NHANES Open Space
September 11-12, 2003

Session Title: Community Indicators

Session Headlines:

1. What community level indicators or ecologic variables are important for health and nutrition components in NHANES and the community HANES? Look to community intervention studies and health systems research. How do you identify a potential indicator and then what do you need to measure it?

   Broad areas and examples:

   - Geographic – GIS, links to zip codes
   - Physical – air quality, water quality, temperature, sprawl index (walkability – sidewalks), transportation dept. statistics
   - Social – crime statistics, safety, number of supermarkets, fast food restaurants, number of liquor stores, number of abandoned buildings, number of billboards/advertisements, social inequality measures (e.g., distribution of occupations in the community), urban planning dept. statistics
   - Economic – population density, Census indicators, services available to the community such as WIC
   - Health care/health system- number of providers, number of hospitals, emergency resources, estimates of uninsured
   - School - school health indicators such as number of physical education classes competitive foods in schools
   - Societal changes that have occurred over time – tobacco laws, school health

2. Primary data collection of community-level indicators vs. secondary data collection of existing data or linkages to other data sets

   - What information is currently available to generate hypotheses about community indicators that may be important for future NHANES health components?

- Listers do go out in to the community – what information could they capture?

3. Methodologic issues

- Migration within communities
- How valid are community indicators for the sample selected in the community vs. use of community indicator as a covariate for the national sample
- Over-sample population groups within a geographic area (geo-code the NHANES data)
- How to measure community indicator 'x'
- Difficulties with capturing income, SES variables, changing social status and mobility
- Confidentiality issues related to personal identifiers and ability to link to other data sets

Next Steps/Action Items:

1. Identify list of potential community indicators from community studies, health systems research -> bring together community researchers to identify potential indicators (CVD, diabetes, obesity, asthma). Build community-level indicators into planning NHANES health and nutrition components.

2. Look to lessons learned in the environmental area for emergency preparedness, and the collaborations between ASTHO, NACCHO, ASTHPHLD

3. Improve data access through data centers to address disclosure issues and make community-level data more "user-friendly' and available.

4. Explore how other survey systems deal with community-level data – how they plan and identify data sources, data analysis, data release