mobilize resources and implement strategies to reach goals
- Ability to organize resources directly impacts ability to solve problems
- Democratic
- More art than science

# Individual Behavior

- If each person in the community is healthy then the community is healthy.
- Examples – seat belts, recycling, bicycle helmets
- Herd immunity – if most people in a community are immunized then less people are exposed
- Least effective

# Community Health Today

- Health care delivery – Affordable Care Act
- Environmental problems – global warming
- Lifestyle diseases – chronic disease
- Communicable diseases – leading cause of missed school and work
- Alcohol and other drug abuse – associated with unintentional injuries, domestic violence and violent crime
- Health disparities – difference in health among different populations
- Disasters – public health preparedness

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## About Healthy People

Healthy People provides science-based, 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. For 3 decades, Healthy People has established benchmarks and monitored progress over time in order to:

- Encourage collaborations across communities and sectors.
- Empower individuals toward making informed health decisions.
- Measure the impact of prevention activities.



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[Watch a short video](#) to see how Healthy People 2020 is inspiring action across the Nation.

[View Transcript \[PDF - 111 KB\]](#)

### Introducing Healthy People 2020

Healthy People 2020 continues in this tradition with the launch on December 2, 2010 of its ambitious, yet achievable, 10-year agenda for improving the Nation's health. Healthy People 2020 is the result of a multiyear process that reflects input from a diverse group of individuals and organizations. [Read the press release for the Healthy People 2020 launch. \[PDF - 149 KB\]](#)

#### Vision

A society in which all people live long, healthy lives.

#### Mission

Healthy People 2020 strives to:

- Identify nationwide health improvement priorities.
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the determinants of health, disease, and disability and the opportunities for progress.

# Healthy People 2020 Goals

- Attain high-quality, longer lives free of preventable disease, disability, injury, and premature death.
- Achieve health equity, eliminate disparities, and improve health of all groups.
- Create social and physical environments that promote good health for all.
- Promote quality of life, healthy development, and healthy behaviors across all life stages

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Now available! Recording of the Healthy People 2020 eLearning webinar, "[Measuring Policy and Environmental Change in Obesity Prevention](#)." Continuing education available upon completion.

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