



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health and Human Service Goals Set for 2006-2009

A strategic vision developed for Larimer County identifies goals and actions to help the communities within the county improve the lives of their residents through more effective levels of health and human service delivery, coordination and collaboration.

A group of 33 community experts from various government and human service agencies convened the Strategic Vision Council of Larimer County, which from August through October 2005 produced Community Goals for 2006-2009.

The council's work began with the United Way of Larimer County and Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County (HCC) who wanted to develop a unified vision for improving the lives of residents throughout the county, particularly those in need.

"We felt we needed a strategic vision to define a comprehensive community-wide guide for addressing the needs in our communities," said Kim Sharpe, HCC coordinator. "One of the questions we asked is, 'We share community-wide problems. Why not share a vision and resources for solving those problems?'" The major benefit of such a shared vision is to build more effective and efficient levels of services county-wide, she said.

Gordan Thibedeau, executive director of the United Way of Larimer County, said his organization started the effort to analyze what services were available county-wide and to see what the future capacity might be. "It is incredibly important to understand clearly what we have in terms of meeting the needs of our population and seeing where the gaps are, particularly in times of decreasing resources. The decisions we make today will affect us three to five years down the road," he said. "He added that gathering the data and information through this goal setting process provides a data-based understanding of what is available in the county.

The council developed goal statements under three headings – basic and emergency; prevention and intervention; and treatment. Thibedeau and Sharpe emphasized that attainment of the goals relies on all parties working together to reduce redundancy and improve service. "Our hope is that funders, service providers and others will focus on these goals and lend their expertise and resources toward producing measurable positive change for the benefit of individuals and families that reside in Larimer County," they said in the cover letter for the Vision Council's recently completed report.

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The primary basic and emergency goal addresses human needs: to increase availability, accessibility, affordability, awareness and utilization of resources that meet basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, safety, utilities, health care and medicine. Several sub-goals follow. Under prevention and intervention, goals include increasing public awareness of at-risk actions and preventative measures to enhance public safety; improving working options and conditions; improving health of all citizens and many more. The treatment goals address providing adequate community-based treatment, case management treatment, and treatment of the under and uninsured.

The entire report and names of those who participated are available at: <http://www.larimer.org/compass/> or <http://www.healthylarimer.org/publications.html>.

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The Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County is an alliance of nonprofit, education, health, business, government and citizen leaders who collaboratively identify, develop and implement strategies to improve the health and well-being of county residents. Established in 1994 and located in Fort Collins, Colorado, HCC's special focus since 2002 has been on improving the lives of our youth.