

**Standard 5.3**

**Measure 5.3.2 A**

**Strategic Plan**

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# Uncas Health District **DRAFT Strategic Plan**

2017-2021

**Submitted to:**  
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Health Resources in Action  
*Advancing Public Health and Medical Research*

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## INTRODUCTION

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The mission of the Uncas Health District (UHD) is:

*To promote and protect public health in order to prevent illness, death  
and disability among its residents.*

UHD works with its member communities to prevent disease and injury, promote healthier communities and assure a safe environment. It does this through information, education, regulation, and community participation. The District is responsible for the enforcement of the Public Health Code and applicable State of Connecticut Statutes in its member municipalities. The District is constantly striving to improve and update techniques to empower the communities with knowledge to ensure health and safety.

In addition to guiding future services, programs, and policies for the health department overall, this Strategic Plan, in addition to the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), is required for the health district to earn accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), a distinction which indicates that the agency is meeting national standards for public health system performance.

## BACKGROUND

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The Uncas Health District upholds the national standards for local public health departments, known as the 10 Essential Public Health Services. These standards were developed within nationally recognized frameworks, and with input from public health professionals and elected officials from across the country.

1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure a competent public health and **personal healthcare** workforce.
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.



These obligations are met through the work of the Department, the Uncas Health District public health nurse, community health centers and, various community-based organizations within the District.

### **Purpose and Relationship Between Community Health Assessment, Community Health Improvement Plan and UHD Strategic Plan**

The Uncas Health District (UHD) is a non-profit organization that provides local public health services to the municipalities of Bozrah, Griswold, Lebanon, Lisbon, Montville, Norwich, Salem, Sprague, and Voluntown in New London County, Connecticut.

In 2015-2016, Uncas Health District (UHD) conducted its community health assessment (CHA) to enhance understanding of the health of residents in the communities served by the UHD and to gain insight regarding community perceptions about how identified health needs are currently being addressed. The overarching goal of the CHA process was to provide a broad portrait of the health of the communities served by UHD. In 2015, UHD contracted with Health Resources in Action (HRiA), a non-profit public health organization in Boston, to conduct its community health improvement plan (CHIP). The CHA provided a foundation for data-driven community health improvement planning (CHIP) efforts, which in turn provided a foundation for constructing a strategic plan to enhance the capacity of the UHD to promote and improve health within the communities it serves.

The overarching goals of the internal strategic planning process facilitated by UHD were to:

- Assess UHD's internal capacity to fulfill the priorities identified by the CHIP (internal strengths and weaknesses) as well as the external opportunities and threats that make up the environment in which the UHD operates.
- Identify priority areas where UHD can direct its strategic planning efforts in order to fulfill the needs identified in the internal assessment.
- Determine how the UHD can focus efforts on these priorities to achieve the maximum impact and results for the communities and stakeholders it serves.

### **Monitoring the UHD Strategic Plan**

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This strategic plan is intended to be a living, guiding document for the UHD. UHD staff will review progress on the priority areas with the Board of Directors on an annual basis to determine progress and identify changes that need to be made to the following year's action/implementation plan based on environmental and other factors. This will include a review of progress and timeline.

### **COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT SUMMARY**

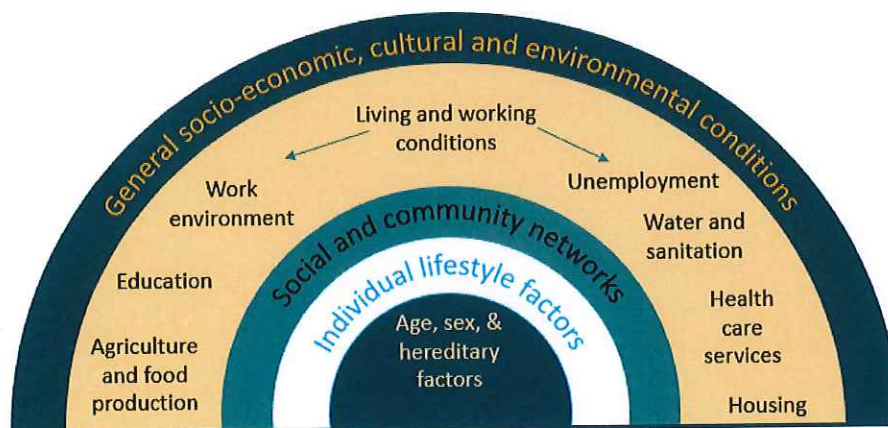
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It is important to recognize that there is a dynamic relationship between people and their environment; where and how we live, work, play, and learn impact our overall health. The



**social determinants of health** framework, depicted in Figure 1 below addresses the distribution of wellness and illness among a population—its patterns, origins, and implications.

**Figure 1: Social Determinants of Health Framework**



Source: World Health Organization, Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, Towards a Conceptual Framework for Analysis and Action on the Social Determinants of Health, 2005. Graphic reformatted by Health Resources in Action

In addition to considering the social determinants of health, it is critical to understand how these characteristics disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. **Health equity** is defined as all people having the opportunity to “attain their full health potential” and entails focused efforts to address avoidable inequalities for all groups, especially for those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantages or historical injustices.

Guided by this framework, the UHD CHA aimed to provide a portrait of community health for its specific service area. To develop an Uncas service area-specific CHA, the UHD contracted with Health Resources in Action (HRiA), a non-profit public health consultancy organization, to conduct the CHA. HRiA reviewed existing secondary data from local, state and national sources. HRiA conducted qualitative data collection with hospital and public health administrators and with focus group participants representing the firefighter/emergency responder and senior communities to understand their perceptions of community strengths and assets, priority health concerns and suggestions for future programming and services to promote community health. A total of 31 individuals were engaged. Eight individuals were engaged in key informant interviews and twenty-three people in focus groups.

On June 2, 2016, members of the UHD Community Health Improvement Planning Group held a summit and reviewed data from the health assessment. The Uncas Health District Planning Group identified 23 key themes from the assessment, from which three priority areas were then identified for the CHIP:

1. Demographic Composition
2. Income and Poverty



3. Educational Attainment and Employment
4. Housing
5. Transportation
6. Crime and Violence (Social Cohesion)
7. Community Health Status
8. Leading causes of Death
9. Chronic Diseases and Related Risk Factors
10. Healthy Eating and Physical Activity
11. Overweight and Obesity
12. Self-rated Health
13. Heart Disease and cardiovascular risk
14. Diabetes
15. Cancer
16. Asthma
17. Mental Health
18. Substance Use
19. Communicable Disease
20. Reproductive and Maternal Health
21. Oral Health
22. Resources and Use of Health Care Services
23. Access and challenges to Health Care

## **Uncas Health District CHIP SUMMARY**

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The CHIP was developed over the course of two (2) planning sessions held in June and November, 2016. Approximately 30 community stakeholders participated in these planning sessions. Key findings that emerged from the CHA were identified as priority areas for the Community Health Improvement Planning process based on key criteria that included data-determined magnitude of the issue, feasibility of addressing, and community/political support. Three (3) Priority Areas were identified from a list of 50 health topics in the 20 theme categories, including:

1. Chronic Disease Prevention/Risk Factors - with a focus on access to nutritional foods/healthy eating, tobacco, and cancer.
2. Substance abuse – with a focus on opioids.
3. Access to Care - with a focus on transportation.

Community stakeholders self-selected priority area working groups for the planning session to develop objectives and strategies for the Community Health Improvement Plan.

Participants were led through a facilitated process to develop plan components for the CHIP (Goals, Objectives, Outcome Indicators, and Strategies). Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) were engaged throughout the process to provide input and refinement.



## UHD Strategic Plan Methodology

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The goals of the strategic planning process is to:

- *Provide clear direction, realistic goals, achievable objectives, and measurable results.*
- *Identify organizational strengths, articulate areas of need, and build consensus and momentum around common goals and objectives.*

### Strategic Planning Elements

Figure 2 below shows the primary elements of strategic planning. Throughout the UHD strategic planning process, the UHD Leadership Team completed each of these elements, collaborating with and eliciting feedback from the Board of Directors and Staff.

The planning process is illustrated in the graphic in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Elements of Strategic Planning**





**Figure 3: UHD Timeline and Milestones**

TIMELINE	Pre-Planning	START	Data Gathering (Kil's, FG's, community meetings)	Prioritization	Planning Session(s)	Draft Report	Final Report	Community / Agency Rollout	END
UHD Strategic Plan	January 2016	June-January	By December, 2017	Nov. 2017	October 2017	January 2018	March 2018	April 2018	June/July 2018

**Methodology for Development of the Strategic Plan**

Developing the strategic plan will include meetings with the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Directors to develop a shared vision and identify strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as a vision for a preferred future. This will followed by internal collaboration to develop shared values statements; to update the mission for the department; and to gather data on the Health District’s current and future capacity. An analysis of strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats (SWOT) was conducted using information obtained from qualitative data collected with hospital and public health administrators and with focus group participants representing the firefighter/emergency responder and senior communities. A total of 31 individuals were engaged. Eight individuals were engaged in key informant interviews and twenty-three people in focus groups

A SWOT analysis looks at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats that provide the context within which an organization must operate. This analysis was conducted from January - June of 2016 through findings from interviews and focus group discussions regarding residents’ perceptions of the Uncas Health District and perspectives regarding Uncas’ role in promoting community health moving forward. Internal conversations with UHD leadership, staff and Board of Directors was also done. The data from these activities were used to help inform the strategic planning efforts.

**SWOT Analysis**

Strengths (Internal)	Weaknesses (Internal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware of UHD role in restaurant inspection</li> <li>• Provides efficient service in an economical way</li> <li>• Serves needs of smaller communities</li> <li>• Addresses needs of vulnerable populations</li> <li>• Communicates quickly regarding regulatory activities</li> <li>• Communicative, innovative and engaged in community health initiatives</li> <li>• Coordination of public health services for multiple communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unfamiliar with UHD specific activities</li> <li>• Small staff size</li> <li>• Emergency responders perceived as fragmented</li> <li>• Put out a flyer of services provided by health district using various media channels</li> <li>• Use social media to contact community leaders and residents</li> </ul>



Opportunities (External)	Threats (External)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting healthy living seen as an opportunity to broaden focus on the social determinants of health</li> <li>• Opportunity to form partnerships and activities around opioid misuse and abuse</li> <li>• Opportunity to coordinate policy and system changes around wellness including healthy eating, physical activity and tobacco use reduction</li> <li>• Play a role in promoting access to oral health, improving asthma and reducing unintentional and intentional injury</li> <li>• Opportunity to be a convener of community health leaders across sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to meet needs of disabled and those with mental health issues</li> <li>• Area has lower SES and less insured people</li> <li>• District may be underfunded</li> <li>• Backus Hospital merger with Hartford Healthcare presents a challenge for community activities</li> <li>• Limited temporary funding for public health prevention or early intervention</li> <li>• State/federal budget cuts</li> </ul>

**Vision**

A vision statement is a statement of the preferred future we are trying to create as a result of delivering our mission, values, and goals.

Healthy people in healthy communities

**Mission**

A mission statement is a statement of organizational purpose.

To promote and protect public health in order to prevent illness, death and disability among its residents

**Aspiration**

To be the healthiest district in Connecticut.

**Values and Operating Principles**

Values and operating principles are those core elements that guide every aspect of our work and interactions with each other, our community, and our partners.

1. **Professional Integrity**

Strive for excellence, function with transparency, provide accurate and up to date information. Enhance accountability and quality.

2. **Respect**

Deliver services in a timely, responsive manner to our clients and each other.



**3. Innovation and Critical Thinking**

Create strategies, recognize changes in the external environment, become adroit at collaboration while leading the public health agenda.

**4. Diversify the Workforce**

Advance career development through training and mentorship.

**5. Shared Leadership**

Team work at all levels. Step up and step out.

**6. Community-centered**

Remember who we serve and why. Stay abreast of community health indicators and judge our work on its improvement. Match what we do with the critical priorities and encourage community participation.



## **Role of the Board of Health?**

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In order to keep pace with evolving visions and trends for public health in the future, the Uncas Health District Board of Directors intends to convene and launch an advisory body, who will work collaboratively to describe the landscape for the next 5-10 years, outline key implications for local vision and strategy, and define metrics for success.

**Comprised of diverse leaders from the district and state; and representing sectors such as government, philanthropy, healthcare providers, and public-health related organizations and coalitions; the UHD Boards of Directors provides visioning, strategic guidance and information on local/national best practices to the Uncas Health District to ensure the District's Strategic Plan is benchmarked against and updated with current thinking and innovation.**

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# Relationship among the UHD CHA, CHIP and UHD Strategic Plan

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