



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 17, 2017

First-Ever Online Data Tool Allows Kansas City to Examine Urban Health by Neighborhood -- and Take Action

Pilot health dashboard will greatly expand city's understanding of health & well-being and how it can be improved

Over 80 percent of the United States population lives in urban areas. Yet Kansas City, Kansas and other cities seeking to make health improvements have lacked a standardized tool to understand and benchmark their city's standing on actionable and widely accepted indicators of health and health risk.

Now Kansas City has joined with three other U.S. cities, NYU School of Medicine and Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service, and the National Resource Network to pilot a City Health Dashboard (cityhealthdashboard.com), a data visualization online tool that will greatly improve city-level understanding of health and empower mayors, city managers, local health officials, and other stakeholders to enact policies that target the risk factors and health conditions that most impact their communities.

"We are very fortunate to have this incredible resource available to us. As the mayor of a city whose residents face numerous health challenges, it is essential that we have access to data that gives us a better understanding of what those challenges are. Just as important, we need to know where in our city those challenges exist," says Mark Holland, Mayor/CEO of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas. "Through the help of NYU and the National Resource Network, we now have a dashboard that helps us do these things. I'm very excited at the possibilities this opens up for our government and the residents of Kansas City, Kansas."

The user-friendly website presents 26 measures related to health across five areas: health outcomes, health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment. The data includes traditional health metrics such as premature mortality, teen birth rate, and adult obesity prevalence, as well as non-health measures that impact health, including unemployment rate, third-grade reading proficiency, walkability, and air quality.

All measures are presented at the city-level and, where possible, by neighborhood, based on census tract, and demographic group. The City Health Dashboard also displays national averages, so that cities can compare their performance on select metrics to national values. Users can explore the data through easily navigable maps and tables to better understand health disparities within and across their cities.

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“For many years, the Unified Government has worked to improve the health of its citizens by using data as a tool to inform decision-making,” said Robert St. Peter, M.D., president and CEO of the Kansas Health Institute, which provided project management for the local initiative. “This new dashboard provides insights at the neighborhood level, helping policymakers identify the areas with the greatest need.”

Kansas City and the other pilot cities face economic challenges, which are reflected in rates of children in poverty, unemployment, and high housing cost burden, according to City Health Dashboard data. Similarly, all of the pilot cities have higher teen birth and violent crime rates and lower high school graduation rates than the national average.

There are bright spots too. Jail incarceration is below the national average in Kansas City (with 217 out of 100,000 people incarcerated in Kansas City compared to 326 per 100,000 nationally). But the greatest value of the City Health Dashboard, participating cities say, is that it paints a clear and accurate picture of priority areas for cities to target with improvement efforts.

The data for this dashboard comes from federal and state governments and organizations that apply rigorous methodology to data collection, including the U.S. Census Bureau, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The Dashboard is available at cityhealthdashboard.com and can be expanded to other cities in the future.

“We created the City Health Dashboard in response to local demand for more accurate data about the health of our cities’ citizens,” said Marc Gourevitch, MD, MPH, chair of the Department of Population Health and principal investigator for the Dashboard. “City leaders know that ‘what gets measured is what gets done.’ They want accurate, actionable data so they can improve their citizens’ health, contain health care-related costs, and focus on community well-being. We’re excited to be the first to provide this important information to cities.”

“In our work with nearly 50 cities across the nation, we have learned that city governments want to improve the physical health of their residents as much as the economic and fiscal health of their cities. But most health data in the U.S. is simply unavailable at the city level,” said David Eichenath, Executive Director of the National Resource Network. “Now, through the City Health Dashboard, local decision makers in these four cities have the data that they need to work to create healthier communities.”

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About the Department of Population Health at NYU School of Medicine

The Department of Population Health at NYU School of Medicine unites research in the fields of medicine and public health to improve the health of populations in New York City and around the globe and educates students to become leaders in healthcare delivery, health policy, and public health. Partnering with colleagues at NYU Langone, NYU Lutheran, Bellevue Hospital, and diverse community and private sector organizations, the Department conducts basic and applied research to improve the quality and effectiveness of healthcare and to prevent and better manage disease. Visit us at med.nyu.edu/pophealth and interact with us on [Twitter](#).

About National Resource Network

The National Resource Network is a component of the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative, and is a \$10 million technical assistance program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Network is being implemented by a group of leading experts from the private and public sectors, including Enterprise Community Partners, Public Financial Management, HR&A Advisors, New York University’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and the International City/County Management Association. The Network develops and delivers

innovative solutions to American cities to help them address their toughest economic challenges. More information about the National Resource Network is available online at <http://nationalresourcenetwork.org>. You can also follow the National Resource Network on Twitter [@NatlResourceNet](https://twitter.com/NatlResourceNet).

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