Cameron Foundation
Service Area
Health Needs Assessment

Forces of Change:
Sussex

December 2018
FORCES OF CHANGE
ASSESSMENT, 2017
Sussex, Virginia
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 over time
- Factors are discrete elements of a community
- Events are one-time occurrences

This report summarizes the FOCA in the County of Sussex, Virginia that occurred on Wednesday, October 25, 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 Khalida Willoughby, Population Health Trainer 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 Sussex community. Those forces that appeared to be particularly significant include:

- As a large, rural community, development of broadband and increased community communication strategies are seen as critical to improving education and employment opportunities.
- Continual reductions in state and federal funding represent one of the largest threats to meeting the healthcare needs of residents.
- Behavioral health needs are growing and substance abuse represents a significant barrier to the employment opportunities of the unemployed and underemployed.
- The need for an increase in recreational activities and programs is viewed as significant.

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.
**Strengths**
- Low taxes
- Access to funding through the Tobacco Commission

**Weaknesses**
- Lack of broadband impacts security of information transfer
- Reduction in funding from state and federal government
- Outdated substance abuse policies in the criminal justice system that prohibit systems change
- Lack of citizen participation in the political process
- No parks and recreation department

**Opportunities**
- Community Engagement
- Evaluation of systems and programs
- Proven successful models and strategies that can be replicated
- Partnership with the faith community to increase recreation or create a parks and recreation department

**Threats**
- Increasing consequences of opioid epidemic
- Continuous reduction and/or eroding of federal funding
- Virginia Medicaid does not cover adult dental
- Lack of awareness and support of behavioral health as a public health issue
**Strengths**

- Prevention programs in the schools
- Sussex Lions Club provides eyeglasses to children
- Food bank in Yale that utilizes 50 volunteers
- Stony Creek CHC has a MOU with two other CHCs to provide dental services
- Sussex Community Health Access Team (CHAT) is forming

**Weaknesses**

- Limited health literacy and healthy practices
- Only one grocery store limiting access to affordable and healthy foods
- Limited coordination and collaboration of providers and faith community
- Limited participation in Sussex CHAT
- Lack of transportation to medical and dental services

**Opportunities**

- Community Engagement to increase awareness of health resources
- Virginia Cooperative Extension has resources to increase education on gardening and nutrition
- Collaboration and coordination of healthcare providers, faith, and community members through coalitions like CHAT
- D19 CSB motivational interviewing for substance abuse population

**Threats**

- Increase in poor health status if more prevention services aren't developed
- Substance abuse issues are increasing strain on service providers
- Mental health services not being available on both sides of the County
- Lack of access to healthy affordable foods
**Strengths**
- ARTS and GAP funding (VA Medicaid expansions) increased behavioral health access
- Two CHCs serve county – one has dental
- District 19 CSB will provide transportation and has telemedicine capability
- Smiles Mobile does preventive care/fillings for children through school partnership

**Weaknesses**
- Lack of broadband
- Transportation
- Lack of specialists for specialty care
- Lack of pain management specialists to address opioid epidemic
- Limited access to affordable health insurance
- D19 has outgrown its current facility and the location is on the Eastern side of the County

**Opportunities**
- Broadband for telemedicine and coordinated care
- Health literacy to improve knowledge and reduce stigma of behavioral health
- Dental, mental health, and substance abuse services
- Regional reentry council

**Threats**
- Lots of substance abuse needs and limited resources for treatment opportunities
- Virginia Medicaid does not cover Adult dental
**Strengths**
- Availability of land
- Land is affordable

**Weaknesses**
- Limited affordable housing
- Lack of community recreation opportunities
- No public transportation system
- No infrastructure to support broadband services

**Opportunities**
- Create Parks and Recreation Department
- Develop community centers and recreational opportunities
- Collaborate with existing organizations like Jessica Ann Moore Foundation or faith communities to provide recreation opportunities

**Threats**
None noted by participants

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2017 Forces of Change Assessment, Sussex, Virginia
Strengths
- Taxes are low
- Availability of land
- Access to tobacco commission funding
- D19 CSB clients have supported employment program
- Improvement Association holistic approach to programming

Weaknesses
- Lack of broadband
- Limited sustainable and diverse funding sources
- Limited tax base/Poverty level
- Unemployed often can't pass substance abuse screening tests or physical fitness tests for jobs
- Social isolation of seniors

Opportunities
- Recreational programs with churches and schools
- Supported employment programs provided through D19 CSB
- Sussex County Chamber of Commerce

Threats
- Shrinking state general funds
- Many unemployed cannot pass initial screenings for employment
**Strengths**
- Rural setting
- Fairly strong faith coalition/faith communities engaged
- Great place to retire
- Community center in Waverly (electronic bulletin board and resources)

**Weaknesses**
- Infrastructure needed to attract residents/businesses to area
- Communication between residents and providers is limited
- Isolation for residents who don’t have support systems or transportation
- Lack of libraries and communities centers in the western area
- Limited sustainable funding for initiatives

**Opportunities**
- Communication about resources and programs
- Hotspots for internet
- Public Library

**Threats**
- Decreased attendance in churches and activities within the faith-based community
## Strengths
- Fully accredited school system
- Rowanty technical school available on edge of Sussex
- Therapeutic day treatment providers in the school system
- Several prevention programs in the schools
- Two early childhood classes (Head Start and VIP classes)

## Weaknesses
- Lack of satellite education programs
- Increase in the number of kids needing placement in day treatment programs
- Income based only programs can be a barrier to those that don’t qualify but can’t afford alternatives
- Difficult to attract teachers/they often live in other communities
- Lack of transportation impacts access to after school programs

## Opportunities
- Broadband
- Virginia Cooperative Extension Financial Literacy Program
- School partnership to inform community
- Rowanty Technical Center
- Teacher incentives

## Threats
- Continuing cuts in funding can impact accreditation
# Acknowledgements

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