



Purpose:

The purposes of holding a community health forum were threefold: (1) with the Baseline Report completed by the North Slope Borough, we wanted to present the findings to the community so that we all have a better understanding of Barrow's health, (2) use the information to start changes needed to address health priorities, and (3) discuss with one another how we can start that change, and exchange diverse ideas.

Attendance:

The Barrow Community Health Forum held on November 1, 2012 at Ipalook Elementary had approximately 50-60 attendees. Jayne Andreen, Alaska Division of Public Health, and Doreen Leavitt, NSB Health Department, facilitated the evening's agenda. Heather Dingman, NSB Mayor's Office, presented findings from the Baseline Community Health Analysis Report.

Method:

The forum was setup using the community café model; three questions were asked to attendees, to whom they discussed with other attendees at their table; at each question, attendees would switch tables, with a different set of attendees. Table hosts were asked to ensure all table participants had voiced their ideas and comments, and wrote the main themes down.

Café Questions:

The questions asked were:

- 1) What does a healthy North Slope mean to you?
- 2) What assets does the North Slope have that encourages it to be a healthy community?
- 3) What do you think are the most important health issues we face as North Slope residents?

25 minutes were given to each question.

Outcome:

Discussions from all tables were recorded into an online site, www.wordle.net. The site generated a picture of words that were used most often, with larger words representing words



When asked, “What does a healthy North Slope mean to you?”, participants brought up the need for better communication and collaboration among individuals, organizations and communities. Barrow is the regional hub to the North Slope, and consists of the largest population on the North Slope; as a result, there are a majority of organizations that are based in Barrow that also provide services to outlying villages. However, both in the interagency meeting and the community meeting, there were concerns expressed about the need to collaborate more effectively with one another as agencies, to prevent redundancy and duplication of efforts. Also, resources could be expended more wisely if collaboration existed.

Faith-Based Community and Local Agencies

There were many, many topics discussed; the aforementioned topics were just the most common themes that came from discussions from all tables. However, there are others worth mentioning. Participants discussed the importance that faith has in becoming a healthy individual, and that churches are an asset to the North Slope in providing a healthy community.

A number of local agencies were listed by participants when asked, “What assets does the North Slope have that encourages it to be a healthy community?” It is clear that there are resources available to the community by a number of agencies, and that the current infrastructure provides access to healthcare, education, and other services to Barrow residents. However, better coordination of services was expressed, as well as the need for better collaboration among organizations.

Next Steps:

A community health forum with local agencies in Barrow was held previous to the evening forum, on October 31, 2012, at the Inupiat Heritage Center. Representatives from different agencies were presented with the report findings and were asked to commit to the common goal of promoting health within our community. Health priorities, however, should come from the community, and thus an evening session was held to discuss what our priorities are as a community. The results from the evening session will be presented to agencies in a report, and follow up discussions will ensue to ensure health priorities are addressed in each of our organizations, for the common goal of promoting health. Large-scale change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from isolated intervention of individual organizations; therefore, substantially greater progress could be made in alleviating many of our most serious and complex social issues if nonprofits, governments, businesses, and the public were brought together around a common agenda to create *collective impact*.¹

