

2005

# Community Health Needs Assessment

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## Bay County's Health Status

Bay County has a higher rate of chronic diseases and a higher rate of uninsured residents compared to the state of Florida. These high rates led to the formation of The Community Health Task Force in 1996. To determine the reasons behind the high numbers, the Community Health Task Force conducted a community health needs assessment, which was used to develop a strategic health plan for the community.

### Main Ways to Improve Health Status

**The Community Health Task Force also identified the community's primary ways to improve our health status:**

- Increasing access to quality healthcare
- Reducing the risk of chronic disease through healthier lifestyle choices

The information in this report is presented to help raise awareness of the true state of health in our community. Only with full understanding of the problems, can we begin to develop a healthier community and improve the quality of life in Bay County. Community health is not a simple problem, and there is no simple solution.



*The Community Health Task Force conducted the Community Health Needs Assessment to identify Bay County's health needs. By working to meet these health needs, the county can develop a healthier community and improve the quality of life for all residents.*

Measures to address specific, identified problems have resulted in some improvements, but we still have many issues to resolve.

## Chronic Diseases In Bay County Higher Than State

According to the Florida Department of Health the top 10 major causes of death in Bay County in 2004 were:

1. Heart Disease
2. Cancer
3. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
4. Unintentional Injuries
5. Stroke
6. Diabetes
7. Alzheimer's Disease
8. Pneumonia/Influenza
9. Suicide
10. Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis

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*The top three causes of death in 2004 were heart disease, cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.*

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Many of these causes of death are chronic diseases, such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Chronic diseases are marked by a

long duration and are generally not cured by medicine or prevented by vaccine. However behaviors such as eating well and exercising can help prevent these diseases.

The costs of chronic diseases are high. They can prevent people from working and enjoying life. People with chronic diseases have an increased risk for spending more time in a hospital and needing longterm care.

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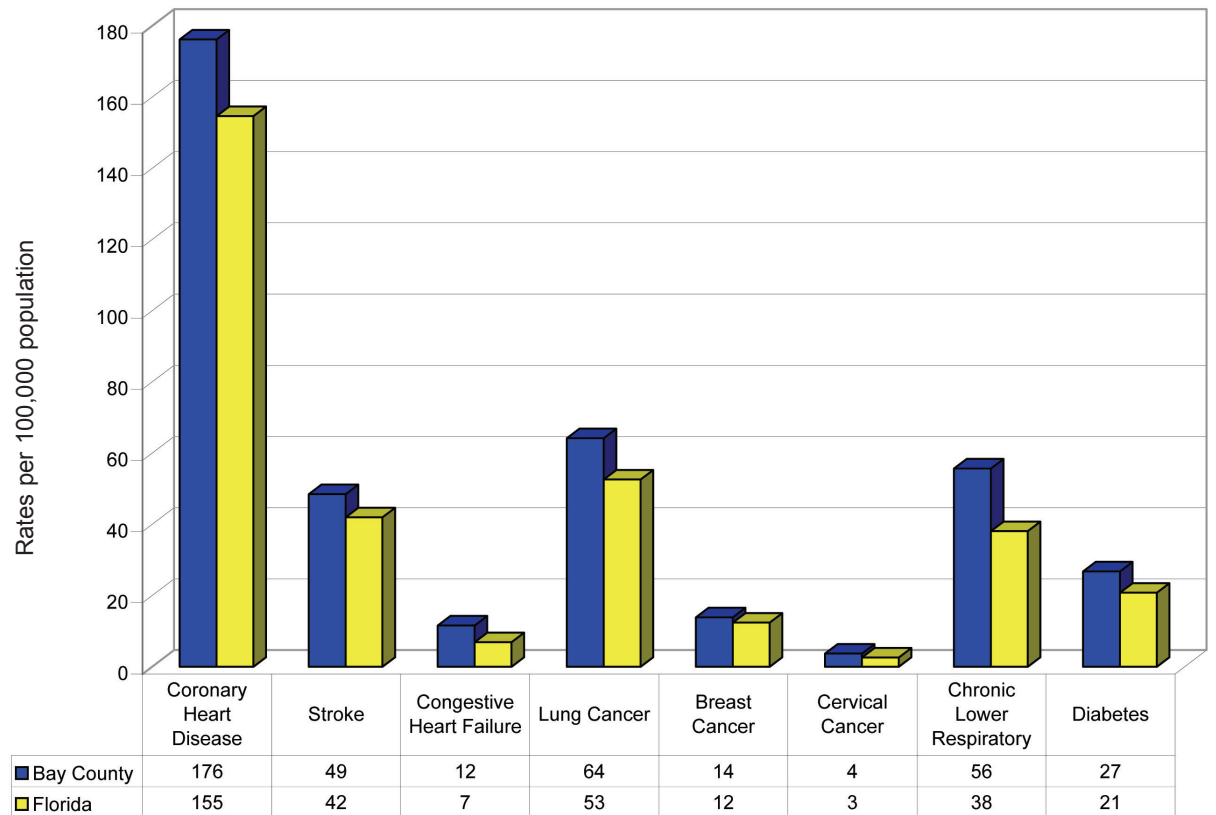
## Chronic Diseases continued from page 1

**Bay County Has Higher Than Average Rates of Chronic Diseases**  
According to the Florida Department of Health's Bay County Chronic Disease Profile, Bay County had higher age-adjusted rates of deaths per 100,000 and age-adjusted rates of hospitalization and incidence per 100,000 related to many chronic diseases compared to the state of Florida from 2002 to 2004. The graphs on this page illustrate those rates.

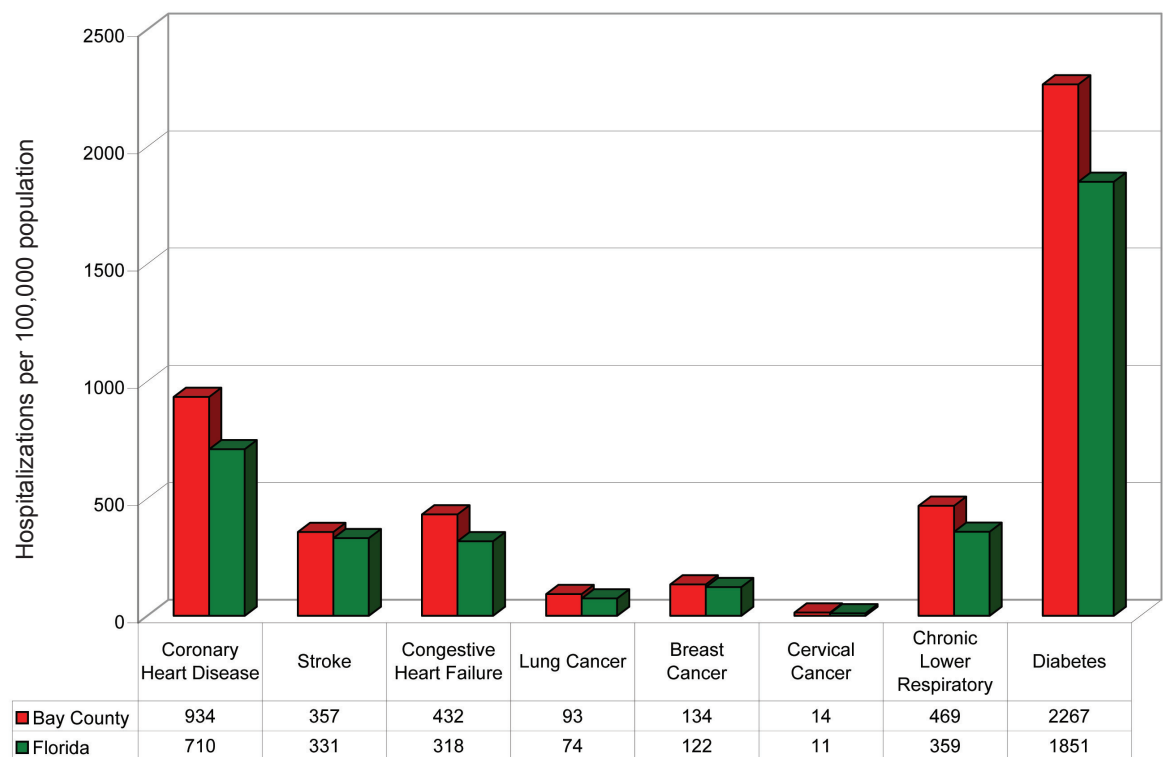
The county had a lower rate of age-adjusted deaths compared to Florida in only three of the 11 diseases in the profile: colorectal cancer, prostate cancer and skin cancer. The county also had a lower age-adjusted incidence rate for prostate cancer. However, the county's age-adjusted incidence rates in colorectal cancer and skin cancer were higher.

Bay County's high rates of chronic diseases compared to Florida are a cause for concern.

**Age-Adjusted Death Rates**



**Age Adjusted Hospitalization Rates by Selected Conditions**



*Compared to Florida, Bay County had higher age-adjusted death rates and age-adjusted hospitalization rates related to coronary heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure, lung cancer, breast cancer, cervical cancer, chronic lower respiratory diseases and diabetes from 2002 to 2004.*

**This assessment was completed by The Community Health Task Force**

**In cooperation with the following community partners:**

Bay Medical Center

Gulf Coast Medical Center

AARP

Bay County Health Department

Northwest Florida and Big Bend Health Councils

Church and civic groups

# Lack of Healthcare Coverage Contributes to Poor Health Status

The lack of healthcare coverage is a growing concern among all healthcare professionals and is reflected in the increase in charity services provided by area hospitals and physicians. Estimates from a 2003 report by The Market Planner Plus, "Solucient," place the number of uninsured in Bay County at almost 21 percent.

As the cost of healthcare rises, so does the number of the uninsured in our area. Often full-time employees are uninsured because medical insurance is not offered through their companies. Other times the premiums are too high and basic necessities, such as rent and food, must be paid before they can afford medical insurance. In addition, some individuals are considered uninsurable because of high health risks, and medication is often not covered by insurance.

Bay County is experiencing rapid population growth due in part to a real estate boom in Panama City Beach. A majority of jobs created by this boom are in construction and the service industry, which frequently do not offer insurance.

As cost to provide healthcare has risen, so has the cost of health insurance. This increased cost has forced many employers to drop health insurance for their employees and the number of uninsured in Bay County has continued to increase. This has created a large population that often delays seeking medical care.

According to a survey highlighted in the Florida Health Insurance Study in 2004, more than one-third of those without health insurance (42 percent) reported delaying or not obtaining needed medical care. Among those with coverage, less than half as many (about 13 percent) reported such deferrals.

Of those that carry health insurance, many are underinsured and unable to pay the co-pays and/or deductibles when they encounter a serious problem. Due to the high cost of



***Approximately 21 percent of Bay County's population is uninsured, however lack of healthcare coverage affects everyone in our community. Even those with insurance are feeling the impact of the shortage of physicians in many specialties with Medicaid clients being denied services due to the low reimbursement rates.***

medications, many cannot afford to purchase them when prescribed. Even those with health insurance are feeling the impact of the shortage of physicians in many specialties, with Medicaid clients being denied services due to the low reimbursement rates.

A community with uninsured people affects everyone. Attracting new physicians is challenging when a large number of people in the community lack healthcare coverage. When people do not have health insurance they often delay seeking medical treatment, which can lead to serious complications or chronic diseases. These diseases are costly and affect people's quality of life.

## *The Gap in Coverage*

Nationally eight out of 10 uninsured are in working families. Many workers are offered healthcare, but some refused due to high costs. Employees paid 63 percent more for insurance than in 2001. According to an article published in the October 2005 Home Care Automation Report, Starbucks Coffee Company CEO says his company will pay more for health insurance than for coffee beans in 2006. Further, a study by Harvard University researchers found that 50 percent of all bankruptcy filings were partly due to medical bills. Lost employee work time from sickness cost small businesses due to lost productivity and retraining.

*According to information received from Curtis Williams, M.D., Medical Director for St. Andrew Medical Center*

## *Who Qualifies for Medicaid?*

While Medicaid covers some individuals and families, many are not covered. Three basic groups are eligible for Medicaid:

- Supplemental Security Income recipients (disabled adults or individuals age 65 or older)
- Children and families
- Aged, blind and disabled people needing institutional care

Single or married adults without children are not generally covered regardless of income or employment status.

# Community Health Needs Survey

To help develop a strategic health plan, the Community Health Task Force performed a Community Health Needs Assessment, which was completed in 1998. The Community Health Task Force then conducted health surveys in 2004 of more than 640 randomly selected Bay County residents, representing a diverse cross-section of the population.

The Community Health Needs Survey responses indicate the impact of being uninsured or underinsured as well as showing the lack of public awareness of challenges that face our community. These challenges include changing policies, behaviors and the physical environment of the community.

When asked where they usually go for medical treatment, 36 percent of the respondents stated

## Top 10 Health Concerns

1. Cost of Medications
2. Health Insurance Cost
3. Dental Needs
4. Environmental Pollution
5. Substance Abuse
6. Tobacco Use/Secondhand Smoke
7. Ability to Find Physician
8. School Health Issues
9. Heart Disease/Stroke Needs
10. Transportation for Medical Care

they go to a doctor's office, compared to 70 percent of the respondents in a similar survey in 1998. Thirty-three percent of the respondents stated they go to an

emergency room, and 16 percent go to a walk-in clinic. (See the graph below to the left.)

The responses indicated that more than 25 percent of those surveyed delayed seeking medical care during the past year because they could not afford it, had no primary care physician, had no insurance or had no transportation. (See the graph below to the right.)

About 82 percent of the respondents that had seen a doctor in the past year were prescribed medication. Twenty-four percent were not able to take the medication as directed. The most common reason was due to lack of insurance coverage.

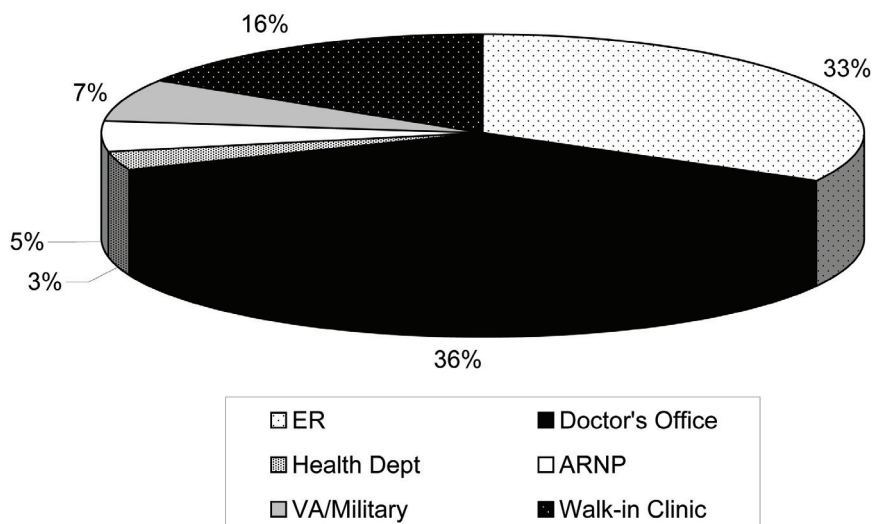
Twenty-four percent of the survey respondents indicated they had no healthcare coverage. In 1998,

only 16 percent of the survey respondents had no healthcare coverage. More than 24 percent of the 2004 survey respondents had Medicaid and almost 24 percent had Medicare. About 12 percent had military coverage.

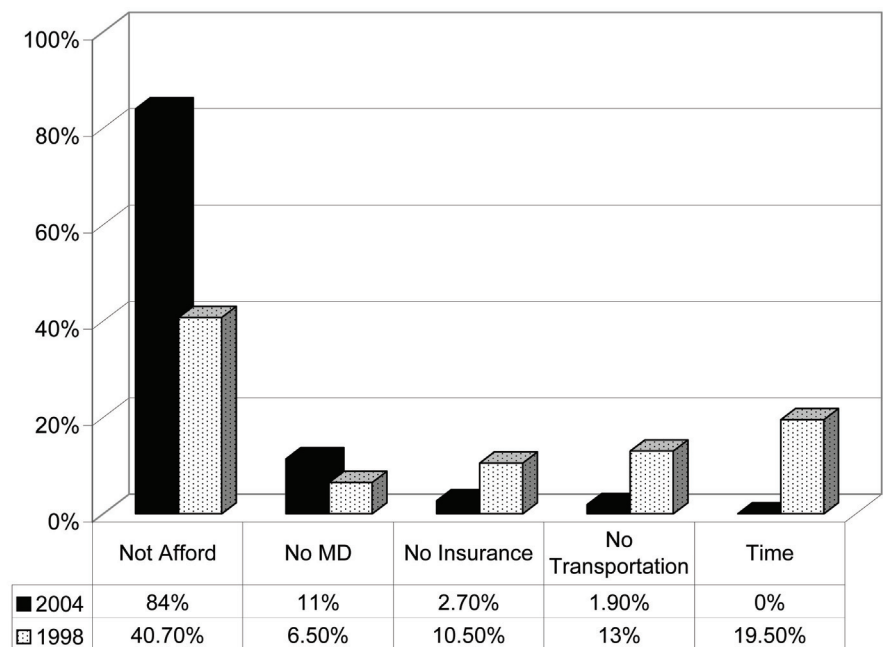
Respondents were also asked what were the most important changes that they would like to see in healthcare services. The top three responses were free or cheap medication, affordable healthcare and cheaper insurance.

When asked to rank their top health concerns, the respondents' top choices were health insurance cost, cost of medication and dental needs. The survey responses indicate the impact of being uninsured or underinsured.

**Medical Care Choices**



**Reasons Survey Participants Did Not Seek Medical Care**



# Community Healthcare Services

## Bay County Health Department

597 West 11th Street, Panama City, FL 32401 (850) 872-4455

The Bay County Health Department offers a range of services from healthcare to health promotion and education.

**Clinic** – The Bay County Health Department includes a team of clinicians that provide high quality service and care to the citizens of Bay and surrounding counties. These services range from primary to specialized care. Services include immunizations, testing and treatment of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), family planning, abnormal Pap smears, pregnancy testing, breast and cervical cancer screening, school physicals, and hepatitis testing. Care for patients with TB and HIV/AIDS is also provided.

**HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases** – The HIV/AIDS program in Bay County provides intervention and education programs on HIV/AIDS, STDs, and hepatitis prevention, intervention and education. The staff work closely with the Panhandle Area Health Network and BASIC, Inc. of Bay County to provide healthcare for the HIV positive population.

**Abstinence Education** – Freedom 180 staff provide education through the Bay District schools and in local community settings. The focus is on abstinence from sexual encounters, illegal drugs and other destructive decisions.

### **Epidemiology/Rabies Control/ Bioterrorism Response** –

The department investigates animal bites, monitors communicable diseases, and works closely with County Emergency Operations to respond to threats from natural and man-made disasters.

### **Environmental Health** –

Environmental health ensures the safety of drinking water; monitors the beaches, sewage treatment and disposal systems; ensures the safe handling of biomedical waste; conducts health and safety inspections; and responds to natural disasters and bioterrorism incidents.

**WIC** – WIC is a special supplemental nutrition program that provides medical nutrition counseling, nutrition education, breastfeeding support and a monthly package of healthy foods to eligible pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women and their infants, and children up to age five.

**PEPW** – Presumptive Eligibility for Pregnant Women is a Medicaid service that enables a pregnant woman to apply for temporary Medicaid for 45 days to facilitate early entry into prenatal care with a private provider.

### **Tobacco Prevention Program** –

The Tobacco Prevention Program has a mission to involve youth and adults in community tobacco use prevention and control

activities. The Tobacco-Free Partnership supports a number of programs including Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) and adult tobacco cessation classes. SWAT activities empower youth to understand the persuasive intent of the tobacco industry advertising, build leadership skills, and teach responsibility for the choices made in life.

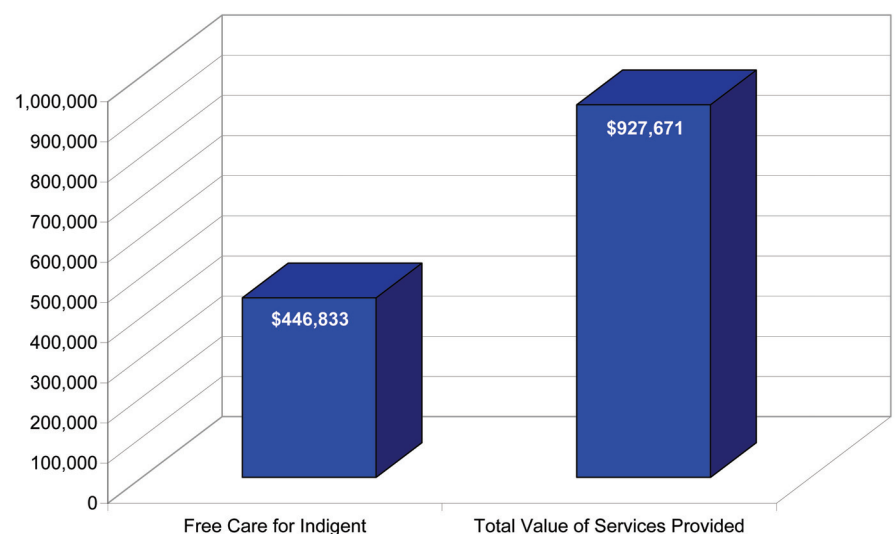
**School Health** – The purpose of the School Health program is to provide services to assess, protect and promote the health status of the 27,000 students in the Bay District Schools. Nurses, social workers and health technicians provide healthcare, case management, communicable disease control, health education, record review, referrals, follow-up and parent teacher conferences.

**Healthy Start** – The purpose of Health Start initiative is to

improve pregnancy outcomes and to reduce fetal and infant mortality. Healthy Start nurses provide case management services and home visits to high-risk pregnant women and infants. Services include prenatal and parenting education, smoking cessation, breastfeeding education and support, family planning, immunization information, developmental follow-up for babies upon discharge from the Neonatal ICU and substance exposed infants. The nurses also provide follow-up for high-risk women who are seen by the Regional Perinatal Intensive Care Unit.

The Bay County Health Department provided almost \$.5 million in free care in 2004. The 43,126 total patient services represent a value of \$927,670.62. This includes amounts billed and the amounts provided for indigent care.

Value of Clinic Services Provided in 2004



## Bay Medical

615 North Bonita Avenue, Panama City, FL 32401 (850) 769-1511

Bay Medical is the area's largest hospital with 413 beds serving a seven-county region. Bay Medical's clinical excellence has been recognized on a national scale including being named one of Solucient's 100 top hospitals in 2005 and receiving accreditation from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations in the treatment of heart attack and stroke. As the area's only not-for-profit hospital, Bay Medical provided 98 percent of all hospital-based charity healthcare in our community during the fiscal year 2004. All of this is accomplished with no tax support from the community. Bay Medical continues to be the largest charitable organization in Bay County. The following is a list of the contributions Bay Medical makes to the community.

### Charity and Uncompensated Care **\$16,555,843**

This is care provided to those who meet charity care guidelines (150 percent of the federal poverty level) or to those who are uninsured or underinsured for which the hospital does not receive payment.

### Net Losses to Provide Medicaid Services **\$3,782,461**

Medicaid covers only a portion of the cost of providing care to low-income patients. The hospital must absorb the costs that are not reimbursed.

### Community Programs and Services **\$759,865**

Bay Medical provides a variety of community health services for which it receives no reimbursements. These services include health education and prevention, support groups, physician referrals and support for not-for-profit agencies.

### Community Health Education Programs **\$115,679**

Bay Medical provides nutritional counseling, childbirth classes, CPR

instruction and numerous health education classes. Screenings for blood pressure, prostate cancer, cholesterol, diabetes and breast cancer are just a sampling of the screenings provided.

### Health Professional Training Programs **\$186,055**

Instructors for mentoring, internships and student training and tuition reimbursement for employees to complete or further their education are all part of the training programs offered at the hospital.

### Funding Support for Local Colleges and Schools **\$20,245**

Bay Medical assists in supporting Gulf Coast Community College and Haney Technical Center by providing matching funds and grants for special health education programs. Funds are specifically used to finance programs in nursing, radiology and respiratory.

### Contributions to the Public Medical Assistance Trust Fund **\$2,048,070**

All hospitals in the state are required to contribute to this fund. Funds are then distributed back to hospitals that have disproportionate volumes of charity care. Funds from Bay Medical are used primarily to subsidize charity hospitals in metropolitan areas of the state.

### General Tax Payments on Commercial Enterprises **\$21,633**

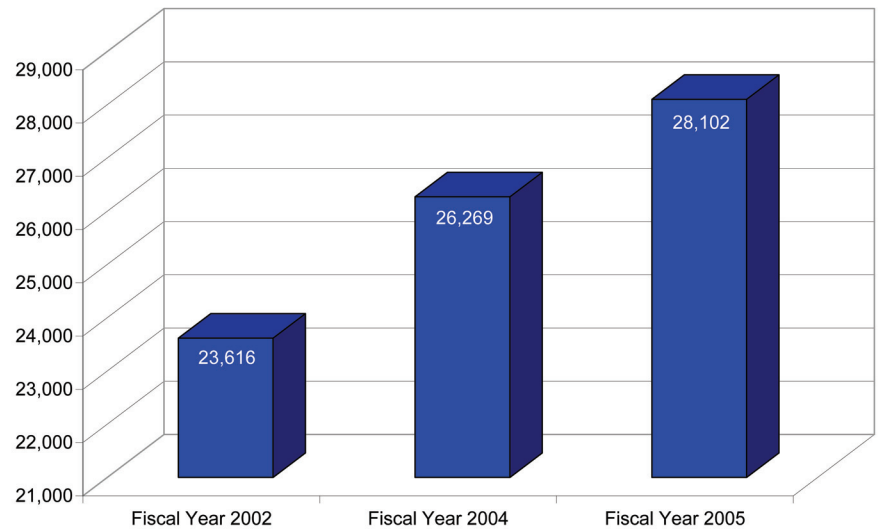
Bay Medical pays property tax on its medical office building and sales tax in its cafeteria and gift shop. Even though services are tax-exempt, the hospital does pay sales and license taxes on some services.

### Miscellaneous Charitable Programs and Services **\$55,148**

Bay Medical supports numerous charitable programs and is not reimbursed for these services including financial planning assistance for patients, training programs for volunteers, senior activities through the BayMed Plus program, social service and rehabilitation opportunities.

### Total Contribution to the Community **\$23,544,949**

Number of Patients With No Insurance



Bay Medical is a not-for-profit hospital and, as such, does not pay taxes on earnings. However, if Bay Medical were required to pay sales tax, ad valorem tax and income tax, the estimated tax liability for FY 2004 would have been \$6,710,333. (Difference between tax exemption and community contribution.)

### Bay Medical's Net Charitable Contribution to the Community: **16,834,616**

Bay Medical receives no tax support to offset this contribution. (Care provided is estimated as actual cost to Bay Medical rather than charges. The Medical Center uses the nationally recognized Catholic Health Care System guidelines for estimating cost of care and other services.)

### 2004

Total Inpatient Admissions	17,911
Outpatient Visits	162,446
Total ER Visits	53,022
Surgical Cases	10,327
Cath Lab Cases	4,392

### Number of Patients Who Had No Insurance (all services): **26,269**

### Number of Patients in the ER Who Had No Insurance: **16,055**

### Bay Medical Behavioral Health Center

Bay Medical Behavioral Health Center is an acute inpatient psychiatric hospital at 1940 Harrison Avenue in Panama City. Bay Medical Behavioral Health Center provides treatment options in the areas of child, adolescent, adult and geriatric psychiatry and accepts individuals from age 3 and older for treatment. Physicians, RNs, LPNs, Mental Health Techs, Recreational Therapy staff and administration/support staff provide psychiatric care for crisis stabilization and treatment. Bay Medical Behavioral Health Center also provides free, confidential assessments 24-hours a day, every day. The number of admissions in fiscal year 2005 was 2,545. Of these, 10.6 percent were self pay. In most cases, these patients did not have insurance and Bay Medical Behavioral Health Center did not receive reimbursement for care.

## Gulf Coast Medical Center

449 West 23rd Street, Panama City, FL 32405 (850) 769-8341

Gulf Coast Medical Center continues providing quality healthcare that is making a difference in the lives of patients and their families. This is accomplished by focusing on three key areas:

- Providing care that is among the best in the nation.
- Expanding the use of innovative technology.
- Hiring employees who are as dedicated to their patients as they are to their families.

As a recipient of the HealthGrades Distinguished Hospital Award for Patient Safety, Gulf Coast Medical Center ranks among the Top 3 percent of hospitals in the nation for patient safety. Gulf Coast is one of only 64 non-teaching hospitals in the nation to receive the award and the only hospital in North Florida.

Another important step in enhancing patient safety is the addition of state-of-the-art bedside technology called Electronic Medication Administration Record (eMAR). In short, eMAR helps clinicians make sure the right patient gets the right medication at the right dose at the right time. The technology, combined with the experience and insight of doctors and nurses, is a major initiative in the national effort to improve the process of care.

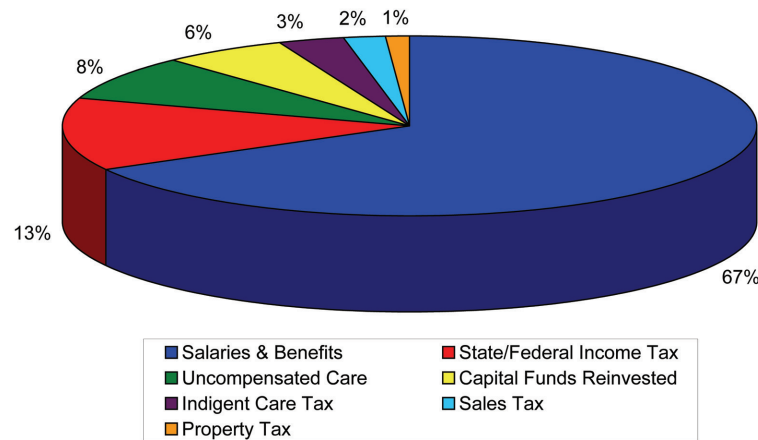
### Community Services

Last year, more than 7,000 individuals and families in Bay,

Calhoun, Gulf, and Washington counties were reached through 55 free health screenings and seminars for employers and community groups. The Community Education Department has developed a partnership with more than 30 of the area's largest employers in an effort to educate employees on many work-related health issues. Members of the Physician Liaison Department at Gulf Coast Medical meet with many physicians in communities around Bay County to inform them of new services, new procedures, and new technology available to their patients.

During community health education programs, simple blood pressure screenings have uncovered dangerously high readings. On many occasions, employees and community members have been encouraged to seek medical attention immediately upon getting their

Gulf Coast Medical Center 2004 Expenses



results. Also, easy-to-perform body mass index screenings are revealing unhealthy levels of obesity, but also provide residents the reason to start making changes in their diet.

### 2004

Outpatient visits	70,703
ER visits	40,753
Admissions	10,534
Surgeries	8,679
Births	2,098
Wages/salaries/benefits:	\$39,378,081
State/federal income tax:	\$7,300,000
Uncompensated care:	\$4,814,454
Capital funds reinvested:	\$3,300,000
Indigent care tax:	\$1,425,828
Sales tax:	\$970,000
Property tax:	\$568,253
Total:	\$57,756,616

### Community Support – Gulf

Coast Medical Center supports a wide variety of local and national organizations dedicated to serving

the healthcare needs of our communities. through generous financial support, valuable volunteer time and sponsorships. During 2004, Gulf Coast Medical Center contributed nearly \$150,000 to organizations such as:

- American Cancer Society
- American Heart Association
- Children's Home Society
- FSU-PC Foundation
- March of Dimes
- Salvation Army
- United Way

### 2004

#### Charity and Uncompensated Care: \$5,040,138

This is the care provided to those who meet charity care guidelines (150 percent of the federal poverty level), or those who are uninsured or underinsured for which Gulf Coast Medical Center does not receive payment.

#### Number of Gulf Coast Medical Center Patients Who Had No Insurance: 8,771

This includes all patients: ER, inpatient, outpatient, diagnostic.

#### Percentage of Patients Who Were Treated at the Gulf Coast Medical Center ER Who Had No Insurance: 19.3 percent

In 2004, 40,753 patients were treated in the Gulf Coast Medical Center Emergency Department. Of those, 7,865 did not have insurance.

## Life Management Center of Northwest Florida

525 East 15th Street, Panama City, FL 32405 (850) 769-0323

Life Management Center of Northwest Florida, Inc. provides comprehensive, integrated care that promotes the health and quality of life of our community members. Established in 1954, the Center has roughly 300 employees and serves Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Washington, and Jackson Counties.

### Major Programs and Services

The following list includes the major programs and services of Life Management Center

#### Child/Adolescent Services

*Outpatient:* Individual, Group and Family Therapy; Crisis Intervention and Support Services; Substance Abuse Counseling; Psychiatric Care; Medication Management; Sexual Abuse Therapy.  
*24-Hour Emergency Care:* Emergency Screening; Crisis Stabilization; Mobile Crisis Counseling

*Community-Based Care:* Foster Care; Therapeutic Foster Care; Adoptions; Family Preservation; Healthy Families/Positive Parenting; Single Point of Access for Assessment & Referral  
*Case Management and Support:* Intensive Therapeutic On-site Counseling

#### Adult Services

*Outpatient:* Individual, Group and Family Therapy; Crisis

Intervention and Support Services; Substance Abuse Counseling; Psychiatric Care; Medication Management Case Management and Support Prescription Assistance.  
*24-Hour Emergency Care:* Emergency Screening; Crisis Stabilization, Detoxification.  
*Case Management and Support:* Forensic Case Management, Florida Assertive Community Treatment (FACT)  
*Rehabilitation & Support:* Case Management; Skills Acquisition Training; Supported Employment Services; Medication Management; Drop-In Center

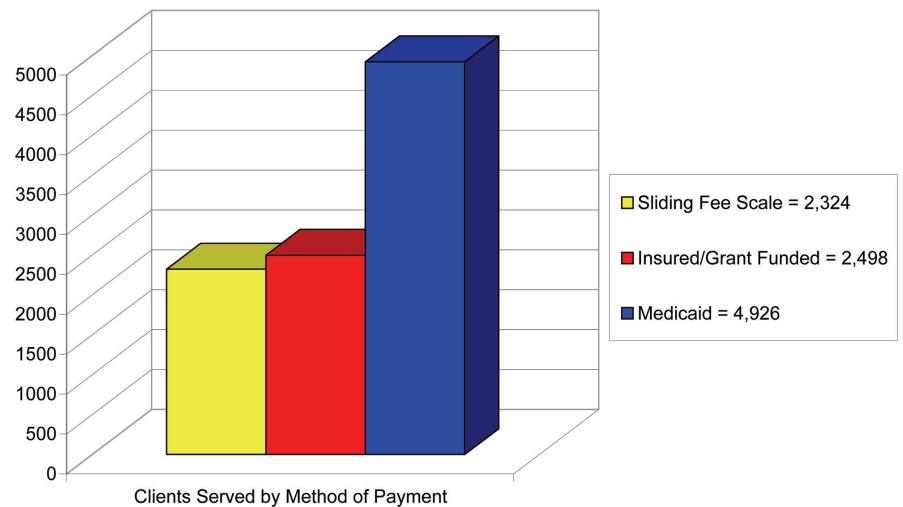
Periodically the Center receives grant funding to deliver specialized services to targeted populations.

#### 2004-2005 Clients Served

The total (unduplicated) number of clients served between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005 is 9,748.

**Challenges** – The 21st century brings new changes, opportunities, and challenges to Life Management Center. One of the major changes is the privatization of Florida's child protection services. Historically throughout the United States protection services for maltreated children have been operated directly by state governments with state employees. In the last several years, Florida has

Life Management Center of NW Florida, Inc. FY 2004-2005



transferred much of this responsibility to private, not-for-profit agencies such as Life Management Center. The Center currently provides adoption services, foster parent recruitment, licensing and training, family preservation, and behavioral health services.

Another major change scheduled for 2005 is the transformation of the Florida Medicaid behavioral health system from a fee-for-service system to a managed care system. Medicaid, a joint federal and state program, is the largest health insurance in the United States and provides substantial support for services to individuals with mental illness. Life Management Center is collaborating with eight other mental health centers in Florida to compete for the contract to provide the service delivery and

administrative system for the managed Medicaid behavioral health program serving North Florida.

The average length of stay in the hospital is an important factor in determining the costs of health care services. In our district, as well as state-wide, the average length of stay for psychoses was the highest, with an average of 8.3 days compared to 5.0 for heart failure and 4.0 for COPD. The average length of stay in the Life Management Center Crisis Stabilization Unit in 2004 was 4.4 days.

Suicide is the 9th leading cause of death in Bay County. The suicide rate is 13.5 (per 100,000) for the state of Florida. However in Bay County the suicide rate is 18.0 (per 100,000).



## HealthSouth Emerald Coast Rehabilitation Hospital

1847 Florida Avenue, Panama City, FL 32405 (850) 914-8600

Nearly 70 percent of people in the United States will face some form of rehabilitation in their lifetime, either through temporary or permanent disability. As the nation's largest provider of inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services, HealthSouth has helped thousands of patients return to daily activities while regaining control of their lives after an injury or illness.

### Services

HealthSouth Emerald Coast Rehabilitation Hospital is a 75-bed community-based medical rehabilitation center. Highly skilled physicians, nurses and therapists and the latest

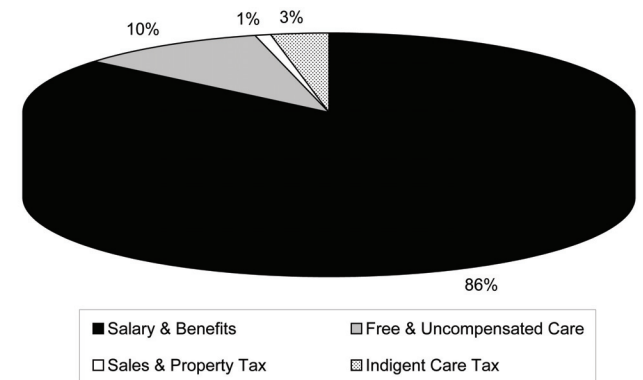
equipment and technology guarantee that all patients have easy access to high quality healthcare. Specialized medical and therapeutic services designed to help physically disabled individuals reach their optimum level of functional independence is provided.

HealthSouth provides comprehensive inpatient and outpatient services for a wide array of diagnoses including trauma, stroke, head injury, arthritis, chronic pain, neuromuscular disease, amputation, musculoskeletal conditions, burns, wounds, pulmonary diseases and other disabling conditions. Along with

these services, HealthSouth has a Sleep Disorders Clinic, which is the only one in the area approved for Tricare beneficiaries.

HealthSouth is committed to maintaining the highest standards of performance to the community. Outpatient facilities have been CARF accredited for over 10 years and are the only accredited FCE and work hardening facilities in the Bay County area.

HealthSouth Emerald Coast 2004 Community Financial Impact



### 2004

- Inpatient Admissions: 1,400
- Patient Days: 20,000
- Outpatient Visits: 20,000
- 5 percent Free and uncompensated care to uninsured and underinsured patients (\$1,000,000)
- 3 percent Medicaid

## St. Andrew Community Medical Center

1616 Cincinnati Avenue, Panama City, FL 32401 (850) 785-1419

The mission of St. Andrew Medical Center is to deliver professional, Christ-centered volunteer healthcare to economically disadvantaged persons of Bay County, thereby meeting their physical and spiritual needs.

The St. Andrew Community Medical Center began operation

in the summer of 2004 and serves clients that meet the federal poverty guidelines (150 percent of poverty or below). The Clinic has seen over 1,400 patients in the past year. It provides both free medical and dental care. It accepts only residents of Bay County as patients. St. Andrew Community Medical Center is the only free dental clinic in the

Panhandle of Florida. The Clinic is primarily staffed through volunteers to provide general primary care and dental care for non-emergency conditions. St. Andrew has its own pharmacy to distribute non-narcotic prescription medications, when available. The Clinic provided over \$460,000 free medical care in the last twelve months. Plans

are to expand both dental and medical services through increased funding. The addition of an adult wellness clinic for preventive care is a priority. With the escalating cost of medicine, we feel we must deal with health rather than just healthcare. The humanity of our county is at stake with this challenge.

## Community Health Center of Bay County

707-A Jenks Avenue, Panama City, FL 32401 (850) 747-5272

Community Health Center–Bay County (CHC–Bay County), operated by the Big Bend Health Council, Inc., was established as a joint community effort. Through a grant, CHC–Bay County was able to secure a physician and through community contributions, it provides quality primary health care to the uninsured and

medically needy. There is no longer a full-time physician at the center and so services are limited. Since beginning operation July 15, 2003, CHC–Bay County and its partners have provided basic health care to over 1,640 patients of record through 4,264 medical encounters. In December 2005, CHC–Bay County will receive

status as a Federally Qualified Health Center and grant funding to expand operations from the current two days per week to a full-time, six days per week, integrated service facility with primary and dental care provided on site to adults, children and infants. Services to be provided will include sick care, preventive

care, chronic disease management, prescription assistance, and physical examinations. Referrals are made for specialty care and hospital care. Services will be provided to patients, whether they have insurance or not, with fees based on the patients' income and a sliding scale fee.

## Bay Cares

597 West 11th Street, Panama City, FL 32401 (850) 872-4455, extension 1127

Bay Cares is a joint partnership between the Bays Medical Society and the Bay County Health Department and receives no federal or state funding. It was created in Bay County in 1991 to address the lack of available specialty medical care for the uninsured in the county. Bay Cares was expanded in 1998 to include nine neighboring counties (Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf,

Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington) due to the lack of medical resources in these rural counties. The number of patients served through Bay Cares grows each year just as the number of uninsured grows. Over 200 physicians and other specialty medical providers participate in Bay Cares. All medical services provided to patients are donated

by the physicians, specialty medical services, Bay Medical Center and Gulf Coast Medical Center. To be eligible for Bay Cares, a patient must meet have an income of 150 percent of the federal poverty level or below and have no other insurance.

The coordinator is housed and supervised at the Bay County Health Department. The program

is funded by donations from county governments, local businesses, and both hospitals. In 2004, 864 people received needed medical treatment, a 36 percent increase in the number of patients since 2002. The total value of the services provided for 2004 was over \$5 million.

## The Agency for Health Care Administration (Medicaid)

651 West 14th Street, Suite K, Panama City, FL 32401 (850) 872-7690

The Agency for Health Care Administration administers the Medicaid program and provides access to healthcare for low-income families and individuals. Medicaid also assists aged and disabled people with the costs of nursing facility care and other medical expenses. Eligibility for Medicaid is based on the family's or individual's income or assets. Eligibility is determined by the Florida Department of Children and Families or Social Security (SSI program). Approximately 2.3 million people in Florida were served by Medicaid in 2004 with

an annual budget of \$14 billion. Bay County has approximately 23,000 people being served monthly. Medicaid has a wide variety of programs for those served including physician services, hospital inpatient and outpatient, prescribed drug services, Durable Medical Equipment, nursing home care and many other services.

There are barriers to healthcare for Medicaid recipients in Bay County due to the shortage of some provider types and providers that elect not to

participate in the Medicaid program. This is true for the dental program as well as some other specialty providers such as dermatology, orthopedic surgery, neurology and general surgery. The general consensus of healthcare providers is the Medicaid reimbursement rate is too low and too complicated. Medicaid reform pilot projects will start soon in Duval and Broward counties with the ability to expand into other counties within one year. The intent of the measure is twofold: to empower participants with choice, while

improving access to vital healthcare services.

The Area 2A Medicaid Office located in Panama City serves the Medicaid recipient and provider population in six counties: Bay, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Franklin and Washington. Medicaid recipients can call (850) 747-5800 or toll free 1-800-699-7068 to have their Medicaid questions answered or for help in navigating the local healthcare system.

## Chemical Addictions Recovery Effort (CARE), Inc.

4000 East 3rd Street, Panama City, FL 32404 (850) 872-7676

Chemical Addictions Recovery Effort (CARE), Inc. is a non-profit agency dedicated to providing prevention, education, intervention, treatment and recovery services to assist individuals and their families change unhealthy behaviors, reduce the stigma, and improve their lives.

CARE offers a full range of licensed services for all age groups and our trained and

dedicated staff is available to help individuals and their families evaluate their need for treatment. Involvement with Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.), Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.), and other support groups is an integral part of the treatment process at CARE. Services are also coordinated with other community organizations. CARE provides services to six counties: Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson and Washington. CARE is governed by a volunteer

Board of Directors and funding for services is provided through a number of sources including the Florida Department of Children and Families, local agencies, patient fees, Medicaid, donations, and contracted work with other agencies. The agency is licensed and operates in accordance with the Florida Department of Children and Families' regulations and guidelines. CARE abides by all Federal and State confidentiality laws. Fees

for services are based on a sliding scale, considering family size and income, and make every effort to keep the cost minimal in order to serve all in need of treatment.

The total (unduplicated) number of clients served between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005 is 28,020. These clients received services in CARE's Treatment, DUI, Prevention and Intervention programs.

# Community Health Task Force Recommendations

The Community Health Task Force has evaluated the survey information and available statistical data to do a comparative analysis of Bay County's strengths and weaknesses, where we are and where we

need to be. As mentioned on page 1, the Community Health Task Force identified the community's primary ways to improve our health status:

- Increasing access to quality healthcare

- Reducing the risk of chronic disease through healthier lifestyle choices

The following information highlights each of these challenges.

## Increasing Access to Quality Healthcare

Access to quality healthcare often means providing primary care services before conditions become chronic. Prevention is less costly than treatment in most cases. Being seen in an emergency room for a non-emergency illness should not be a necessity for those without health insurance. The number of uninsured and underinsured continues to increase with the rapid rise in the cost of health insurance.

While the community has a number of healthcare providers, the high rate of chronic disease and uninsured residents show that a

gap exists between available healthcare and needed healthcare.

The Community Health Task Force recommends increasing access to quality healthcare services by:

- Engaging community partners in creative approaches to increasing access for all.
- Providing community education and information.
- Endorsing policy changes to increase access.
- Expanding health care services.



*Access to quality care often means providing primary care before conditions become chronic.*

## Reducing Chronic Disease Risks

According to the Florida Department of Health, chronic diseases, such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes, account for seven out of every 10 deaths and affect the quality of life of more than 90 million Americans. They are among the most common, most costly and most preventable causes of chronic diseases.

Many contributing factors to chronic diseases can be prevented. Lifestyle choices, such as regular exercise, eating well and going to routine medical exams can help prevent the onset of serious chronic diseases.

The Community Health Task Force encourages reducing chronic disease risks by promoting cessation of tobacco use, fighting obesity and encouraging physical activity.

### Tobacco

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of chronic diseases. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, tobacco use can cause cancer, chronic lung diseases, coronary heart and cardiovascular diseases, osteoporosis, premature death, reproductive effects and sudden infant death syndrome.

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*Tobacco use and obesity are the most common, most costly and most preventable causes of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.*

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The Tobacco-Free Partnership of Bay County is committed to reducing the risk of chronic diseases through intervention and education programs. From 1998 to 2002, there was a 30 percent drop in the use of tobacco products by youth. The Community Health Task Force's recommendations to reduce tobacco use are:

- Secure funding to continue efforts of Tobacco-Free Partnership of Bay County.
- Educate the community as to the costs of tobacco use in terms of quality of life and dollars spent.
- Expand Students Working Against Tobacco (S.W.A.T.) into all middle and high schools in Bay County.

## Reducing Chronic Disease Risks continued from page 11

### Obesity

Obesity is the second leading preventable cause of chronic disease and has been declared an epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control and Health and Human Services. Obesity is a contributing factor in many chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, cancers such as breast and prostate cancer, diabetes and arthritis.

In response to the Governor's Task Force of the Obesity Epidemic, an Obesity Task Force (BFIT) has been established as a sub-committee of the Community Health Task Force. This is a coalition of community partners representing a broad range of agencies with a mission of increasing awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and promoting programs that lead to increased physical fitness of our population.

The Community Health Task Force's recommendations to help

fight obesity are:

- Educate the public regarding nutrition and physical fitness.
- Focus on ways to provide incentives for lifestyle changes.
- Use community partnerships to maximize resources.
- Provide incentives for healthcare providers to work with patients.
- Secure funding for community-wide healthy lifestyle programs.
- Work with Bay District schools to expand health, wellness and physical activity curricula.

### Physical Inactivity

Sidewalks, parks, bike trails and aquatic facilities provide a safe area for residents to enjoy the outdoors and be physically active. As new development continues to increase in our community, so does the opportunity to build new facilities such as parks, sidewalks,

walking trails and recreation centers.

A recent study has shown that increased access to safe environments increases the amount of physical activity for a majority of individuals. City and County planners across the country are being challenged to create safe neighborhoods for physical activity.

The Community Health Task Force recommends the following actions:

- Educate the public regarding available parks, trails and bike paths.
- Support community leaders in their efforts to provide safer neighborhoods.
- Encourage community walk groups.
- Support a walk-to-school program in appropriate areas.
- Work with community planners and developers to incorporate more side



*Communities with safe areas designated for exercise and play help encourage an active lifestyle. The opportunity to build these areas grows as our community continues to develop.*

walks; bike paths; walking trails; and year-round aquatic facilities for safety, competitive swimming and adult aquatic exercise.

*For a healthier community and a better quality of life for all Bay County residents, the Community Health Task Force recommends increasing access to quality healthcare and reducing chronic disease risks by reducing tobacco use, fighting obesity and providing safe areas for exercising to reduce physical inactivity.*

## A Healthy Community or Not?

It has been said that today's youth are the first generation in the United States with a shorter life expectancy than that of their parents. Most of this decreased life expectancy can be attributed to lifestyle choices such as poor diet, little exercise and substance abuse, which lead to chronic disease. It is imperative to eliminate, or at least minimize, poor lifestyle choices. It is also imperative

that we provide access to quality healthcare for all in our community. We can not stand by and say, "There is nothing I can do." We must unite as one voice with innovative ideas to maximize our resources and ensure a healthier Bay County. This is a challenge we cannot afford to lose.

*If you would like more details about the Community Health Needs Assessment, Community Health Needs Survey or any information presented in this report, please contact Mary Matthews at the Bay County Health Department at (850) 872-4455, extension 1210.*