About Pathways 2020

In 1996, a community health assessment grant awarded to the Cowlitz County Health Department required a citizen’s advisory group to guide the process. That advisory council became Pathways 2020. Modeled after the success of other community health projects, Pathways 2020 attained permanent status through the contributions of Cowlitz Economic Development Council, Cowlitz County Health Department, Kaiser Permanente, and PeaceHealth. Incorporating in 1999, Pathways 2020 is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, dedicated to improving the quality of life in Cowlitz County through collaborative partnerships, resource mobilization, strategic planning, and program development. Pathways 2020’s Board of Directors is comprised of 23 local leaders representing education, health, social services, business, and government sectors.

To meet its mission in the community, Pathways 2020 reaches out to organizations to help deliver services. Pathways 2020 serves as the coordinator for the Community Health Partners, a non-profit organization that supports the Cowlitz Free Medical Clinic and dental programs for uninsured adults. Lower Columbia College Head Start benefits from Pathways 2020’s experience providing marketing, training, and development of community partnerships. For six years, Pathways 2020 has co-facilitated the Cowlitz On The Move Healthy Lifestyles Coalition through grants from the Washington State Department of Health and the Northwest Health Foundation.

Pathways 2020 is committed to providing and encouraging an environment of collaboration for community organizations of various interests to come together for local solutions. We proudly support the Lower Columbia School Gardens, Highlands Activities and Beautification Committee, Cowlitz Meth Action Team, and Envision Kalama. Pathways 2020 discourages unnecessary competition for grant funds and supports community based projects rather than organization based.

Pathways 2020 Mission Statement

The mission of Pathways 2020 is to promote and improve the health and well being of Cowlitz County by fostering community partnerships which provide the fabric and support that each person needs to be a healthy and contributing member of the community.

Pathways 2020 Board of Directors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Position</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chris Fritsch</td>
<td></td>
<td>Longview School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Nelson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attorney at Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Wilson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Port of Kalama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Vorse</td>
<td></td>
<td>Castle Rock Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Meskew</td>
<td></td>
<td>Compendium Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynda Goodwin</td>
<td></td>
<td>Banking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Carreon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cowlitz County Health Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mel Jewell</td>
<td></td>
<td>Retired, Youth Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosanne Ponzetti</td>
<td></td>
<td>PeaceHealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Jane Melink</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Health Care Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Matye Edwards</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Columbia College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Gregory</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Longview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Karnofski</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilona Kerby</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Columbia CAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reed Hadley</td>
<td></td>
<td>Edward Jones Investments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denny Richards</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Kelso</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Shaw</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kaiser Permanente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Perez</td>
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<td>Longview Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Junker</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cowlitz County Facilities and Parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tammie Howard</td>
<td></td>
<td>Woodland Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Sherrill</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cowlitz Indian Tribe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dian Cooper</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cowlitz Family Health Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Russell</td>
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<td>Love INC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents

Foreword.............................................03
Healthy Lifestyles..................................07
Economy..............................................13
Education............................................17
Families.............................................20
Community..........................................24
Environment........................................27
Acknowledgements..............................29
Data Sources.......................................30
Sponsors............................................Back Cover

The 2010 Pathways 2020 Community Report Card is made possible through the generous donations of the sponsors found on the back cover of this report and specifically from the support of the member entities of the Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments.

Contact Information
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Longview, WA 98632

P: 360.423.8704 • F: 360.423.1921
E: youmans@cowlitzedc.com

www.pathways2020.org
Dear Reader,

There is a traditional curse that states ‘May you live in interesting times’. Few times have been more interesting than these and we are faced with difficult decisions. The economic downturn brings budget cuts to many of the health and social service programs in our County. We are forced to deal with balancing the equation of infinite needs against increasingly finite resources.

As you read our report you will notice that we have continued the grading system that began in our 2006 Report Card. Our report card provides an overall picture of the many different connecting pieces that make up the health and well-being of our County. They include such factors as education attained, affordable housing, and environment, as well as life expectancy and chronic disease. While there have been some improvements, there are many areas that remain to be adequately addressed.

In your review, you may notice the added focus on our ‘Calls to Action’ sections. We hope this provides an opportunity for you to identify how you might be able to help; either as you participate as part of a community group or as a role model for your own individual improvement. It is the hope that the data in this document will lead to the wisest possible use of our energy, intention and funds.

Sincerely,

Carlos Carreon, L.I.C.S.W., B.C.D.
Chair, Pathways 2020

2010 Report Card Grading System and Goals

Grades: A B C D F

We report our progress much like a school report card. Each indicator has received a grade to reflect how well we are doing and helps us gauge where progress is being made and where improvement is needed.

This year, the grades were determined by votes of the Pathways 2020 Board of Directors and the Community Resources Committee. Voters were asked to grade each indicator based on three factors: trend over the years, comparison to Washington State, and progress towards the revised Pathways 2020 goals and, if applicable, the national Healthy People 2020 goals.

Goals:
Since the 2008 community report card, Healthy People 2020 replaces Healthy People 2010 as the national 10-year plan for improving America’s health. For some indicators, we have updated national goals. The release of Healthy People 2020 prompted a review of our Pathways 2020 goals. Healthy People 2020 goals are often a 10 or 20% improvement over the current rate. Feeling that this approach provides realistic, achievable goals that encourages action, Pathways 2020 has decided to revise our goals similarly.
## A Quick Look At How We Are Doing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Washington State Rate</th>
<th>Cowlitz County Rate</th>
<th>Cowlitz County Rate change from 2008 report card</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Lifestyles</td>
<td>Healthy Weight</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adult Smoking</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>^</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smoking While Pregnant</td>
<td>per 100,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>^</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>per 100,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STDs (all)</td>
<td>per 100,000</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>^</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mortality (all)</td>
<td>per 100,000</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>845</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Life Expectancy</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Childhood Immunization</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>v</td>
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<td>Economy</td>
<td>Housing Wage</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>17.98</td>
<td>12.92</td>
<td>v</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Median Household income</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>55,379</td>
<td>46,037</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed Workforce</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>v</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
<td>HAI*</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>^</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>NA**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School Dropouts</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>^</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education Beyond High School</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>per 1,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td>per 1,000</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Families in Poverty</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>^</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teen Pregnancy</td>
<td>per 1,000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Elder Fatal Falls</td>
<td>per 100,000</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adults With Health Insurance***</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Alcohol and Drug Related Deaths</td>
<td>per 100,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crime Rate</td>
<td>per 1,000</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>^</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Registered Voters Who Voted</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>^</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foodborne Illness</td>
<td>per 100,000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recycling</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>NA**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Housing Affordability Index ** Not Applicable means that the datasets between the two reporting periods are not comparable due to a different measure being used.

***Compared to 2004-2006 rates (81.6%)
Making Progress

Since the publication of the 2008 Community Report Card, the community has responded positively for many of the Calls To Action that Pathways 2020 put forth. These include:

- Bike and pedestrian trails development continued with the addition of the Cooks Ferry Trail and the South Cowlitz River Trails
- Tobacco free parks designated in the City of Longview
- An assessment of access to healthy foods was completed
- Steering committee began work on updating the County’s Comprehensive Plan
- TIP Strategies adopted by Cowlitz EDC to improve business development opportunities
- Early Head Start program funded to serve 60 pregnant women and children birth to three.
- Youth and Family Link expanded afterschool programs
- Lower Columbia College expanded classes to meet growing enrollment
- New funding for Drug Court secured
- Mental Health Court opened
- Children’s Justice and Advocacy Center opened
- Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Government began the Longview Kelso Transportation Systems Plan
- Healthy Homes project established to help individuals manage asthma

In this report card, Pathways 2020 continues its Calls to Action. We offer suggestions that the individual, community and policymakers may take to start down the path to a healthier community. Our hope is to stimulate discussion and a commitment to collaboration, necessary for a healthier community future.

What Makes a Healthy Community?

Good health starts in our homes, our schools and our workplaces. Where we live, work, learn and play has a tremendous impact on whether we are healthy. It begins with loving families and safe neighborhoods. It begins with schools that challenge our children, prepare them for future success, and provide them with healthy foods and time for physical activity. It begins with easily accessible grocery stores that sell affordable fresh fruits and vegetables. It begins with having the time and the money to relax and play, because life is stressful, and stress takes a toll on our bodies.

Good health isn’t just about medical care. It’s about having the opportunity to make healthy choices. The conditions in which we live greatly influence our health. How much money we make, our educational attainment, our social connectedness, and our environment all affect our physical and emotional health. While individual responsibility plays a role, the lifestyle decisions we make are only as good as the options available.

All Americans should have the opportunity to make choices that allow them and their families to live a long and healthy life, regardless of income, education, race or ethnicity. In fact, Healthy People 2020, which provides 10-year national objectives, recognizes the social and physical factors which influence our health. These factors are often referred to collectively as the Social Determinants of Health and include resources in neighborhoods, quality of education, safety of work and living places, clean water, food and air, and social relationships.

Pathways 2020 has long recognized that there is more to a healthy community than the presence or absence of disease. Our county’s community report card includes not only healthy behavior indicators, but also indicators that address our economy, education, family, community, and environment. All of us, as individuals, communities, and/or policy makers, can influence positive change. When we work to improve the conditions in which we live, learn, work, and play, we are creating healthier and happier communities. Most importantly we are positively paving the way for our own, health and our children’s future health.
Are We A Healthy Community?

The question we are often asked is how healthy is Cowlitz County? In 2010 and 2011 the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin published County Health Rankings reports, which look at the health of individual counties across the United States. This annual report identifies health behaviors, health outcomes, access to medical care, and social factors, among other areas, in an attempt to look at all the factors that influence health. How does Cowlitz County stack up when compared to other counties in the state? When it comes to health behaviors, in 2011 we fell to the bottom of the rank. The table below shows how we compare and serves as a blueprint for what is affecting the overall health of our residents.

2010 & 2011 County Health Rankings: Mobilizing Action Towards Community Health,
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Outcomes (Overall)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortality (Length of life)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morbidity (Quality of life)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Factors (Overall)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Care (Access to care, quality of care)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Behaviors (Tobacco, diet and exercise, alcohol use, high risk sexual behavior)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Economic Factors (Education, employment, income, family and social support, community safety)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and Environment (Air quality, built environment)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
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</table>

This report helps show that where you live, learn, work and play influences how healthy you are and how long you will live. Programs and policies can positively influence the measures that make up the health factors rank, which should result in better health outcomes and, therefore, a healthier community. In 2011 our overall health factors ranking improved, as did our health outcomes. Unfortunately, despite the slight improvement, we are still among the unhealthiest counties in the state.

Pathways 2020 will continue to monitor these reports on a regular basis and use them as one means to evaluate the effectiveness of our activities. These reports are available at: www.countyhealthrankings.org.
While personal choices impact our health, the conditions in our community influence many decisions we make as an individual. Unhealthy lifestyle choices put a person at risk for many chronic diseases. Heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and asthma are the cause for nearly 60% of all deaths in Cowlitz County. To live long healthy lives, residents need to be committed to eating healthy foods, getting physical exercise, and avoiding smoking, excessive drinking, and abuse of prescription medications or illicit drugs. Barriers to making healthy choices exist, such as unsafe housing, neighborhoods and parks; lack of access to stores that sell healthy fresh foods; and a plethora of unhealthy, quick food options.

As a community we can address the factors that prevent people from making healthy lifestyle decisions and help by improving the opportunities to choose a healthy lifestyle. Policy and environmental change that make active living and healthy eating accessible for all residents will improve healthy behaviors. Cowlitz County should aim to make the healthy choice the easy choice for all residents. This may be ensuring access to healthy foods in convenience stores, safe parks, continued development of walking trails, and other opportunities for affordable recreation. These are just a few examples of how a community can influence personal lifestyle habits for the better.

It has long been acknowledged that some individual behaviors are risk factors for chronic diseases, such as smoking, lack of physical activity, and poor eating habits. Unfortunately Cowlitz County consistently falls short in many healthy behaviors. The 2011 County Health Rankings by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation determined that Cowlitz County ranked 39 out of 39 Washington State counties for healthy behaviors among adults. The measure took into account our smoking, obesity, binge drinking, motor vehicle crash mortality, chlamydia rates and teen birth rates. Additionally, 2007-2009 BRFSS data show that Cowlitz County adults are less likely to consume adequate fruits and vegetables compared to Washington State (21% and 26% respectively) and only half of Cowlitz County adults get adequate physical activity. Consequently, our county experiences higher mortality rates from many chronic diseases compared to the state as a whole.

**Call To Action**

**INDIVIDUAL**

a. Adopt healthier lifestyles: exercise, eat more fruit and vegetables, don’t smoke  
b. Use the community parks and trails  
c. Grow your own food  
d. Share your garden with family, neighbors or food banks  
e. Buy locally grown and processed foods, shop at farmers markets

**COMMUNITY**

a. Support community gardens, school gardens, gleaning, and food preservation  
b. Encourage development of trails systems and parks  
c. Support Cowlitz On The Move and Access to Healthy Food Committee  
d. Support availability of affordable healthy foods

**POLICY MAKERS**

a. Improve public transportation options to address access to affordable healthy foods  
b. Preserve existing parks and trails through collaboration of local governments  
c. Adopt complete streets standards in our cities to encourage pedestrian and bicycle access  
d. Buy and serve locally grown foods in schools and institutions  
e. Support land use policies that preserve agricultural land and encourage “urban farming”
Healthy Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight is important in reducing one’s risk for many chronic disease conditions and to prevent premature death. Less than one in three Cowlitz County residents is at a healthy weight. Rates of overweight and obesity in our county are among the worst in the state and we experience a much higher percentage of people who are obese. We had an obesity rate of 32% in the years 2004-2006 and in the years 2007-2009, the rate climbed to 36%. Washington State’s 2007-2009 obesity rate is 26%. In order to promote healthy weight among our residents, we need to address issues of food insecurity and hunger as well as policies and environments that allow for healthy eating decisions and behaviors in our schools, workplaces, and communities.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 35% Healthy Weight
Healthy People 2020 Goal: 33.9% Healthy Weight

Making An Impact

NEW TRAILS AND SMOKES-FREE PARKS
Cowlitz On The Move, Cowlitz County, City of Longview, National Park Service, and several community members have been active in the development of new trails in the county. Cowlitz County developed the 2.5 miles long Cooks Ferry Trail south of Castle Rock along the Cowlitz River. The Port of Kalama continued to expand their trails systems laying a mile-long asphalt trail to give walkers a safe path from town nearly to the Kalama River. Cowlitz On The Move, Pathways 2020, and the National Park Service collaborated to print the first map of public trails in Cowlitz County and more than 6,000 maps are distributed to tourists and residents. The City of Longview completed plans for the South Cowlitz River Loop Trail linking the Lexington area to Gerhardt Gardens and across the river to connect with the City of Kelso’s trails system, created a master plan for Archie Anderson Park, involving 160 neighborhood residents in a public visioning process, and adopted an ordinance banning tobacco use in 17 parks. Features of the Archie Anderson Park master plan include neighborhood gardens, a fruit or flowering tree orchard, basketball courts, a playground, a water spray area, a neighborhood building, picnic areas, a multi-use field, and baseball fields. There are plans for two parking lots and a trail head connection to the Highlands Trail.
**Life Expectancy**

Life expectancy at birth refers to the average expected lifespan of an individual. A baby born in Cowlitz County in 2009 can expect to live to be 77 years old. This is lower than the state's life expectancy of 80 years. Even within Cowlitz County there is variation of 10 years when place and race are considered. Non-Hispanic African-Americans in Cowlitz County can expect to live 69 years, whereas, a resident that lives in Kalama or Woodland can expect to live 79 years. While differences by race, place and income do exist in life expectancy, they are attributable to a combination of injuries and preventable risk factors that lead to chronic disease.

Pathways 2020 goal: > Washington State Rate

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**Mortality Rates**

Overall, the 2009 age-adjusted mortality rate in Cowlitz County is statistically higher than Washington State: 845 per 100,000 compared to 703 per 100,000. Only four counties in Washington have worse mortality rates than Cowlitz County. Females generally have lower mortality rates than males, a fact that holds true in our county. Place matters as well. Longview has the highest mortality rates (973) while Kalama (724) was similar to Washington State's rates. Most of the leading causes of death in Cowlitz County are chronic diseases that can be mitigated by healthier lifestyles (exercise, nutrient-packed diets, and abstinence from tobacco) and preventive care.

Pathways 2020 Goal: All-cause mortality at 761 per 100,000

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*Statistically significant different from State rate*
Smoking While Pregnant

One in four pregnant women in Cowlitz County smokes, compared to one in 10 women in Washington State. In Cowlitz County, maternal smoking rates are higher among younger mothers. From 2005-2009, 31% of 15-19 year olds, 27% of 20-29 year olds, and 15% of 30-49 year olds reported smoking during pregnancy. Maternal smoking is a concern not only because it increases the likelihood of sudden infant death and low birth weight among babies, but also because children growing up in households with smokers are more likely to have health problems, such as asthma and ear infections.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 10%

Childhood Immunizations

Immunizations are considered one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20th century. They prevent suffering, disability and even death from illness that once claimed the lives of many children and adults. Almost 90% of Cowlitz County kindergarteners are up-to-date on school-required vaccines. Data from CHILD Profile, an online vaccine registry, indicate that by the end of 2010, 67% of 19-35 month olds were up-to-date on recommended vaccines (4-3-1-3-3 series). This data is reflective of data in the registry (used by most Cowlitz County medical providers), not necessarily of true immunization rates. Ensuring vaccination of children not only protects their health, but also protects the health of those who are immunocompromised or too young to receive certain vaccines.

Pathways 2020 and Health People 2020 Goal: 95%
Suicide Rate

Since 2000, Cowlitz County has had between 9 and 19 suicides per year. Our rates remain higher than Washington State. While the number of suicides may seem low, suicide attempts are more common and both often are the result of mental illness. 90% of suicide victims have a diagnosable and treatable mental illness. Data from BRFSS for 2007 & 2009 suggest that 15.5% of Cowlitz County adults are currently receiving treatment from a health professional for mental illness. Additionally, the Washington State rate for adults with a serious mental illness is 2.9% while Cowlitz County’s rate is twice as high at a rate of 6.2%.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 13.5 per 100,000
Healthy People 2020 Goal: 10.2 per 100,000

Sexually Transmitted Infections

A Gonorrhea outbreak from 2005-2007 made STIs a local concern. Rates decreased by 2009 due to extended outreach and education, targeted testing and treatment follow-up, however there are indications that Gonorrhea is once again on the rise. Access to testing and treatment remains an issue. Young people aged 15-24 have four times the rate of infection as the general population, and in Cowlitz County, 15-24 year olds have statistically higher rates of infection compared to their peers in the state. Many young people are uninsured or delay seeking treatment due to fears about parent knowledge. Delayed treatment can lead to further complications, like pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility.

Pathways 2020 goal: All STI’s at 352 per 100,000
**C- Adult Smoking Rate**

Smoking puts a person at risk for heart disease and cancer, the top two causes of death, among many other diseases. In Cowlitz County, 61% of smokers reported having good, very good or excellent health, compared to 86% of non-smokers. Likewise, rates of smoking are higher in lower income families. A pack-a-day smoker who quits smoking will save nearly $250 a month, money that could be spent on healthier food for the family. Although Cowlitz County smoking rates decreased in 2009, our rates remain higher than Washington State and national rates. In Cowlitz County one in five adults are current smokers compared to one in seven in Washington State.

**Healthy People 2020 & Pathways 2020 Goal: 12%**

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**Making An Impact**

**ENHANCED RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

In 2009, Cowlitz Bikes organized a Bike to Work Week, which drew workers, students, and local leaders to strap on their helmets and bike to work, school, and play to promote bicycle safety and physical activity for active living and healthier lives. The Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments is preparing a transportation systems plan for Kelso and Longview which will incorporate pedestrian and bicycle travel in the future design of arterial streets.

In addition, the City of Kelso completed a competition-level skate park in 2010 after it took nearly nine years for the idea of a skateboard park to become a reality. The Kelso Rotary Club was a staunch supporter and together with youth, local fundraising events were held to augment the grants received and the City of Kelso’s contribution. The young skaters were able to help from the planning phase all the way through to completion of the park. They learned a great deal about how participation makes things happen in a community and visited Kelso City Council meetings a number of times. A large collaboration resulted in a completed skate park and overjoyed skaters who now come from all over the region to practice their skill.
The economic condition a person lives in impacts his or her health, even in first world countries. While poorer people are more likely to have worse health, there is also correlation with each step up the gradient of wealth. This relationship was most notably shown in the Whitehall Study, a study done among civil servants in England. Stresses related to the economy and income, such as unstable employment, limited family assets, and debt burden, have a cumulative effect on one’s health and may result in physical illness and psychological distress. Moreover, the monetary resources a person has influences the opportunities available, such as higher education, the ability to live in a safe house and neighborhood, owning reliable transportation, and buying healthy foods. Wealth affects an individual’s ability to have access to quality health care, including preventive care such as screenings for cancer or pre- and post-natal care. According to Washington Employment Security, about 20% of all jobs in Cowlitz County have an average hourly wage of less than $15 per hour, and another 40% provide an hourly wage of $15-$20 an hour.

Wealth is the strongest predictor for health. People in the highest income groups can expect to live more than six years longer than those in the lowest who are 50% more likely to have heart disease. Health improves as you move up from the bottom to the top of income groups. In Cowlitz County, 92% of adults with a household income of $50,000 or higher reported good or better health compared to 73% of those making less than $50,000. Similarly, 12% reported asthma in the higher income bracket compared to 21% of those in the lower income bracket.

While our economy may be in a recession, Cowlitz County is fortunate to have a lower cost of living, which makes the impact a bit softer. Granted, for the families impacted by unemployment this may be of little comfort. In addition, there are several ongoing initiatives to strengthen the efforts of local business and industry to retain and create employment opportunities. We have brought Skyline Steel and Carrington Electric to the county along with new infrastructure dollars at Exit 46 on I-5. In recent months there have been more than $257 million in new construction starts.
Housing Wage

A family should pay no more than 30% of its income on housing. Housing wage calculates what a full time worker would have to earn per hour to spend no more than 30% of household income for a two-bedroom house. In general, housing costs for new home construction and home sales have been dropping and the county remains one of the most affordable on the I-5 Corridor. In Cowlitz County 52.4% of renters are paying more than 30% of income on housing while the state of Washington the rate was 48.3% (ACS 2005-09). If you are paying more for housing, this means less money for basic essentials and no disposable income.

Pathways 2020 Goal: < 75% of Washington State Housing Wage Rate

Making An Impact

NEW JOB CREATION

The hard work of creating jobs in Cowlitz County is beginning to pay off. New Jersey-based Skyline Steel is constructing a manufacturing plant at the Port of Longview that will employ 65-70 workers with family wage jobs. Skyline manufactures large spiral-welded or straight-seamed pipes used primarily in construction. The new site will also return $100,000 in local taxes. More good news in 2010 came from the Port of Kalama where Bennu Glass LLC bought and plans to reopen the shuttered wine bottle manufacturing plant. While bringing new jobs to town is important, the community’s economy is also based on family-owned businesses that provide living wage jobs and support community charities dedicated to improving our community members’ quality of life.
Median Household Income

Washington State Office of Financial Management projected the Median Household Income in Cowlitz County in 2010 at $46,037, compared to Washington State at $55,379. While this is a modest increase since 2008, it’s lower than the 2005 median household income reflecting the impact of the national recession on income. The loss of income translates into loss of other resources for the family and has far reaching impacts on the family, ranging from health to educational opportunities to increased stress and a decreased sense of control.

Pathways 2020 Goal: > Washington State Median

Unemployed Workforce

While the measure of unemployment has its limitations, since it does not account for those that are discouraged and have stopped looking for work, those that are collecting benefits but not looking for work, and those that are underemployed, the unemployment indicator is widely used and allows comparison between jurisdictions. However, it is the human story that is most important. Since 2007, 2,500 jobs have disappeared in Cowlitz County. Employment offers individuals the power to make healthier choices for themselves and their families. By the end of 2010, the unemployment rate hovered near 12% and there is no quick turnaround on the horizon.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 10%
Affordable Housing

Affordability of housing is critical in a community to attract new families, investors, and business. An affordability graph which depicts where counties in the state fall in respect to local families having the ability to afford the mortgage on a new home has been reviewed. For the past six years, Washington State, because of rising costs in the Puget Sound area, has fallen below the affordability scale. While the affordability level for Cowlitz County has taken a dip, it still remains good and on an upswing. While housing may be affordable, ensuring availability to those who need it most is still challenging.

Pathways 2020 Goal: > a score of 100
Education brings opportunity. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Commission to Build A Healthier America, education can influence health in a number of ways:

- Education increases health knowledge and healthy behaviors, leading to improved health.
- Greater educational attainment results in better employment opportunities and a higher income, both of which are linked to better health.
- A higher education is linked to social and psychological factors, such as a sense of control, fostering skills and attitudes that include purposefulness, problems-solving, and confidence which result in better health.

People with higher education are more likely to live longer, have better health outcomes and practice healthier behavior. For instance, in Cowlitz County 26% of adults with more than a high school education eat at least five fruits and vegetables a day versus 15% of adults with a high school education or less. Similarly in Cowlitz County, 12% of adults with more than a high school education smoke, while 33% of those with a high school education or less smoke. Overall health differs by education. In Cowlitz County 87% of adults with more than a high school education report good, very good or better health versus 74% of those with a high school education or less (BRFSS 2007-2009). This relationship between health and education works as a gradient; each level of education demonstrates an increase in the number reporting good health. A study that looked at the percent of adults in Washington who report less than very good health provides the following statistics: 75% of those with less than a high school education, 54% of those with a high school education, 45% of those with some college and 28% of those with a college degree (RWJ).

Educational attainment of parents is linked to a child’s health. In Washington, the infant mortality rates for babies born to mothers with 11 or fewer years of education was 6.8 per 1,000 live births, compared to 3.2 per 1,000 live births for babies born to mothers with 16 or more years of education. Furthermore, household education matters. Children whose parents have not finished high school are more than six times as likely to be in fair or poor health.

Employment opportunities increase with education. Those with lower educational attainment are also more likely to have occupational hazards and poor working conditions, are less likely to have health-related benefits, and are more likely make less money. Higher education means a person is less likely to be unemployed, even during times of economic downturn.

As educational attainment increases so do people’s perception that they can influence their lives. This sense of control over life has been linked to better self-reported health, lower rates of physical impairment, decreased risk of chronic health conditions, and increased adoption of healthy behaviors.

Call To Action

**INDIVIDUAL**
- Donate to scholarship programs that facilitate access to post secondary education
- Support back pack buddies program
- Support continual education for students and adults
- Read and play daily with your young children
- Become a school volunteer or tutor
- Set and maintain clear rules for the student in your home

**COMMUNITY**
- Offer local training to child care providers facilitated by early learning providers
- Maintain L.E.E.P. activities with the Longview School District
- Advocate for higher education opportunities for all community members

**POLICY MAKERS**
- Increase funding for early childhood programs such as Head Start and ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program) (Legislative and Congressional action required)
- Support programs that reward high school students for not dropping out
**Early Childhood Education**

Studies show that graduates of Head Start are more likely to complete high school, stay out of prison, and be productive members of the community. In Cowlitz County, the penetration rate is good for enrolling the neediest children with Head Start and ECEAP services. After several years of planning and advocacy, Lower Columbia College recently added Early Head Start serving pregnant women, babies and toddlers up to age three. Sixty children are now enrolled and many are on a wait list. Early Head Start gives families an opportunity for five years of participation in a program that is beneficial to the child’s development and future health. At present, Lower Columbia College Early Head Start Program is only serving 5.4% of eligible low income babies and toddlers under three. Together Head Start/Early Head Start/ECEAP is serving 498 children in Cowlitz County.

**Pathways 2020 Goal: 32% Eligible Children Served**

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**Making An Impact**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

A community building block within the social determinants of health is the provision of quality early childhood education. Cowlitz County has been fortunate to have two new strong examples of quality early childhood education. Lower Columbia College was able to expand its Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) with the addition of Early Head Start (EHS). EHS serves 60 low-income children, prenatal to three years old, and their parents. The program delivers home-based and center-based services to strengthen the parents’ role as their child’s first and best educator. The EHS joins a Head Start/ECEAP program designated as a Center of Excellence by Governor Gregoire. The quality of the program was recently demonstrated when two parents were singled out for Beating the Odds in Region X and Father of the Year for the National Head Start Program. NORPAC also received the National Corporate Award for their contributions to Head Start.

The Longview School District has taken the leadership to implement a standard curriculum for local pre-schools to prepare children for advancement to kindergarten. Longview Early Education Partnership (L.E.E.P.), made up of local Preschool and Childcare Directors, received special support from the Weyerhaeuser Foundation to purchase curriculums for 19 centers to pilot the concept of students receiving comparable lessons to prepare them for kindergarten.

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**Source Data:** 2005-09 American Community Survey Estimates, Lower Columbia College Head Start/Early Head Start/ECEAP Enrollment Data
High School Dropouts

Pathways 2020 has chosen the dropout rate as their measure for academic success by local students. The local high school graduation rate is similar to Washington State. In 2009-2010 the on-time graduation rate for Cowlitz County schools ranged from 67.6% to 92.9% and smaller schools demonstrated higher graduation rates. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) shows the on-time graduation rate for the same period across the state was 73.5%. Adults who have not graduated high school have worse health outcomes.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 4.2%

Education Beyond High School

In Cowlitz County only 14% of adults over the age of 25 have a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 31% of Washington State and 28% of the nation. Fortunately we have a low percentage of residents with less than a high school education (14%), which is not much higher than Washington State (11%) and is lower than the national average (16%). Each additional year students remain in school is beneficial to their health, and the health of their children and provides more opportunities for employment in the future. The current economic downturn may have demonstrated to residents the increased employment opportunities education provides. Our local community college has a full enrollment this year.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 61% Education beyond HS and 15% 4-year degrees
Call To Action

**INDIVIDUAL**
- Limit children's screen time (TV and computer)
- Learn who your neighbors are
- Spend time with teens and help them find what they are good at

**COMMUNITY**
- Encourage family and community events
- Support expansion of Cowlitz Free Medical Clinic
- Support agencies that promote parenting and care giving skills

**POLICY MAKERS**
- Support continued funding for Children’s Justice and Advocacy Center
- Support the development of local living wage jobs

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Children who grow up in poverty or have low-quality developmental support have worse health outcomes. Evidence shows that children that participate in early childhood development programs experience immediate and long-term health benefits; children from poorer families experience even greater health impacts. Investing in our children's care, education and development can have an impact on the future health of our children.

Likewise, childhood experiences within the household can affect a child's health in adulthood. The emotional experiences we have as children shape our future emotional health, physical health, health behaviors and mortality. Adverse Childhood Events (ACE) include growing up with physical, emotional or sexual abuse; an alcohol or drug abuser in the household; an incarcerated household member; someone who has mental illness; witnessing domestic violence; and/or parental divorce, separation or death. The greater number of adverse events that a child experiences, the greater the negative health impacts. An ACE score, ranging from 0-8, was developed to measure this cumulative effect. In Washington State, 23% of adults with an ACE score of greater than 6 reported fair or poor health compared to 9.6% of adults with a score of 0, and 41% of adults with an ACE score greater than 6 reported limitations in their activities due to health problems while only 15% of adults with a score of 0 reported limitations. Rates in Cowlitz County are similar to the state rates.

In addition, one's family situation matters. Married people are more likely to live longer, with males seeing the most benefit. Two parent families with children are less likely to live in poverty than a family with a female head of the household. In Cowlitz County 45% of single mothers raising children live in poverty. A single mother raising children who is living in poverty is more likely to feel stressed, have less control over her life, and is less likely to have health insurance. Her children are also less likely to eat healthy and be at a healthy weight.
**Domestic Violence**

The past 10 years has demonstrated a downward trend in the number of domestic violence offences in Cowlitz County. Advocates at the Emergency Support Shelter note an increase in the level of violence and that fewer victims are willing to report because they rely financially on the offender. In fact, the shelter has noted a 16% increase in victims seeking services in 2010. Limited resources will require more community collaboration to reduce the rates of domestic violence. While there are numerous community and law enforcement activities to prosecute domestic violence offenders, treatment for offenders is lacking. Cowlitz County, along with the state of Washington, showed a slight upturn in the number of domestic violence offences in 2009.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 5.9 per 1,000

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**Child Abuse And Neglect**

Since 2003 the rate of accepted referrals for child abuse and neglect for children in Cowlitz County has dropped by more than half. In 2009 the rate was 40.2 per 1,000 children. A reason for this decline may be legislative changes which make referrals for drug endangered babies more difficult to accept. Strong program services by Parents Place, school districts, and Lower Columbia College Head Start can help parents deal more effectively with life’s stresses. According to Child Protective Services, the difficult economic times, family separations, and increased heroin use are affecting the number of child abuse and neglect accepted referrals, which were up in 2010.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 32.2 per 1,000
Families in Poverty

A higher percentage of Cowlitz County families and individuals live below the federal poverty level than in the state and nation. In the past nine years the number of low-income individuals has risen at a rate slightly faster than the national rate. More individuals and families are qualifying for Federal and State services at a time when funding for services is being reduced. Services are being denied and taken away from people who previously qualified for aid. Education matters: In Cowlitz County 28% of adults without a high school degree live in poverty compared to 13% of adults with a high school degree.

PATHWAYS 2020 GOAL: 9.2% of all families

Teen Pregnancy

Since 2006, pregnancies among 15-17 year olds have decreased from 96 in 2006 to 49 in 2009. Cowlitz County rates are not statistically different from the state. Pregnancy among teens is a concern because a young mother is less likely to complete high school. Educational attainment is related to one’s income level, and those with less than a high school education make less money and therefore have inadequate resources to raise a child. A mother’s educational level and income is positively correlated to the health of the child.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 26.9 per 1,000
Healthy People 2020 Goal: 36.2 per 1,000

Making An Impact

CHILDREN’S JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY CENTER

For too long, abused children have recounted their abuse to police, prosecutors, social workers and defense lawyers; repeatedly reliving their nightmares in a formal agency setting. Today, there is a solution. The Children’s Justice and Advocacy Center opened to provide a safe place for children of abuse to tell their stories. The children talk with a trained forensics interviewer, while lawyers, law enforcement, and others can watch from an adjoining room. The center helps with improved prosecution in child abuse and neglect cases and offers the child victim protection and recovery help. The Children’s Justice and Advocacy Center is a joint effort between the prosecutor’s office, Emergency Support Shelter, the Child Psychiatry Coalition and other social service groups.


**Adults With Health Insurance**

Not all jobs provide medical insurance. Nationally, 75% of the uninsured are in a working family. In Cowlitz County an average of one in five adults 18 to 64 years of age did not have health insurance coverage from 2007-2009. The rate has increased from 2004-2006, while it has decreased statewide. Health insurance is important because it promotes timely and appropriate medical care, as well as encourages utilization of preventive care. Uninsured adults are more likely to have worse health outcomes. While state sponsored Basic Health provides low-cost health coverage, the program is no longer processing incoming applications and new applicants are on a wait list until spots open up.

Pathways 2020 and Healthy People 2020 Goal: 100%

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**Elder Fatal Falls**

Falls among the elderly are a concern in our community. 20-30% who fall suffer moderate to severe injuries which can make it harder to get around and live independently. Four in five fatal falls occur among adults 65 years or older. The rates in Cowlitz County remain higher than Washington State. In 2009, Cowlitz County had 14 deaths attributable to falls among the population over 65 years old. Falls may be prevented by regular exercise that increases leg strength and balance, a review of medications by a professional, and yearly eye checks. Homes can be made safer by reducing tripping hazards, adding railing or grab bars, and improving the lighting.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 107.2 per 100,000
Healthy People 2020 Goal: 45.3 per 100,000
The community in which you live makes a difference in your overall health. One’s neighborhood has an effect on short and long term quality of life and life-expectancy. The features of your neighborhood which may influence your health include quality of schools and affordable housing, frequency of violence and crimes, opportunities for social interaction with neighbors, access to grocery stores that sell affordable, fresh and healthy produce, and places for adults and children to play and exercise. Communities with easily accessible, clean and safe parks provide an incentive for using the areas for exercise and social gatherings.

A community food assessment performed in Cowlitz County demonstrated a high prevalence of convenience stores and a low prevalence of supermarkets in lower income neighborhoods. Convenience stores have few healthy food options available and generally their food products are higher in costs. In fact, obesity and poor diet are related to inaccessibility of supermarkets and to easy accessibility to convenience stores. There are several activities happening in our county to address these issues. The Access to Healthy Foods Committee has several action plans to address issues related to better school food, community gardens, healthy foods in convenience stores, and increasing opportunities to sell local produce. An Eat Smart grant awarded to Pathways 2020 opened the door to expanding our efforts in those issues as well as implementing more school and community gardens.

Another important characteristic of a community is the social cohesion or connectedness. A person who lives in a community which provides social support, networks and cohesion is more likely to have better physical health (Fujiwara). Robert Putnum’s book, Bowling Alone, argues that America’s social capital is in decline and that this has a negative effect on health. Furthermore, John McNight and Peter Block’s book, The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods, argues that by working together with our neighbors, we can better sustain our health and care for our children and vulnerable populations. Residents within a community must work together to keep the neighborhood safe and clean, protect the vulnerable, and educate. Joining a neighborhood association or making an effort to get to know our neighbors are good starting points to forming strong ties and higher levels of trust among each other. In Cowlitz County the Highlands Neighborhood Association is a good model of collaboration.

**Call To Action**

**INDIVIDUAL**
- a. Register to vote and vote in elections
- b. Join and be active with a local anti-drug coalition
- c. Get to know your neighbors and their unique skills, offer your special skills to help out your neighbors.

**COMMUNITY**
- a. Support community collaborations
- b. Support cultural events, for example, the International Festival
- a. Form and participate in Neighborhood Watch groups

**POLICY MAKERS**
- a. Pass 1/10th Cowlitz County sales tax increase for mental health and substance abuse services
- b. Maintain community policing with local law enforcement agencies
**Alcohol and Drug Related Deaths**

The use of drugs and alcohol can have a deleterious effect on the user’s body, contributing to early death. While the rates are low, Cowlitz County’s rates are higher than the state. The abuse of drugs or alcohol can have a damaging effect on the economic, emotional and physical well-being of the individual, family, as well as on the community in terms of crime. These rates do not reflect deaths that result from motor vehicle or other accidents as a result of drug or alcohol use. Alcohol and drug related death rates are also lower than the rates of death from all motor vehicle accidents.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 21.0 per 100,000

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**Crime Rate**

Cowlitz County and its local cities are benefitting from a continued decline in overall crime rate. However, Cowlitz County has experienced slightly higher crime rates than Washington State. The rate of violent crimes in Cowlitz County is less than the state while the property crime rate is just slightly higher. There has been a continuing decline in all crimes since the high of 74 per 1,000 residents in 2003. Local government efforts to adequately fund law enforcement have likely been a factor to reduce crime in the community. The downward economic situation may impact crime rates as people become more desperate.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 37.5 per 100,000
Race and Ethnicity

While Cowlitz County race and ethnicity is predominantly white, since 2000 there has been an increase in the Hispanic population. Changing populations may bring about challenges in terms of communication, but also will bring about a richer cultural experience for community members as a whole. These graphs show the percent of population by race in Cowlitz County and Washington State.

Registered Voters Who Voted

In Cowlitz County a voter has the convenience of mailing or dropping off their ballot. Still, Cowlitz County remains near the bottom when compared to other counties in the State for the number of registered voters who vote. In 2010, the local turnout was 68.4%, the fifth lowest in the state. Change in a community often is the result of elections, but with fewer voting, the local government misses out hearing from a segment of the population. Ironically, Cowlitz County has a good rate for registering voters. Senior citizens remain the largest voting block and this will likely continue. Low turnout by registered voters indicates local residents are disconnected with local policymaking.

PATHWAYS 2020 75.2%

Making An Impact

EAT SMART COWLITZ

Over the past two years the Northwest Health Foundation has funded two projects that will help connect people with their neighbors and better health. Eat Smart Cowlitz, a project of Pathways 2020 and Cowlitz On The Move, is helping volunteers at local grade schools and in the Highlands neighborhood to plan and plant gardens, share produce, and support local corner stores. The Highlands Neighborhood Association assists the project by building the participatory capacity of the residents to take individual ownership and improve their lives. Being connected to a neighborhood is a strong indicator of what makes up a healthy community.
Our physical environment impacts our health. We are fortunate to have easy access to the natural environment. The Mt. St. Helens National Monument, the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and our nearby rivers provide many year-round opportunities to relax and play. In 2009, Cowlitz On The Move released a trail map highlighting 16 local trails to promote outdoor recreation.

Conversely, our built environment can affect our health. People who live near high traffic areas are exposed to fine particulate matter and other pollutants, have worse health outcomes, such as asthma, and are less likely to have areas to walk. Air quality is often a concern in our community; however a recent study performed at the end of 2010 on the air quality around the St. Helens Elementary School in Longview, which is near the industrial area, failed to find levels of pollutants that would indicate health concerns (EPA). Pathways 2020 has discontinued reporting on the number of good air quality days for the county as too little data is collected for an accurate picture. The County Health Rankings also looked at the physical environment, taking into account the air quality and the built environment. In 2011, Cowlitz County ranked 25 out of 39 counties.

The conditions within our homes have implications for how healthy we are. People spend 65-90% of their time indoors and indoor air quality can be up to five times more polluted than outdoor air. Poor quality housing or inadequate housing can contribute to disease, injuries and poor childhood development. Substandard housing conditions can lead to increased mold, mites, and other allergens that are associated with poor health. The Cowlitz County Healthy Homes Program offers in-home assessments which help homeowners identify common asthma triggers and develop action plans with low or no cost solutions.

**Call To Action**

**INDIVIDUAL**

a. Recycle at home and at work
b. Drive less and carpool when possible to reduce pollution
c. Wash your car in a place at home that prevents wash water from entering the storm drains; or, better yet, take your car to be washed at a facility to manage this for you
d. Purchase green household products which are less harmful to you and the environment

**COMMUNITY**

a. Maintain a Community Environmental Health Assessment Work Group sponsored by local agencies
b. Talk to your neighbors about conservation, reuse and recycling
c. Bring in or form a “green drinks group” for people to discuss environmental and sustainability issues

**POLICY MAKERS**

a. Adopt curbside recycling county wide
b. Adopt a smoke-free policy for all Cowlitz County facilities and properties
c. Consider conservation opportunities and sustainable planning when adopting new policies

**Recycling**

Individually, we can all help the environment by recycling more. Cowlitz County has excelled in providing residents with this opportunity. Longview was the first municipality in the state to collect co-mingled recyclable materials. Cowlitz County is currently planning to add five recycling collection stations throughout the rural county. Curbside recycling pickup is available in Longview and Woodland. The County has maintained the lowest tonnage tipping rates in the state while increasing it recycling efforts. In 2009, Washington State recycled 45% of its waste, as reported by the Department of Ecology. In 2009, Cowlitz County recycled 53% of its waste, surpassing the state set goal of 50%.

**Pathways 2020’s Goal: 59%**
**Foodborne Illness**

Tracking outbreaks and single cases of foodborne illness are critical public health functions to prevent further illness and protect the public. Public health also inspects restaurants regularly to ensure that proper control measures are being implemented. Individuals can reduce their risk of foodborne illness by following food safety guidelines such as washing hands, food prep surfaces, fruits and vegetables; separating cooked and ready to eat foods, thoroughly cooking meats, and refrigerating foods promptly after serving them. In Cowlitz County rates of illness from salmonella, E. coli, and shigella have been lower than Washington State since 2005.

**Pathways 2020 goal: 7.9 per 100,000**

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**Making An Impact**

**HEALTHY HOMES**

An outcome from the Community Environmental Health Assessment organized by the Cowlitz County Health Department and Pathways 2020 was the Healthy Homes Program. Cowlitz County recognized that the higher rates of asthma in children and adults affected their school, work, quality of life. The goal of the program is to help people learn about common health risks in the home associated with asthma, allergies, and other breathing problems. Common allergens inside the home include mold and mildew, dust, mites, pet dander, and secondhand smoke. More than 100 families annually receive a free home assessment on barriers to healthy breathing and simple remedies. The project is modeled after the Master Home Environmentalist Program originally presented by the American Lung Association of Washington. The program volunteers offer low-to-no cost suggestions to help address those concerns. Led by an AmeriCorps member, Cowlitz County’s Healthy Homes Program is helping families prevent unhealthy indoor living environments.
Asthma

Asthma, while a serious chronic disease, is often manageable through regular check-ups, following an asthma management plan, and making changes to the home environment. Managing asthma can help reduce activity limitations and days of school or work missed, trips to the hospital, and lost sleep. The Master Home Environmentalist Program can help by providing a home assessment to suggest ways to reduce common allergens in the home. Asthma rates for adults are higher in Cowlitz County than the state and national rates. While the rates decreased in Cowlitz County between the two time periods used, this decrease was not statistically significant.

Pathways 2020 Goal: 11.2%
### Data Sources

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy Weight, Health Insurance, Smoking Rates, &amp; Asthma Rates</td>
<td>2004-2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Surveys, Washington State Department of Health (local and state data) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (national data)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suicide, Mortality, Elder Fatal Falls, Alcohol &amp; Drug related Deaths</td>
<td>Death Certificate Data, Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics</td>
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<td>Maternal Smoking</td>
<td>Birth Certificate Data, Washington State Department of Health, Center for Disease Statistics</td>
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<td>Sexually Transmitted Diseases</td>
<td>STD Report Records, Washington State Department of Health, STD/TB services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childhood Immunization</td>
<td>Washington State Department of Health CHILD Profile School and Childcare Assessment Database</td>
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<td>Housing Wage</td>
<td>2000-2010 Out of Reach Reports, National Low Income Housing Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed Workforce</td>
<td>Washington State Department of Employment Security Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
<td>Washington Center for Real Estate Research, Washington State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Lower Columbia College Head Start/ECEAP</td>
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<td>High School Dropout</td>
<td>Washington Office of Superintendent of Instruction (local and state data) and US Dept of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (national data)</td>
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<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, UCR Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td>Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration, Administrative Services, Case Management Information System (local and state data) and US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, Voluntary Cooperative Information (national data)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registered Voters who Voted</td>
<td>Cowlitz County Auditor, Washington Secretary of State Elections Division</td>
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<td>Teen Pregnancy</td>
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<td>Recycling</td>
<td>Washington Department of Ecology</td>
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The 2010 Community Report Card is made possible through the contributions and in-kind support of the following organizations:

Cowlitz County Health Department  
www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/health/  
360.414.5599

Cowlitz EDC  
www.cowlitzedc.com  
360.423.9921

Cowlitz PUD  
www.cowlitzpud.org/  
360.423.2210

Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments  
www.cwcog.org  
360.577.3041

City of Castle Rock  
www.ci.castle-rock.wa.us  
360.274.8181

City of Kelso  
www.kelso.gov  
360.423.7420

City of Longview  
www.mylongview.com  
360.442.5000

Kaiser Permanente  
www.kaiserpermanente.org  
360.636.2400

Kelso School District  
www.kelso.wednet.edu  
360.501.1900

Longview School District  
www.longview.k12.wa.us  
360.575.7000

Lower Columbia College  
www.lowercolumbia.edu/  
360.442.2311

Lower Columbia Community Action Program  
www.lccac.org  
360.425.3430

City of Kalama  
www.cityofkalama.com  
360.673.4561

PeaceHealth  
www.peacehealth.org/LowerColumbia  
360.414.2000

Port of Kalama  
www.portofkalama.com  
360.673.2325

Port of Longview  
www.portoflongview.com  
360.425.3305

Port of Woodland  
www.portofwoodland.com  
360.225.6555

Family Health Center  
www.cowlitzfamilyhealth.org  
360.636.3892