

Socioeconomic Health Determinants

Social Disruption

Health Determinant: Social Disruption

Socioeconomic Component: Divorce

Percent and Rank: 2007 - 9.5% (51)
2008 - 9.5% (51)

Socioeconomic Component: Single-Parent Households

Percent and Rank: 2007 - 7.1% (39)
2008 - 7.1% (39)

Healthiest Wisconsin 2010 Health Priority: Social and Economic Factors that Influence Health

Divorce and children living in single-parent households have significant effects on health. Divorce has been associated with adverse health effects on mental and social health and has been associated with increased risk of depression, anxiety and increased risk of alcohol abuse. Single-parent households, are defined as those run by a single male with no wife present or a single female with no husband present with one or more of their own children under age 18. This measure is considered a proxy for social disruption in the community. Studies indicate that being raised in a single-parent household can negatively affect future health, particularly as it relates to anxiety issues.

Waupaca County is in the lower middle quartile for percentage of residents who are divorced as well as for the percentage of residents in single-parent households. With an awareness of the stress this kind of social disruption causes families, in addition to the poverty which usually accompanies it, the Healthy Beginnings Program provides services to empower families to function in the best interest of the children. Healthy Beginnings provides development and social-emotional assessments, HOME inventory, and safety assessments as well as education and support to high-risk families of children ages 0-5. This is a research-based program whose goal is to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect.

Healthy Beginnings has provided home visitation to 112 families in Waupaca County. There were 3435 contacts, 637 screenings, 972 health-teaching activities and 545 referrals/followup to resources. Strengthening families in the midst of social disruption can only serve to enhance future health outcomes.