

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP

AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Public Health Partnering with the Healthcare System Workgroup

February 7, 2012

In 2011, the Public Health Improvement Partnership, under direction of the Secretary of Health, adopted the 'Agenda for Change'; a roadmap for redirecting the work of public health to better respond to the changing needs of preventable illness and disease in our state. Three workgroups were established to identify goals, strategies and action plans. The role of this workgroup is to evaluate and question how Public Health can be more effective by Partnering with the Healthcare System to improve access to care, and clinical-and community-based preventive services in Washington State.

There are many compelling reasons why public health must renew strong partnerships with the health care system, including:

- 1) the dramatic emergence of a new set of preventable health illnesses (obesity, diabetes, heart disease),
- 2) the rising and unsustainable costs of clinical health care,
- 3) the dismal US health rankings compared to other developed countries,
- 4) evidence that overall population health will improve most by preventing chronic disease, and
- 5) knowledge that we will have a bigger impact creating better healthier lives and economic vitality if we partner with health care leaders, community leaders, and the health care delivery system to stem the tide of preventable illness.

As the US disease burden has shifted from infectious disease at the turn of the last century, to chronic disease at the beginning of the 21st century, there are important implications for the relationship between traditional 'public health' work and clinical preventive services provided in individually-focused healthcare. Our best opportunity to achieve prevention goals, reducing the cost and impact of chronic disease, will come from effectively combining the knowledge that emerges from population-based studies of the public's health with the potential for patient education and intervention in clinical preventive services. It is critical that public health identify best practices and new strategies in partnership with health care leaders, community leaders, and the health care delivery system so that all available

resources are working together to stem the tide of preventable illness. If we do this well, people can all live better, more productive and healthier lives.

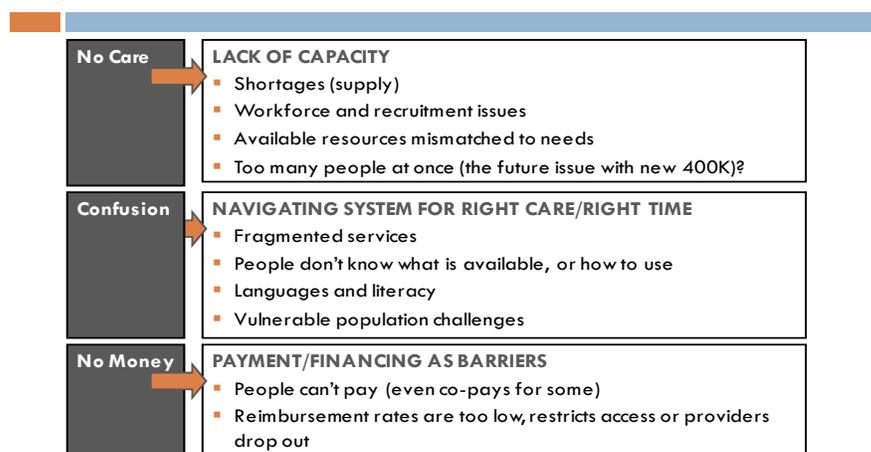
This workgroup’s members have considered how public health can best partner with other health care entities, in order to support a prevention agenda for the future. They have asked ‘What does the field of public health contribute to the topic?’ under consideration. They have considered the importance of individual access to health services and specified the various ways that access barriers keep people from getting needed health services. They have considered how public health can help build a stronger health care system, and can promote better mental health.

Access to Health Care

Health care reform, alone, will not solve the problem. Restructuring payments, increasing the number of people with insurance and changing incentives are all important health reform strategies, but each is only one part of a larger picture. That larger picture is where a public health perspective can make an important contribution.

The workgroup recognizes that three fundamental problems limits access to care: (i) lack of provider capacity, (ii) confusion about how to access care, and (iii) inability to pay.

Access to care challenges



While solving all of these problems is beyond the scope of the workgroup, the workgroup members believe public health can **provide information** to help local leaders and others address these issues at a community level. In addition, the work group identified roles for public health in providing **local leadership** and **provider education** to improve access to care, evidence based information to improve quality of care and increased preventive services across Washington State.

Information for decision makers about:

- health care capacity (ex: providers by specialty in the community, health status of the community)
- how people use the health care system to obtain care (help navigate the system), and
- financial barriers to care
- health status of the community

Leadership to convene health care providers, community leaders and others to address community health problems, making commitments to actions that will ensure access to care and reduction of health disparities, and

Education to health care providers about effective clinical preventive services so they can be widely used in practice

Workgroup members recognize that now is the time for public health to more effectively and strategically partner with the health care system to improve access to quality, affordable, and integrated health care and clinical preventives services. The workgroup offers the following strategies and actions for public health in Washington.

Objective 1:

Public health provides information for decision makers about:

- health care capacity
- how people use the health care system to obtain care, and
- financial barriers to care
- health status of the community

Strategy

Public health provides information about the capacity of the health care delivery system within their community so that local participants can develop plans to close gaps.

Possible action items:

- Action:* State public health provides information to local health departments about the number and type of providers in their area so that local public health can share information, identifies gaps in service, and has better information to help people obtain services.
- Action:* Your ideas

Strategy

Public health provides information about how people use the health care system (utilization data) in their communities so that inefficient use can be identified, and providers can help people navigate the system effectively and efficiently.

Possible action items:

- Action:* Summarize and share existing sources of data about geographic variation in access to and use of health care resources including the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Office of Financial Management - Blue Ribbon Commission Report, Puget Sound Health Alliance (PSHA), and the Dartmouth Health Atlas of Health Care.
- Action:* Your ideas

Strategy

Public health provides information about financing barriers so that health care partners delineate where payment is a problem.

Possible action items:

- Action:* Identify populations who lack access to health care. The process to specify barriers can include an assessment survey, analysis of secondary data such as ER and insurance status data.
- Action:* Your ideas....



Strategy

Public health provides information about the health status of the community including behavioral health, access to care, quality, outcomes, and gaps so that community leaders, health care providers and other decision makers can make informed decisions how to best meet local need.

Possible action items:

- a. *Action:* Public health convenes community leaders and others to provide information about the health of their community and to encourage commitments to improve health. Consideration includes rates of disease, access to health, behavioral health status, and other health factors available through the Public Health Improvement Partnership, the County Health Rankings, and other sources.
- b. *Action:* Your ideas....

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Objective 2: Public Health provides leadership to link health care providers, community leaders and others to address community health problems.

Strategy

Connect LHJs with local hospitals and other provider groups so that meaningful community health assessments and can be developed. This includes connecting behavioral health, primary care, specialty care, dental care

Possible action items:

- a. *Action:* Public health partners with nonprofit and district hospitals and other provider groups in the development of community health needs assessments and community benefits implementation strategy reports. (HB 2341)
- b. *Action:* DOH develops reports about the health of local communities (such as county profiles) for broad dissemination and easy access (such as a web portal)
- c. *Action:* Your thoughts....

Strategy

Public health convenes diverse audiences so that there is a common understanding of health issues prevalent in the community, and so that the social determinants of health are more commonly understood, and included in community health assessments

Possible action items:

- a. *Action:* Public health convenes community forums where public health, clinicians, hospitals, boards of health and other partners to identify problems and potential solutions.
- b. *Action:* LHJs expand their presentations to local boards of health
- c. *Action:* Your thoughts....

Strategy

Public health identifies how other states have worked to effectively develop collaborative community health assessments with their partners including hospitals, provider groups, community clinics, public health, and provides for public participation.

Possible action items:

Action:

Objective 3: Public health provides an ongoing flow of information to health care providers about effective clinical preventive services so they can be widely used in practice

Strategy

Prioritize and expand the use by providers of evidence-based clinical prevention services (proven to be both effective and cost saving) endorsed by the National Commission on Prevention Priorities Services (National Quality Strategy).

Possible action items:

- a. *Action:* Share information and educate providers on effective clinical preventive services such as screening tests, counseling, immunizations or medications used to prevent disease, detect health problems early, or provide people with the information needed to make good decisions about health.
- b. *Action:* Share information and educate community leaders and others through the Community Transformation Grants (CTG) clinical preventive services agenda which supports community-level efforts to reduce chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes.
- c. *Action:* Public health disseminates this information to primary providers and others on a regular basis and evaluates for successful messaging. (Pilot with provider groups)
- d. *Action:* Your thoughts.....

Strategy

Promote the adoption of primary care medical homes to recognize the benefits of increased access to health care, continuity of care, and patient-centered care.

Possible action items:

- a. *Action:* Public health share information with providers and other health care leaders about primary care medical homes and how this option enables the improvements in quality of care and patient safety achieved through accreditation to be combined with the potential for increased reimbursement as a Primary Care Medical Home.
- b. *Action:* Your thoughts.....