

Historical Patterns

The overall health trend of Erie County looks quite similar to the State of Pennsylvania and the nation. However there are unique aspects where Erie is performing better and in some cases understandably worse than the State and nation.

Under the topic area of Chronic Disease and Disease Management, the overall leading causes of death in Erie County have improved since 2000, though there is room for more improvement because the local rates are higher than the State rates. The trend for chronic disease care is mixed. While the diabetes standard of care has improved there are referrals and follow-up for eye exams that are reporting negatively.

The Availability and Utilization of Healthcare Services is one of the most dramatically changing areas of health, primarily driven by the passing and implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act put into place comprehensive health reforms that expand coverage, hold insurance companies accountable, lower health care costs, offer more choices and enhance quality of care. This Legislation continues to change the landscape of healthcare management nationally. With that preface, the current trend is mixed as healthcare systems adopt, promote, and implement that change. However, it can be expected that this area will experience improvement for those who are currently uninsured or having difficulty accessing quality care. This is a major paradigm shift in healthcare delivery systems.

Positive change in health behaviors and improved access and patient compliance to early disease detection and prevention strategies will result in improved health outcomes such as longevity and improved quality of life. This concept is commonly referred to as a generational behavioral change. It will require broad and lasting health behavior changes that are taught at a young and receptive age and mastered throughout a lifetime.