

**PROJECT NAME:** Environmental Scan of Healthcare Trends and Issues and Development of Grantmaking Guidelines

**PROJECT LEAD:** Bruce A. Eddy, Ph.D.

**TIMELINE:** 2004

**CONTENT AREA:**

**FUNDER:** Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City

**CLIENT:** A Rising Tide

**AUDIENCE:**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:** Mixed Methods -- Qualitative and Quantitative

This Environmental Scan (ES) examined how trends in the demographic, political, economic and health care environments were likely to affect health status and the access to health care in the Greater Kansas City area. It also highlighted trends in health status issues consistently identified as major need areas in other community health assessments.

The ES was one part of a larger body of research conducted for the Health Care Foundation (HCF). A companion report to this Environmental Scan was the *Health Assessment of Cass, Jackson and Lafayette Counties (2005)*. That report examined the health status and unmet health needs of Cass, Jackson and Lafayette Counties in Missouri based on data from health assessment reports, public health data, and focus groups and town hall meetings conducted in Cass and Lafayette counties.

The Health Assessment also provided HCF with an overview of the health status and unmet health needs for residents of its Missouri service area, and identified several vulnerable populations for which there are few sources of information. The ES built upon the Health Assessment by synthesizing health information and ongoing and emerging trends in health care, demographic shifts, economics and the political environment.

**OVERVIEW:** The ES sections include:

**Demographic Environment:** This section discussed how overall population growth, the growing number of Hispanics, patterns of suburbanization, and the aging of society were likely to affect health care in the Kansas City region.

**Political Environment:** This section addressed how recent national and state budgets with substantial reductions for Medicaid and other programs serving indigent populations would affect the region. The section also discussed several health levies that exist in the Greater Kansas City area which support critical health-related services for the area's indigent populations.

**Economic Environment:** This section presented recent trends in poverty and the current status of housing in the region. The section concluded with a discussion of homelessness in the Kansas City area, which highlights growth among one of the region's most vulnerable populations.

**Health Care Environment:** This section detailed changes in health insurance coverage in the United States. While the overall percentage of uninsured persons has increased only

slightly over time, recent and dramatic increases in the costs of health insurance are likely to lead to sharper reductions in health insurance coverage in the region. The section also highlighted the safety net providers who provide the bulk of direct health care services for the region's indigent persons. National and local data regarding hospital consolidations and closures, and the overall shortage of health providers are also discussed.

**LINKS:**

<http://hcfgkc.org/about/history>