Cameron Foundation
Service Area
Health Needs Assessment

Forces of Change:
Colonial Heights

December 2018
The Forces of Change Assessment (FOCA) identifies trends, factors and events that are occurring or will occur that affect the health and quality of life of the community or the effectiveness of the local public health system.

- Trends are patterns overtime
- Factors are discrete elements of a community
- Events are one-time occurrences

This report summarizes the FOCA in the City of Colonial Heights, Virginia that occurred on Friday, October 20, 2017 with a diverse group of community stakeholders. The forces are grouped into the categories: Legal and Political, Health Factors, Access to Care, Environmental, Cultural and Economic, Social, and Education. This assessment was facilitated by Karen Cameron, an Independent Healthcare and Strategic Planning Consultant, recorded by Freda Williams, Community Health Assessment Planner, Southside Health District, with the Virginia Department of Health, and organized by Valerie Liggins, Program Officer with the Cameron Foundation.

FOCA participants responded to the following questions:

i. What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of the community or the local public health system?

ii. What are specific threats or opportunities generated by these occurrences?

The findings compiled into the attached report represent a comprehensive matrix of key forces and their associated impact upon the health of the Colonial Heights community. Those forces that appeared to be particularly significant include:

- Growing numbers of low-income families and children are under stress and require increased community supports such as housing, transportation, quality employment, dental and behavioral health care
- Potential federal cuts, particularly to the Children’s Health Insurance Program and the Affordable Care Act, threaten access to healthcare for low-income families
- The community has many existing resources that could be helpful in addressing needs
- The growing opioid epidemic, increased number of healthcare facilities and traffic on the I95 corridor are putting increased demands on first responder resources

The information gathered from the FOCA is an important component of the Community Health Assessment Process (CHA). The findings in this report, in conjunction with the results from other assessments, will identify key strategic issues and priorities for community health improvement.
**Force**

**LEGAL AND POLITICAL**

**Strengths**
- Part of larger social services and health department systems with more resources
- High police visibility
- Proactive building code enforcement
- Strong coordination with Emergency Preparedness
- Local government resources cooperate and coordinate

**Weaknesses**
- All health department services aren’t available in Colonial Heights
- No satellite social services office in Colonial Heights
- Lack of access to transportation services
- Lack of Section 8 vouchers for affordable housing
- Lack of a regional perspective and cooperation

**Opportunities**
- Regional cooperation
- Expand Medicaid in Virginia to increase access to health and dental insurance
- Partnerships with the community to address crime

**Threats**
- Changes to Affordable Care Act, women’s health (birth control) and maternal/child policy threaten access to care
- Increase in opioid addiction
- Lack of funding for dental care for adults
- I-95 corridor brings human and drug trafficking

2017 Forces of Change Assessment, Colonial Heights, Virginia
**Strengths**
- All Fire/EMS/Police carry Narcan to prevent overdose deaths
- Access to Food Pantry
- Upgrades to walking trails
- Strong Medical Reserve Corp and Cert team through the Chesterfield Health Department

**Weaknesses**
- Medical Reserve Corp doesn’t have active presence in Colonial Heights
- Lack of sidewalks for walkability
- Opioid addiction - impact on children and CPS cases reported and investigated
- Lack of transportation for ex-offenders and substance abuse clients to access treatment services

**Opportunities**
- Therapeutic recreation for adults and children
- Use the Medical Reserve Corps more extensively
- Community education to bolster health literacy
- Lakeview Community to get a new ADA Compliant Park

**Threats**
- Increase in opioid addiction
- Some landlords not compliant with keeping rental homes up to code
**Force ACCESS TO CARE**

**Strengths**
- Free standing ERs have their own transportation for those needing hospital services
- Increase in the number of physician offices, urgent care centers, and specialists in the area

**Weaknesses**
- Limited dental care for low income adults
- Limited affordable healthcare
- Limited number of mental health providers that accept Medicaid for adults
- Lack of mental health providers for children

**Opportunities**
- Expand Medicaid eligibility
- Dental care for low income adults

**Threats**
- High demand for transportation from EMS system for patients in crisis who went to urgent care and not the hospital
- Changes in the Affordable Care Act, women’s health and maternal child health
- Limited dental services for low income adults
Strengths
- Proactive building code enforcement
- Emergency Preparedness is strong
- Boat landings and the river
- River trail can be used to access South Park and Colonial Heights Food Pantry

Weaknesses
- Lack of sidewalks in some areas impact walkability
- Park safety not monitored
- Noise and air quality are poor due to the proximity to Interstate 95
- Lack of accessible transportation

Opportunities
- Upgrades to parks
- Walking and biking trails along the river and old railroad
- Community partnerships with the faith community

Threats
- I-95 corridor brings human and drug trafficking and car accidents requiring emergency assistance
- Flooding from the river (requiring shelters)
- Tornadoes
Force
CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC

**Strengths**
- Development around Southpark Mall area
- Presence of Fort Lee enhances the economy
- Great libraries with good programs
- All CHHS students are required to take Financial Literacy to graduate
- Swift Creek Mill Playhouse is an established theater venue

**Weaknesses**
- Lack of affordable, quality housing
- Public transportation is very limited
- Transportation is limited overall
- Growing number of low income residents
- Lack of pedestrian access to areas where there are jobs (especially Temple Ave)

**Opportunities**
- Swift Creek Mill Playhouse as a resource to develop cultural community events
- Community Partnership with VSU to engage volunteers
- Redevelop existing facilities into multi-use developments
- Colonial Heights Chamber as a resource for business and community partnerships

**Threats**
- Low income jobs that don’t pay a living wage increasing due to retail growth
- Economy very dependent on retail which is vulnerable to economic downturns

2017 Forces of Change Assessment, Colonial Heights, Virginia
**Strengths**
- Open to discussion, training and seeking solutions for substance abuse addiction
- Faith community and Virginia State University (VSU) student involvement
- Philanthropic community spirit
- Health Department and Social Services are larger with more resources
- Senior Center offers many opportunities for older adults

**Weaknesses**
- Increased number of families in crisis
- Limited staff and community awareness of resources
- Parents are not aware of affordable summer programs or may not have transportation
- Lack of sidewalks for walkability

**Opportunities**
- Community partnership with the faith community
- VSU and Fort Lee volunteers
- Community Resource Coordination
- Expansion of Parks and Rec to include therapeutic recreation for special needs

**Threats**
- The negative impact of social isolation upon vulnerable populations
- Limited housing for low income families
Strengths

- All schools are accredited/SOL scores are good
- High graduation rates
- City supports after school programming for grades 3rd-6th
- Teacher turnover is low/participate in school readiness programs
- Two Pre-K classes in public schools

Weaknesses

- Increased costs associated with need for day placement of children with emotional challenges
- Not all private preschools participate in star quality initiatives

Opportunities

- Therapeutic recreation for children
- Increased collaborative partnership with VSU volunteers
- Summer feeding programs
- Prevention educator in each school building

Threats

- Increase in number of children needing feeding programs (particularly when school is not in session)
# Acknowledgements

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