

## STEP 2: DETERMINE YOUR FOCUS

Now that you know who will be involved in this process, your first step together is to determine what you collectively want to achieve with this assessment. Clearly articulating this is essential for building group consensus and for ensuring that you are successful in accomplishing what you set out to do.

⇒ Step 2 has three activities, which are reflected in the *Step 2 Planning Worksheet: Issues, Problems, Goals and Objectives* (following page 4-16):

- 2.1 Identify and Prioritize Community Public Health Issues
- 2.2 Define the Problem
- 2.3 Create Realistic and Achievable Goals and Objectives

### ***2.1 Identify and Prioritize Community Public Health Issues***

The first time you bring your partnership together, identify the public health issues that each of the community partners, their families, or clients are concerned about. The particular health issues your group prioritizes as being the most important become your **community assessment focus**. Your focus ensures that your community assessment explores one topic well, rather than taking on more topics than your partnership resources can handle. **The focus can be broad.** This is useful if you are not quite sure what the major health concerns of your community are, and want to collect some general information about disease rates, availability of health services, or community members' perspectives on health and health care. **Or, the focus can be more specific.** This might be the best option if your community is already aware of particular health concerns in the community, and would prefer to invest the community assessment in this one particular area. For example, if diabetes rates are already known to be high in your community, the assessment can focus on diabetes. Thus you might concentrate on assessing availability and use of diabetes screening services, diabetes-related care, or explore issues related to diabetes management such as nutrition and physical activity.

In many cases, the different members of your community partnership will have their own particular health issue interests. It is very important to discuss these different interests to identify the health issues on which everyone can agree. You can facilitate this discussion with your community partners using some of the following questions to stimulate a thoughtful conversation. Write each issue raised on paper posted to the wall so that everyone can see what is being said.