



HAYS COUNTY LOCAL
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE ONE | MARCH 2023

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Community Health Assessment kicks off in Hays County

The Hays County Local Health Department has engaged Initium Health, a Denver-based healthcare consulting firm, to conduct a community health assessment.

The community health assessment officially kicked off on February 27 with a welcome meeting for the steering committee, a group of key leaders in the community who will steer the process and be a voice for the groups they serve in the coming months. On March 1, a community visioning session was held at the San Marcos Public Library. Residents came out from all over Hays County.

This visioning session was held to come to a consensus of all neighborhoods, ages and interest groups on what a healthy Hays County should look and feel like. Following the session, a vision statement will be developed to help facilitate a comprehensive assessment on areas that need improvement. Contact us today to find out how you can be involved in the Community Health Assessment.

CONTACT US

LOCALHEALTHHECE@CO.HAYS.TX.US

Events this month

March 18: Hays Latinos United Vaccine Clinic | 12 - 3 pm | Gemstone Palace in Kyle, TX

March 25: Wimberley Valley Emergency Preparedness Fair | 10 am - 2 pm | VFW Fairgrounds in Wimberley, TX

March 25: Buda Public Library Spring Fling | 10:30 am - 12 pm | Buda Public Library

March 25: Hays Latinos United Vaccine Clinic | 12 - 3 pm | Gemstone Palace in Kyle, TX

March 29: Simon Middle School Parent Breakfast | 8 - 9 am | Simon Middle School

What is a Community Health Assessment?

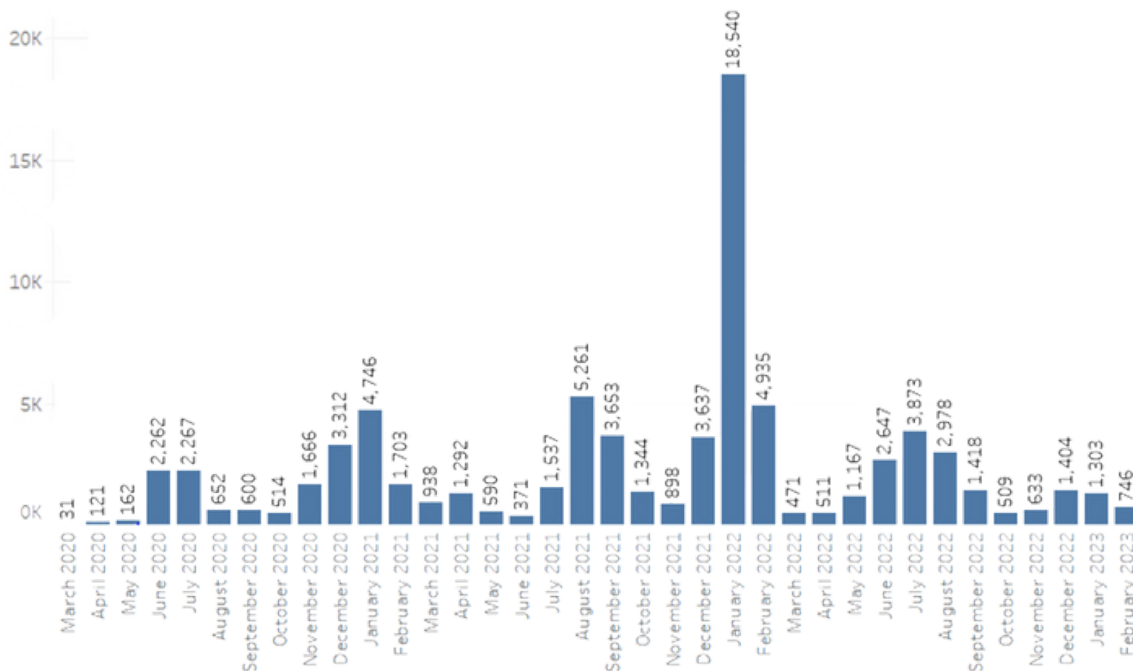
A community health assessment, or community health needs assessments, is an assessment of a jurisdiction's key health needs and issues. The assessment collects and analyzes the data in a systematic manner. Community health assessments lead to the development of a community health improvement plan. The plan is a long-term effort to address the identified problems. There are a variety of methods to conduct a community health assessment. (Centers for Disease Control) The Hays County Local Health Department

is using the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) method. The process creates accountability between the facilitating MAPP organization and the partners and encourages the engagement and education of participants. (National Association for City and County Health Officials) This assessment and method is important for Hays County. We are the fastest growing county in the nation. We must lay the foundation for addressing the public's concerns of health, so that we can equitably respond to issues as they arise.

COVID CORNER

COVID-19 Monthly Case Totals:

March 11th marks the three-year anniversary of the first COVID case in Hays County. Although much has changed since then, COVID is still affecting our lives and will be for the foreseeable future.



Is COVID Over?

Unfortunately, the pandemic is not over. Although COVID is likely here to stay, it is still very unpredictable so cannot be considered endemic. A disease is considered endemic when there is a constant and predictable level of disease in a community.

When looking at the above graph, we can see that Hays County continues to see outbreaks on a unpredictable basis. COVID has not settled into any seasonal patterns. This same scenario is playing out across the world. This wide geographical reach is what constitutes a continuing pandemic.

Because no single intervention is going to be 100% effective in preventing COVID, it is important to use several layers of protection to reduce your chances of getting sick:

- Stay up to date with vaccination
- Use high-quality masks (N95, KN95, or KF94) in crowded indoor areas
- Quarantine at home if you are sick and encourage others to do the same
- Improve indoor air quality through better ventilation and filtration
- Wash your hands

EPIDEMIOLOGIST INSIGHTS

Indoor Air Quality

The most common way that COVID-19 is transmitted is through tiny airborne particles of the virus. These spread through the air when an infected person exhales (while breathing, coughing, speaking, etc.). The aerosol particles can spread throughout a room and linger in the air.

Improving indoor air quality can reduce the spread of COVID-19. Two key strategies to improve indoor air quality are ventilation and filtration. Ventilation pulls fresh outdoor air into indoor space, thus reducing the concentration of airborne pollutants and viruses. Filtration removes pollutants and viruses from indoor air by trapping them in a filter.

Use the following strategies to reduce exposure to airborne disease:

Increase fresh air flow (ventilation):

- Open a window or door. If you have a portable fan, place it near the window blowing out
- Increase the amount of outdoor air that is pulled in by your HVAC system
- Run the exhaust fan in your bathroom

Clean indoor air (filtration):

- Use high efficiency filters in your HVAC system (MERV 13 or higher). Consult your HVAC manual or a specialist to determine if your system can handle the high efficiency filters.
- Use portable HEPA filters
- Make a DIY box fan filter at home

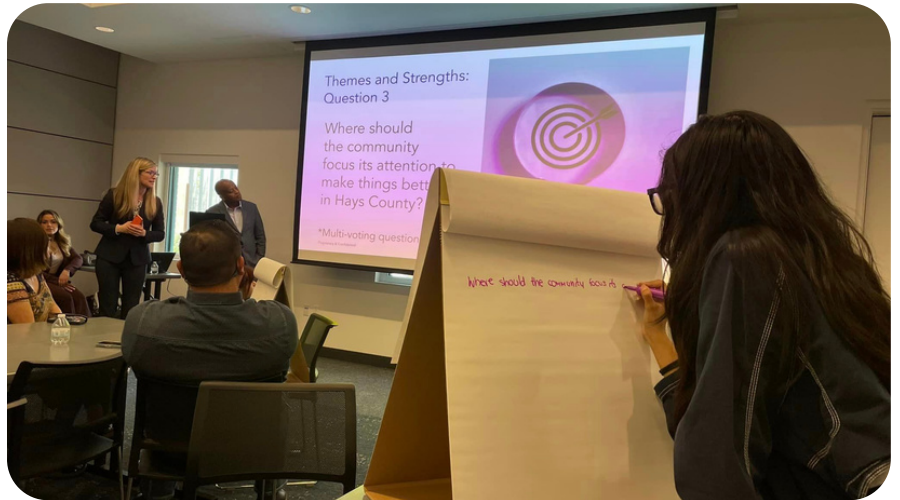




Above: HCLHD Program Manager Matthew Gonzales and Community Outreach Specialist Austin Baier at the 4th Annual Buda Black History Celebration. Left: Intern Johana Fuentes scribing during the Community Visioning Session.



Thank you to everyone that attended our Community Visioning Session on March 1! Above is a photo of the hard workers who helped make this event a success. Shoutout to our awesome interns, employees, and Initium Health!



Hays County Local Health Department

- Epidemiology
- Indigent Health Care
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness
- Tuberculosis Program
- Immunization Monitoring Program
- Community Health

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HAYS COUNTY

SUMMER HEALTH FAIR

JUNE 10TH, 2023

8am-3pm (9am-2pm for the public)

The Hays County Local Health Department wants you to join us in improving our community's health. Consider attending our Summer Health Fair as a vendor to share your services and resources with the people of Hays County!

RANCH PARK & EVENT CENTER

1042 Event Center Dr, Dripping Springs, TX 78620



Scan QR Code to sign-up to be a vendor! For more information, contact Austin Baier at Austin.Baier@co.hays.tx.us or 712-444-6876.

HAYS COUNTY LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT ESSAY COMPETITION



JANUARY 1 - MARCH 12, 2023

**6 STUDENTS WILL WIN A
MACBOOK AIR!
INTERESTED STUDENTS
CAN APPLY HERE:**



CONTACT US!

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