Background
Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a group of disorders involving the heart and blood vessels. CVD is the leading cause of health problems in the United States. In 2015, 41.5% percent (102.7 million) of the population had at least one CVD condition. Almost one out of every three deaths result from CVD, and about one-third of CVD deaths occur before the age of 75.

Many Americans have risk factors for CVD, which include obesity, physical inactivity, high blood pressure, cigarette smoking, high cholesterol, and diabetes. Other factors such as age, race-ethnicity, and gender also put people at a higher risk for CVD. Ninety percent of individuals over the age of 80 have some form of CVD.

The public health impact and the economic burden of CVD is enormous. In 2016, it was estimated that the U.S. spent $55 billion on CVD, which includes the cost of health care services and medication to treat.

City of St. Louis Surveillance of Cardiovascular Diseases
In 2016, St. Louis City had a CVD death rate of 287 per 100,000 population, which was higher than the rate of St. Louis County with 226 per 100,000, and St. Charles County with 199 per 100,000 population. The state of Missouri had a CVD death rate of 247 per 100,000 population. From 2006 to 2016, there was a steady decline in CVD death rates across the country, and in the state of Missouri. The CVD death rate for the city dropped by 27% since 2006, compared to St. Louis County (19%), St. Charles (12%), and Missouri (17%), yet the burden of the disease remains high in the City of St. Louis. As seen throughout the state and nationally, males suffer from CVD at a greater rate than females. In 2016, males in St. Louis City had a CVD death rate of 322 per 100,000 population.
CVDs are unevenly distributed with blacks, resulting in higher death rates than whites. The CVD death rate in 2016 among black residents in the City of St. Louis was 328 per 100,000 population, compared to white residents with 258 per 100,000 population. The health disparity among racial and ethnic groups is also observed at both state and national levels. The burden of CVD in the City of St. Louis may be ascribed to a high number of residents with unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as inactivity, smoking, and unhealthy diets which constitute major risks for CVD. Based on the data, 34% of adults in St. Louis City are obese, 26% of adults are smokers, 24% of the residents do not engage in any physical activities. Also, the diet quality/food environment index for St. Louis residents is 4.9. These health indicators are why the St. Louis City ranked poorly compared to other counties and the state. Other contributory factors are medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and high blood cholesterol, which are also high in St. Louis City. Having one of these medical conditions increases the risk of suffering from CVD.

What Are Health Departments Doing to Reduce Cardiovascular Diseases?

- Promoting the adoption of food service guidelines and nutrition standards, which include developing policies aimed at decreasing sodium consumption.
- Promoting the adoption of physical education and physical activity in schools, early child care centers, and work sites.
- Promoting reporting of blood pressure and self-monitoring of blood pressure.
- Promoting awareness of prediabetes among people at high risk for type 2 diabetes.
- Increasing access to healthy foods and beverages, and supportive nutrition environments.
- Implementing quality improvement processes in health systems.
- Educating the community on nutrition and eating healthy foods, being physically active, and other preventive measure for reducing risk factors for cardiovascular diseases.
- Reducing smoking hazards through educational campaigns, promoting policies for smoke-free environments, smoking cessation classes, and enforcing local tobacco-related ordinances.
- Connecting people to resources for medical assistance and for help with reducing risk factors for CVD

Sources
1. www.cdc.gov
2. Missouri Information for Community Assessment
3. American Heart Association/American Stroke Association
4. www.countyhealthrankings.org