

A MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT HEALTH DIRECTOR

It is my pleasure to present ***Douglas County 2010: How Healthy Are We?*** This report conveys valuable information regarding the health status of our county. I hope that you will find it informative on current health issues and trends. I also hope it will serve as a *call to action* for us — as individuals and as a community — to be deliberate in living healthier and safer lives.

From a health and safety standpoint, we have much to be thankful for in Douglas County. Over the past few years, the mortality rate due to diabetes has decreased significantly. The numbers of tuberculosis (TB) and acute hepatitis cases have remained low. Immunization rates in children under the age of two have increased, and immunization rates in the elderly populations for both seasonal flu and pneumonia have been high. Additionally, the rates of substantiated cases of child abuse and/or neglect have greatly declined.

Yet we also have areas that need significant improvement. In Douglas County, cardiovascular disease, cancer and accidents are the leading causes of mortality. Preventable injuries including motor vehicle crashes, homicide, and suicide are among the leading causes of premature death. Infant mortality rates have fluctuated over the past five years and significant disparities exist between different county populations. Lastly, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are prevalent in Douglas County.

I believe that having “healthy people in healthy communities” is not a goal that can be accomplished by one agency or health district alone — or even by a few large organizations working together. Successfully improving our health status will depend on a long-term collaborative effort involving many stakeholders including public health, our hospital systems, our physicians and other health care providers, our local governments, our schools, our Chamber of Commerce, businesses, churches, civic organizations, non-profits, and other partners. But even the most meticulous planning and implementation by these stakeholders will have limited impact unless each of us is willing to make our health a top priority. This means changing our behaviors as needed so that we’re eating better, exercising more, driving more safely, and avoiding harmful substances.

Our Douglas Public Health staff, Board of Health members, and community partners are working hard to promote and protect the health, safety and well-being of the residents of Douglas County. In 2011, we will begin a very important initiative called MAPP (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships), which is a *community-wide* strategic planning process for improving our community’s health. In this context, “health” refers to a dynamic state of complete physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being - not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization, 1998). While CDPH leadership will facilitate the MAPP process, participation and ownership will be spread throughout the community. Broad participation by a wide range of organizations and individuals is essential to maintaining and improving our community’s health. If you’d like to learn more about MAPP please visit our website at www.CobbandDouglasPublicHealth.org.

Many thanks to the staff of Douglas Public Health, the Douglas County Community Services Board, and other partners for the effort and expertise contributed to produce this report. Thanks also to everyone in our community who works hard to make Douglas County a safer and healthier place. May we continue working together to help each other live healthier, longer and more rewarding lives.

Kind regards,

Jack Kennedy

John D. Kennedy, M.D.
District Health Director



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