

Community Radon Assessment Program

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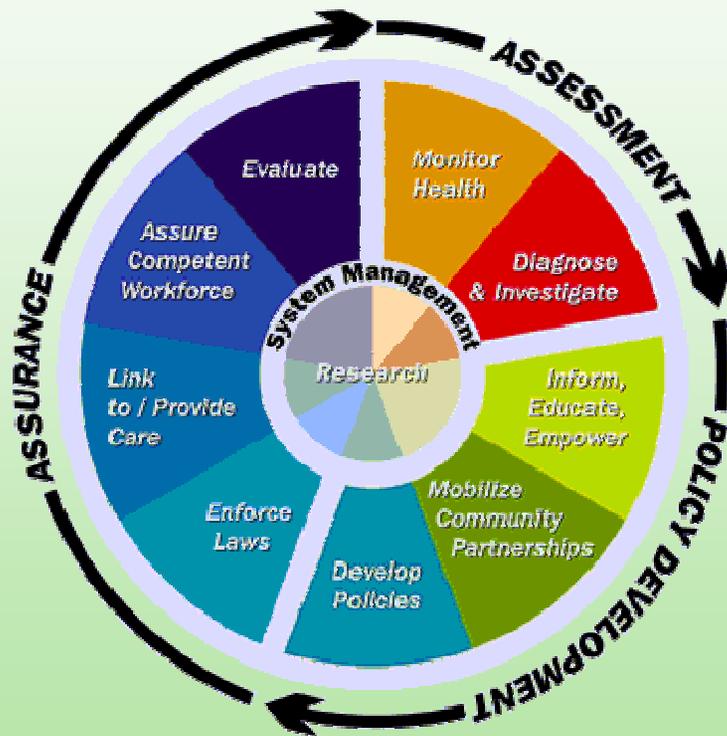
Introduction

- ☛ The vision of the Nassau County Health Department is to identify exposure to radon gas and reduce or eliminate lung cancer caused by radon within our local communities.
- ☛ Our goal is to create multiple partnerships with key stakeholders (The Nassau County Realtors Association, The Northeast Builders Association, The Nassau County Building Department, and the American Lung Association) to institute an educational, testing, and mitigation program for residents.
- ☛ This Community Radon Assessment initiative will be developed to sustain and implement, at a minimum, four of the Ten Essential Services of Environmental Health.

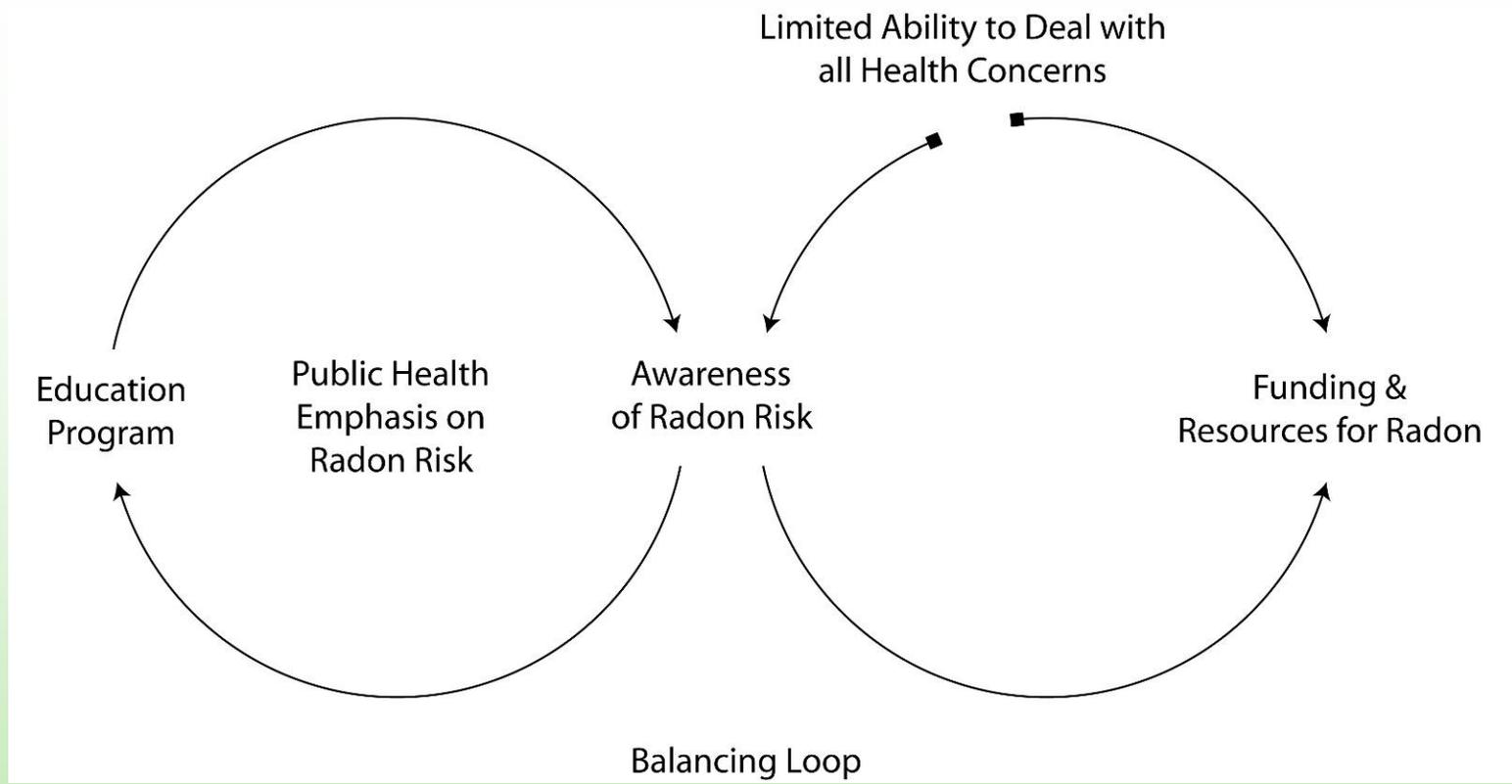
Background

- ☛ The State of Florida has diverse environmental issues to address as well as federal and global concerns.
- ☛ These issues come from municipalities, rural communities, cities, counties, and state government as well as individuals, industry and special interest groups.
- ☛ Competition exists for financial and human resources to address these issues.
- ☛ Established environmental concerns take a back seat to the “disease du jour” of present which places even greater competition on available public health resources.
- ☛ Competition for resources has created a void in addressing radon gas exposure.

Implementation of the Ten Essentials of Environmental Health Services



- EEHS #1, 2. These partners will support the creation of a radon assessment program that will promote *monitoring and diagnosing* homeowner's health through testing, investigation and potential mitigation initiatives.
- EEHS #3. Homeowners and the general public will be *empowered, informed and educated* about the risks of radon and the mitigation strategies which will provide a safe and health living environment.
- EEHS #4. To *mobilize and create partnerships* with the Nassau County Realtors Association, the Nassau County Building Department, the Northeast Florida Builders Association, and the Nassau County Health Department. These organizations will have a strong, sustainable partnership that is effective in addressing radon and other environmental issues that may arise in the future.
- EEHS #9. To *ensure a competent workforce*, three staff members in the Environmental Health Division of the Nassau County Health Department have been recently certified in Radon Assessment, one staff member certified in Radon Mitigation and the entire staff (10) have been oriented and trained to disseminate information to the public about the effects of radon exposure and services offered through the newly developed Community Radon Assessment program.



The Balancing Loop Diagram shows the relationship the public health system's effort to educate the public about the risks of radon and the system's limited ability to address all health concerns due to competition of resources.

Project Objectives

- ☞ **Problem Statement:** Currently, no system exists to prevent radon gas exposure to citizens of Nassau County, Florida.
- ☞ **Program Goal:** To establish a radon prevention program with local stakeholders in Nassau County, Florida.
- ☞ **Health Problem:** Radon exposure contributes to increased rate of Lung Cancer.
- ☞ **Outcome Objective:** To prevent Lung Cancer from radon gas exposure.
- ☞ **Determinant:** To create partnerships with the Nassau County Realtors Association, the Nassau County Building Department, the Northeast Florida Builders Association, and the Nassau County Health Department. These organizations will have a strong, sustainable partnership that is effective in addressing radon and other environmental issues that may arise in the future.
- ☞ **Impact Objective:** Homeowners and the general public will be empowered, informed and educated about the risks of radon and the mitigation strategies which will provide a safe and health living environment.

Contributing Factors

Every stakeholder has a mental model

- ☞ *Elected Officials* desire to minimize the alarm about any issue in our community that might prohibit growth and restrict economic development.
- ☞ *Realtor/Builder* believes that the free market is all that is needed to supply what customers want. Government regulation adds cost, time delays and cannot prove that the status quo will lead to health risk. Market realities sometimes require focus on short-term gains.
- ☞ *The citizen* holds the belief that the public health department and other jurisdictional agencies would not allow homes to be built or development to occur that were not safe to live in or located in safe areas.
- ☞ The *health official* believes that education, prevention and balanced regulation will safeguard the public's health and the environment without stifling economic pursuits. A system exists that promotes responsible long term development.

Process Objectives

-  1. Assist the Nassau County Realtors Association (NCRA) and the Northeast Florida Builders Association (NFBA) in educating their clients about the risks of radon and the potential benefits of collaboration with the Nassau County Health Department (NCHD) in promoting healthy living environments. The NCRA will offer a radon test kit to each client who is purchasing a home in one of the delineated areas. The NCHD will offer technical assistance with test results and possible mitigation procedures.
-  2. Highlight the fact that these partnerships are striving to improve the level of public health and the livability of our communities by improving standards which may create unintended consequences of highlighting a public health risk in existing housing. The NFBA will offer a test kit to a client who will be remodeling or adding on to a home that is located in a delineated area. The NFBA will work with the NCHD to establish possible mitigation efforts. The NCHD will assist in technical assistance.

Process Objectives

-  3. Inquire from each partner how each one can assist in identifying opportunities or challenges that would contribute to success and promote the improvement of public health in our communities.
-  4. Work with partners to create a positive and collaborative response strategy that balances educational and technical expertise with mitigation procedures that may create a financial burden for a homeowner.
-  5. A long range plan for sustainability for the partnerships will be jointly developed by the partners to provide continuity and pragmatic service to the public to maintain an enhanced radon prevention program.

Expected Results

- ☛ To prevent detrimental levels of radon gas in homes in Nassau County Florida.
- ☛ To promote a community wide healthy living environment.
- ☛ To work with the partners to create a positive and collaborative response strategy that balances educational and technical expertise with mitigation procedures.

Conclusions

- ☛ The Local Public Health System has been limited in addressing all health concerns due to competition of resources and emerging health issues that draws attention away from established health issues.
- ☛ As public awareness, emphasis by the public health system, and funding decline, the risks of environmental health issues such as radon exposure to occupants of homes increase.
- ☛ The local public health system acknowledges the need to strategically mobilize partnerships within the community that will promote the health and safety of its citizens.
- ☛ The development of the Radon Community Assessment (RCA) program will fulfill many of the Ten Essential Environmental Health Services which will strengthen the Local Public Health System.
- ☛ The RCA program goal is to provide a testing resource and education process to the public to reduce potential exposure to radon gas thus reducing or eliminating lung cancer from radon in our local communities.