

MADERA COUNTY
FORCES OF CHANGE ASSESSMENT



**JUNE
2023**

Background

Between March and April 2023, the Madera County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) facilitated four meetings to complete a Forces of Change (FOC) Assessment. FOC Assessment meetings were held with members of the Live Well Madera County coalition (LWMC), a multi-sectoral collaborative that acts as the guiding partnership for improving community health. LWMC uses a community-driven planning framework called Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP) to prioritize public health issues and mobilize resources to address them. The FOC Assessment is one of four assessments that are part of the (MAPP) framework. The other assessments are the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment, Local Public Health System Assessment, and Community Health Assessment (CHA). These assessments together provide the information needed to comprehensively understand the public health system and local needs.

What is a Forces of Change Assessment?

A Forces of Change Assessment aims to identify all the forces and associated opportunities and threats that can affect, either now or in the future, the local public health system. Forces can be social, economic, political, technological, environmental, scientific, legal, and/or ethical.

Forces can be trends, factors and/or events:

- **Trends** are patterns over time, such as migration in and out of a community or a growing disillusionment with the government.
- **Factors** are discrete elements, such as a community's large ethnic population, an urban setting, or a jurisdiction's proximity to a major waterway.
- **Events** are one-time occurrences, such as a hospital closure, a natural disaster, or the passage of new legislation.



The Forces of Change Assessment answers two specific questions:

- “What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of our community or the local public health system?”
- “What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?”

Assessment Methodology

Madera County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) facilitated four sessions with LWMC to conduct the FOC Assessment. The first two sessions were held March 22 and March 28 with the LWMC Steering Committee which consists largely of executive-level decision-makers from partner agencies. Two additional sessions were held on April 25 with 37 members of the LWMC Growing Healthy Families work group and 16 members of the LWMC Healthy People Strong Communities work group to gain broader participation.

These assessments were conducted in three parts: identifying forces, identifying threats, and then identifying opportunities. Before each session, MCDPH facilitators introduced the MAPP process and explained the Forces of Change Assessment to participants. Participants were asked to brainstorm out loud in a group setting to identify forces, threats, and opportunities while MCDPH facilitators recorded thoughts and ideas shared throughout the meeting.

Participants were sent the brainstormed forces, threats, and opportunities from all four meetings for review and were given the opportunity to add any additional feedback.

Findings

The 42 forces, threats, and opportunities were compiled into the following matrix after removing duplicates and combining similar forces together as appropriate.



Category	Forces	Threats Posed	Opportunities Created
Social	widening gap between haves and have nots	distrust, disengagement, alienation, misinformation, inequitable access to economic and educational opportunities, inequitable access to and distribution of services, varied expectations of community members	highlight and celebrate philanthropic community activities, businesses who give back to the community, motivate others to do the same
Social	discourse around Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)	different perceptions of equity and stigmatization of the term	identify and use different language for equity, supporting equal opportunity for successful outcomes, educate leaders and influencers, educate the workforce, provide workforce professional development opportunities so that the workforce represents the community at all levels, increase partnership with local educational institutions
Social	polarization of the community	mistrust, resistance to change, competing agendas	provide education, show up as a calm presence, use good crucial conversation skills and build common connection, increase unity and togetherness
Social	mental health crisis	strain on mental health services, lack of services for those who have private insurance, potential for increased substance use and abuse	develop new initiatives to address mental health in the school setting, opportunities for sustainable resources, increased awareness, newly developed resources (crisis stabilization unit)
Social	distinct central valley culture	many evidence-based programs are not built in the area and may not fit the needs of the community, rejection of outside entities	increase cultural and linguistic competency, provide services and resources in other languages, establish sustainable relationships, connect with community members
Social	aging population	increased costs for care, potential to be priced out of affordable housing, decrease in family support	develop more skilled nursing facilities, utilize supportive services through Cal-Aim
Social	increased number of children in the foster care system	children placed outside county, not culturally appropriate homes, siblings split up, loss of connection to community, unsafe placements, reduced likelihood of reunification, children with special needs are not being met, lack of trust, mental health and substance use is a stigma/ misinformation around children in foster homes	increase cross-sector collaboration with supportive services, communicate success stories, provide community and public education, peer support programs

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Social	prevalence of alcohol use and substance abuse	loss of jobs, transportation, ties to mental health, DUIs and court-mandated programs are expensive, threat to public safety, increased risk of domestic/family violence, negative impact on relationships, affects decision-making & emotional regulation, challenge in detecting abuse	provide education, prevention & early intervention, develop campaigns to educate public/schools/teens, engage in support systems
Technological	change in communication methods and information overload	lack accurate in information, don't completely understand how to connect, might not be reaching target audience, feeling overwhelmed, feeling the need to tune out constant negative news, disengagement, isolation, apathy	spread information quickly, increased use of Parent Square, learn the most effective ways to engage the population, create a plan to reach a diverse audience, improve communication styles, communication through school districts, respect teachers/district administration
Technological	increased use of the internet and virtual services	inequitable access for specific populations, technology anxiety, disparities in access, people can be left behind, comfort level with technology, risk to privacy, less control of how information is used and shared, loss of person to person connectivity	increase technology literacy skills, work with the community that has a willingness to learn, increase access to technology, teach tech literacy, identify gaps in affordable broadband access, improve telemedicine
Technological	use of telehealth/ telephonic services	lack of comfort for some community members, need to be in the clinic face-to-face with a provider	increase access to care, increase awareness/trust of benefits of telehealth/telephonic visits, educate patients on how to use these services when they lack knowledge/ technological literacy
Economic	lack of affordable housing	difficulty attracting workforce, perpetuating poverty, gateway to homelessness, crowded housing, delays in city and county planning	work with planning departments to streamline and advocate for affordable housing
Economic	hospital closure	lack of access to care, possibility of higher mortality rates, delayed care, higher burden on nearby hospitals, increased stress on government resources lack of access to immediate care, emergency room access, access to labor and delivery services, patients waiting for services at other hospitals, other local hospitals overburdened	pass legislation such as, Assembly Bill 412, promote alternative specialized medical services at the site, partner with University of California (UC) systems, increase regionalization of healthcare, offer mobile services, improve hospital at home and telehealth, improve transportation, increase health literacy, improve utilization of healthcare services, build and expand new hospitals, grow services, increase health literacy, gather community input and implement ideas, improve state adjusted Medi-Cal rates, think about healthcare regionally, engage directly with legislators

Category	Forces	Threats Posed	Opportunities Created
Economic	inflation	larger need for social services, increased stress, increased cost of living, potential for substance abuse, exacerbate other threats, going without necessities like medicine, poor nutrition, housing instability, poor work and school performance, sleep, decreased sense of security	unify, barter, share resources, strategize making money stretch, get to know your neighbors, trade resources at a neighborhood event
Economic	significantly high unemployment rate	social service usage (drug, alcohol abuse, etc.)	offer workforce development programs
Economic	low median income	social service usage (drug, alcohol abuse, etc.) grey area for services, lack of choice for housing for families, increase parental stress, violence in home	offer vocational and educational training, be intentional about community service, reevaluate the eligibility criteria, provide living wages, offer dual enrollment in high schools
Economic	high percentage of population with Medi-Cal	Medi-Cal unbalanced payer mix, low reimbursement rates not paying enough, lack of appeal to potential hospital buyers, population believing Medi-Cal is complicated and slow, bifurcation between reimbursements and various supplemental payments	reevaluate reimbursement rates
Economic	lack of community based organizations (CBO) infrastructure and sophistication	sometimes difficulty finding CBO partners that have the capacity because many CBOs are small and don't have robust administration staffing, loss of CBOs and services, loss of trust with the community and CBO	increase grant funds, provide technical assistance, reevaluate fundability, link to larger or more robust organizations, build capacity
Economic	provider shortage	long wait times for patients, specialists not being available locally, overburdened urgent care and emergency services	partner with universities, promote mobile health and other entities, offer telehealth, increase health literacy
Economic	inadequate local workforce	underemployment, underpaid workforce, unskilled/untrained and unaware (lack of knowledge of programs/systems) employees	promote adult schools, improve onboarding process, offer work development training, bring retired individuals back into the workforce, partner with school districts and address needs (classes for youth and adults), collaborate and build career pathways for needs (youths), work with guidance counselors, have employers rethink job descriptions, arrange financial capacity for employers to build skills of employees

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Economic	limited resources	deciding who has access first	advocate, innovate, create partnerships, promote resources, stockpile systems for later use and distribution, improve sustainability in infrastructure, go upstream and maximize resources to prevent the need for downstream intervention, build relationships with corporate businesses for local support
Economic	limited qualified local contractors, vendors and consultants	less business for the local community, lack of ability to find a vendor to serve the community's specific needs	partner with universities and businesses
Economic	education barriers	lack of/limited GED programs and technical schools, barriers to access (don't have time/ transportation/financial/support system), lack of education determines work and pay, people economically struggling may not be able to relocate to a place with wages for sustainable living	create partnerships, have adult schools with childcare/transportation built into program, reevaluate promotion/awareness activities (including awareness when eliminating barriers to advertise opportunities for the barriers)
Economic	homelessness	difficulty finding overnight stays, places require check-ins at certain times, people have to wait in line to see if they will have a place to stay, programs covering hotel/ overnight stay are temporary; the rules in place (e.g., must stay for the evening, cannot keep pets)	have programs cover hotel-stay, enhance Madera Rescue Mission; offer free exams to motivate people to come in to get checked
Economic	increased cost of rent/housing	apartments/homes are no longer affordable, single-home families are pressured to move in with another family to be able to afford living in a home, people are forced to move out to find places that are more affordable (e.g. people move to Fresno for more affordable options), increased homelessness for those unable to afford rent/housing, people rent from slumlords who don't take care of the place and may not want to speak up because they're migrant, speak another language, or have a fear of deportation	reevaluate housing costs, identify programs with reasonable caps, impose caps for renters
Legal	CA flavored tobacco ban	financial impact for retailers, reduced First 5 funding	restrict tobacco sales to youth

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Legal	immigration issues	individuals delaying services, unknown vaccination status, lack of legal services to undocumented individuals, inability to attract workforce to the area due to lack of multifamily housing	utilize trusted messengers to engage the community
Legal	allowing cannabis retailers in the city of Madera	risk of increased initiation rates, normalization of use, increased access, possible association with other unhealthy behaviors	increase taxes for city, create employment, reduce black market and reduce crime, educate and prevent
Legal	Cal-Aim	poorly planned, confusing, and disorganized roll out by the Department of Health Care Services	expand preventative services, coordinate care, increase whole person care case management for high-risk patients
Legal	increased illicit drug availability at cheap prices (meth, fentanyl, etc.) and prescription & overuse of drugs; Increase access to drugs	high risk of overdose, younger initiation rates, addiction to drugs prescribed post-surgery, lack of awareness, lack of understanding about how addictive these drugs can be, mental health layer (substance abuse/overuse could be tied to co-occurring disorder)	educate early, bring awareness to parental/community, make treatment facilities accessible, educate public on co-occurring disorders/mental health, teach proper medication disposal (awareness of where to properly dispose)
Environmental	seasonal and migrant community	poor continuity of care, poor continuity of housing, crowded housing	improve community awareness of the contribution and value, build regional partnerships
Environmental	reduced security and safety in public	poor mental health outcomes, fatalities, worried parents, anxiety, lack of academic achievement	preempt community conversations, recognize warning signs
Environmental	COVID-19	delayed preventative care and chronic disease management, increased domestic violence, increased mortality rates, unemployment, polarization, reduced academic achievement, increased isolation and anxiety, poor understanding of public health, misinformation, housing issues, layoffs, supply chain issues, businesses closing, inflation, distrust	build technology skills, telework, innovate, advance technology, focus on the need for reliable systems, develop a more robust communications team (Public health), expand epidemiology and mobile services, build strong partnerships, open hospitals and agencies to provide services, increase telehealth, improve crisis management practices, intensify value of partnerships, increase communication with families and parents through the school districts
Environmental	climate change	poor air quality, drought, heat, extreme weather, stranded mountain community, affected health outcomes, damaged crops, valley fever, algae blooms in the lakes, increase of asthma	support young people who are passionate about climate change, diversify the economy, innovate in industry, increase business opportunities for innovators, regulate crops that require large amounts of water

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Environmental	air quality	affect on adults and children, lesser life span (lung cancer, asthma related issues)	plan for walk paths and walkable communities, improve city planning and design
Environmental	service deserts	impact of access to care, families not having access to services (impact entire household), food deserts (no place to get healthy food), skipping on preventative care	expand telehealth services, improve access to online services, grow awareness of telehealth systems, work with the community to find services/spaces
Environmental	lack of community transportation	not having access to programs (mountain areas)	set up bus systems (mountain communities), collaborate and coordinate with other systems, improve regional transportation systems, create more jobs
Ethical	pharmaceutical companies spiking medication costs	affects of access to medication, increased health complications	promote the 340b program Camarena Health offers (discounted program for patients that can't afford medication), encourage more pharmacies to enroll and become a 340b pharmacy (must enroll, follow process, monitor inventory & meds)
Ethical	human trafficking	area close to California 99 highway being a huge corridor for human trafficking (hotels being involved)	spread awareness at truck stops & gas stations (e.g., handing stickers to truckers at rest stops "see something, stay something") educate people on the signs to lookout for and where to report
Scientific	pharmaceutical companies & medication cost (e.g. insulin)	patients have difficulty accessing/ paying for medication, patients have to split insulin or lower doses to make it last longer, patients not seeing doctor regularly and putting off appointments, increase health complications, mortality; increased urgent care; visits & hospitalizations; patients knowing they have a condition but choose not to seek care due to cost of medication	provide education on prevention/ preventative care & importance of regular visits
Scientific	vaccines (COVID-19)	difficulty the community had understanding how vaccines work (especially during COVID-19), lack of vaccination creating impacts on individual health and health of others	educate the community on how vaccines work



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