

Great Game Huddle Notes

October 11th, 2016

This morning Commissioner Harold Bengsch introduced our special guests for today's presentation, Clay Goddard, Kathryn Wall and Katie Towns of the Greene County Health Department.

Clay Goddard, Assistant Director of Health, spoke about the Regional Health Assessment conducted by the Ozarks Health Commission. The Regional Health Assessment provides a detailed look at the County's health data on a variety of topics. The document is instrumental in determining areas of priority addressed in strategic planning. The staff worked together with local health care providers including Cox and Mercy Health Systems, Burrell Behavioral Health, Freeman Hospital in Joplin and Citizens Memorial Hospital in Bolivar. The study included not just our immediate area, but 51 counties across 4 states. This vast area was then broken down into communities, our own community including Greene, Webster and Christian counties.

Katie Towns, Assistant Director of Health, guided us through a presentation summarizing the findings of the assessment. Three major areas of concern have been identified locally: diseases of the heart, diseases of the lungs and mental illness. Katie spoke of some of the underlying issues and contributing factors of these top three concerns and of the common threads they share. She also shared with us some of the strategies of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) which engages the Healthy Living Alliance to address the community's health needs and identified issues.

There are many issues, but some of the areas Katie spoke on were:

- Mental health problems.
- A need for more physicians in the 51 county area.
- Encouraging local students to become interested in the health care field.
- Better access to health care through Medicaid.
- Access to healthy foods for healthy living.
- An increase on the excise tax on tobacco products.

To review the entire assessment click [here](#).