

# COUNTERMEASURES

**Countermeasures** involve health-related policies, programs, and practices that enable the community to counteract the effects of existing and emerging health threats.

Countermeasures are a means for communities to engage in health promotion/disease prevention activities in response to structural and environmental challenges.

## WHAT COUNTERMEASURES MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN COMMUNITIES WITH...

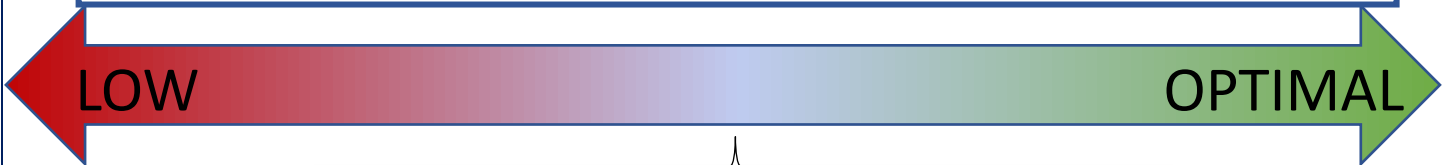
### LOW CAPACITY:

CBOs, FBOs, community leaders, health care providers and public health professionals and staff do not interact regularly. Lines of communication between the community and the formal health/public health sector officials are weak and complicated by providers' unexamined assumptions and mistrust among underserved, at-risk groups. Providers and hospitals may work together, but little aside from acute care services receive significant attention. Regional and state public health has limited knowledge of community strengths and challenges, and thus limited ability to recommend, support and monitor countermeasures. Poor agency coordination, lack of outreach to trusted CBO/FBOs, and lack of focus on risk communication hampers the ability to provide consistent, timely, and accurate information about countermeasures. Local organizations' efforts at countermeasures are limited in their reach and impact because of lack of resources.

### OPTIMAL CAPACITY:

The network for health promotion is vibrant and diverse, from traditional entities (hospitals, safety net providers, local public health) to community-specific efforts (CBOs, FBOs, university researchers, community foundations, and NGOs). Relationships between public health agencies and communities are strong, and support effective countermeasure recommendations, monitoring, and analysis. Health promotion efforts are effective means of social learning. An ethical framework for allocating scarce resources exists and is known and accepted among all relevant groups. Decision-making processes are designed to be driven by science, ethics, and consultation with stakeholders on multiple levels. Health literacy and public trust in health systems are high.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Think about **countermeasures** in your community, and mark on the horizontal line where you think your community falls between the description of '**low capacity**' and '**optimal capacity**'. Once you have made your mark, please list the strengths and challenges that your community faces in the area of **countermeasures**.



**OPPORTUNITIES**

**STRENGTHS**