



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Work Plan Quarterly Report

1st Quarter

*March
2009*

Planning and Evaluation Division



COMMON GROUND

Creating Equity through Public Policy and Community Engagement



1.0 Executive Summary

This Health and Human Services Quarterly Report for the first quarter of 2009 provides the history, process, accomplishments and status of the Health and Human Services Departments, specific to Focus Areas 1 and 2 of the Board of Commissioners Work Plan, and the *Common Ground* philosophy of service delivery.

Health Disparities Report

In April 2008, the Georgia Department of Community Health's Office of Health Improvement and the Minority Health Advisory Council released "Health Disparities Report 2008: A County-Level Look at Health Outcomes for Minorities in Georgia". The report, which was developed in support of the Georgia Health Equity Initiative, defines health disparities as "differences in health status among distinct segments of the population including differences that occur by gender, race or ethnicity, education or income, disability, or living in various geographic localities." Counties were assessed and provided a letter grade in seven key minority health outcome categories.

While Fulton County received a 'C' or below in five of the seven categories, the overall score for Fulton County was an "F".

Fulton County Minority Health Report Card by Outcome Category

Minority Health Outcomes	Grade
Illness Events (Hospital Admits & Emergency Visits)	D - Poor Outcomes Made Worse by Extremely Severe Racial Inequality
Social and Economic Indicators	C - Below-Average Outcomes with Moderately High Racial Inequality, or Above-Average Outcomes but Severe Racial Inequality
Mental Health Care Access	C - Below-Average Outcomes with Moderately High Racial Inequality, or Above-Average Outcomes but Severe Racial Inequality
Mortality (Deaths)	F - Extremely Poor Outcomes and/or Extremely Severe Racial Inequality
Physician Racial-Ethnic Diversity	B - Above-Average Outcomes but Some Racial Inequality
Prenatal Care & Birth Outcomes	D - Poor Outcomes Made Worse by Extremely Severe Racial Inequality
Primary Care Access	B - Above-Average Outcomes but Some Racial Inequality



Board of Commissioners Response

In response to this compelling assessment, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners developed a resolution (Item No.09-0160 dated 01/21/2009) establishing a policy to support the administrative efforts to reduce health disparities throughout the County. The resolution establishes the framework for refocusing Fulton County's efforts to address health disparities and includes: (1) a commitment to assist the community in understanding the causes of health disparities; (2) determine the most effective inter-departmental strategies for reducing health disparities; and, (3) develop effective partnerships with stakeholders from the health and non-health sector.

This quarterly report responds to these three components. The Resolution and the FY09 Fulton County Budget were both adopted in late January 2009 and this quarterly report showcases the progress of the Health and Human Services agencies since their adoption. In an effort to keep the Board of Commissioners apprised of these and other activities that support the Health Disparities Resolution, this quarterly report includes accomplishments realized during the first quarter of 2009, updated action plans completed by the Health and Human Services Agency departments, marketing efforts undertaken to educate the community about health disparities and factors that cause them, supplemental information describing the significance of the activities and how they connect to the Board's focus areas and goals, the identification of stakeholders in the health and non-health sectors, as well as action steps for next quarter.

Efforts to further the three components of the framework established within the Board resolution are detailed in the document as well. Elements 1 and 3, which highlight the County's commitment to assist the community in understanding the causes of health disparities, as well as the development of effective partnerships with stakeholders from the health and non-health sector are discussed in Section 3.0 - Health Disparities Awareness Marketing and Outreach. Strategies in response to element 2, which is to determine the most effective inter-departmental strategies for reducing health disparities, are detailed in the following section.

Common Ground

A New Approach to Service Delivery: Common Ground is the County's solution for addressing health disparities in our communities. It is the guiding philosophy that will mitigate the social determinants of health which impact our residents and our communities. The key to the Common Ground approach is to understand those issues which impact particular areas (such as poverty rates, literacy rates, obesity rates, foreclosures and abandoned properties, prevalence of disease, etc.) and to work with our community partners to address those issues. The approach in Mechanicsville may differ from that in Adamsville, South Fulton or Sandy Springs. Community-oriented primary care will be provided in settings which allow for access to human services that allow for a holistic approach to client services.



County leadership identified an opportunity to improve the coordination of services to insure greater access to health care and other social services and directed the Health and Human Services Agency departments to investigate actions that could be taken to optimize service delivery. This task evolved into an extensive strategic initiative resulting in the development of a proposal to address inequities with regard to racial, ethnic and other socioeconomic disparities and their impact on health status. Titled *Common Ground: Creating Equity through Public Policy and Community Engagement*, the proposal embodies a new philosophy for addressing health disparities in communities and includes six targeted opportunities expected to result in positive behavioral change and healthier living in revitalized neighborhoods.

The six initiatives, which will be administered by the Health and Human Services Department agencies, include, but are not limited to:

1. Serving At-Risk Teens (START)
2. Oakhill Mental Health Treatment System
3. North Fulton Community Center
4. South Fulton Community Center
5. Neighborhood Union Primary Care Partnership
6. Intergenerational Communities

As part of the Common Ground philosophy, health centers throughout the County will be refocused to support a seamless continuum of care. Primary care, public health, behavioral health, and human services will be available to our residents in a “one-stop shop”. The focus will be on services provision without regard to the County Department responsible for the provision of services. These artificial departmental lines will be blurred and will not be evident to clients who recognize only that their needs are being met in an efficient and effective manner. The refocusing of the County’s health centers will be done in a tiered approach. Tier I will focus on the North Fulton Community Center for which a feasibility study has been completed and architectural and service delivery plans are being developed. Efforts to conduct a feasibility study for the existing Adamsville Health Center are underway. Tier II will cover facilities, such as the Center for Health and Rehabilitation, where services are currently co-located but opportunities exist for full integration of services. Tier III projects will focus on other centers which require extensive modification such as the Palmetto Health Center, for which the City of Palmetto and Fulton County have partnered to seek funding under the federal stimulus package.

In coordinating efforts to support the six initial opportunities as well as the aforementioned endeavors, additional strategies to streamline internal operations have been created.

A Reinvention of Government: To be successful, Common Ground requires an overhaul of Fulton’s traditional governmental structure. The new structure will tear down the silos represented by the distinct departments in the Health and Human Services Agency through the



creation of a new Health and Human Services Agency under one shared leadership team and one shared vision. Through the development of the Health and Human Services Agency, Fulton County government will experience economic efficiencies as a result of enhanced service coordination, a restructured continuum of care, uniform intake tools and techniques, modernized client tracking mechanisms, and enhanced transparency.

The organizational chart on the following page illustrates the planned restructuring.