



Oklahoma Turning Point Initiative Directors Report

This time last year there were **42** Local Community Partnerships addressing their health issues at the local level. At this writing there are **54** Local Community Partnerships! Again for 2006, the goal of the state Turning Point office is to provide the needed technical support to local Turning Point partnerships around the state as *they* address the health issues in *their communities*.

We have had some changes this year in our staffing to meet the needs and continued growth of the Local Turning Point Partnerships. This time last year we had 6 regional Turning Point Field Consultants. We celebrated the addition of Tammy Randazzo, MPH to the Turning Point team in May. Tammy brings several years of community development experience with her, and provides support for the partnerships in East Central Oklahoma. Then we helped Sandy Butler celebrate her retirement in August. So for a short period of time we had an increase in the technical support staff. We have two vacant positions at this time. Our hope is to have these positions funded, and filled by the end of the calendar year. Turning Point Field staff remains 6, but now there is a strong possibility that we will come closer to meeting the demand of the community partnership to assist them in developing and maintaining partnerships.

Last year I announced the addition of an epidemiologist to our staff. The State of the County Health Reports developed by Miriam McGaugh continue to be very popular tools for the communities when conducting community assessments and developing health improvement plans. All of the county reports are now available on-line at www.health.ok.gov/local/chr/. In addition, Miriam has been working on partnership evaluations in order to increase the effectiveness of the initiatives offered, to improve infrastructure, and to simply help document the many and amazing accomplishments of our community partners. Jackson County Health Action Team and Cherokee County Health Coalition are currently undergoing the evaluation process at varying stages.

The Business Committee of Oklahoma Turning Point Council evaluated the Certified Healthy Business Program this year, and developed a new strategic plan to accommodate its rapid growth. Chesapeake Energy, Saint Anthony Oklahoma City, and Norman Regional Health System added incentives this year for the businesses that receive the Certificates of Excellence and Certificates of Merit. Remember: ***The Economy of Oklahoma Will Improve, When the Health of Oklahoma Improves.***

During the year I have had the honor of attending several partnership meetings and special events sponsored by the partnerships. The excitement and passion I have witnessed has been amazing!! The climate of *health improvement* in Oklahoma is changing. The partnerships and field consultants have produced outstanding reports this year. Please review the reports if you haven't. If you're not involved in a local partnership I suggest you get involved, and have some fun!!

Thanks to all of the partners, both state and local, who share their vision and passion to improve the health of Oklahoma. The many hours that you give of your time *will* have an impact. Just look around and see all that is happening to improve our health that wasn't happening just a few years ago! We recognize the efforts you are making in your communities and truly appreciate your commitment. Your involvement in this endeavor will be sure to result in an improved state of health for all Oklahomans.

Larry Olmstead, Director
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