

# PUBLIC HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP

## AGENDA FOR CHANGE - Partnering with the Healthcare System

Public health in Washington State is at a crossroads, and the public health system is changing. After a century of focusing on communicable disease prevention to effectively prevent death and illness and increase the quality of life of our residents, today we face new challenges. We face a severe funding crisis; at the same time the nature of preventable disease and illness has shifted from communicable disease to chronic (often preventable) illness. These new realities have led to a rethinking of how public health does its work.<sup>1</sup> In 2011, the Public Health Improvement Partnership under the direction of the Secretary of Health adopted the *Agenda for Change*, a roadmap for redirecting the work of public health to better respond to these challenges.

The *Agenda for Change* recognizes healthcare reform as a tremendous opportunity for the public health system to re-evaluate its role and to align with the healthcare delivery system in order to improve access to care and implement effective community based prevention strategies.<sup>2</sup> Under the leadership of the Public Health Improvement Partnership, several work groups are convening to put the work identified in the *Agenda for Change* into action. We invite your perspective, experience, and insight on a work group to explore how the governmental public health system can effectively partner with the health care delivery system. The role of the Partnering with the Healthcare System work group is to question and evaluate how the public health system in Washington can partner more effectively with the healthcare system. Two other subgroups are working to implement the Agenda for Change: Communicable Disease and Other Health Threats, and Healthy Communities and Environments.

As a member of the Partnering with the Healthcare System subgroup, you represent and understand today's healthcare system, the public health system; you know barriers that restrict access to care, and you have good ideas for crafting strategies for improvement. We want to hear your thoughts and suggestions in the following areas:

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<sup>1</sup> An Agenda for Change – Reshaping Governmental Public Health in Washington, October 2010  
[www.doh.wa.gov/PHSD/doc/AgendaForChange.pdf](http://www.doh.wa.gov/PHSD/doc/AgendaForChange.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Puget Sound Health Alliance, Report from the Governor's Workgroup on Health Care Reform November 12, 2010 Add Link

**TOPIC 1:** How does public health work to improve access to quality, affordable and integrated healthcare that incorporates routine clinical preventive services and is available in rural<sup>3</sup> and urban communities alike?

- What barriers limit access to healthcare in your community?
- What are your concerns about meeting the needs of your community in the future?
- What data are you using to monitor the availability of healthcare services in your community?
- Can we identify some measures and goals? For example, increase the percentage of women receiving early prenatal care (visit in first trimester) by X amount, or reduce preventable hospitalizations (per 1000 Medicare enrollees) by X?
- How can we prioritize prevention programs and reduce costly treatment efforts later?

**TOPIC 2:** How do we strengthen relationships between public health and the healthcare systems to improve access to clinical and community preventive services?

- What are some ways public health and the healthcare delivery could partner to improve community health?
- In what circumstances should public health continue to provide clinical services?
- What are some ways the community can assess healthcare services provided in terms of adequacies, sufficiency and quality?
- What can public health do to help build a strong healthcare system in your community?
- How can we think of the healthcare system as a whole and how can we show the benefits of working together to improve access to care?
- Are there unintended consequences of changes to the delivery system that result in bad public health practices and outcomes?

**TOPIC 3:** How do we work together to promote good mental health, reduce substance abuse, improve access to behavioral health services, therapeutic care, and substance abuse/addictive services?

- What role can public health play in promoting better mental health and preventing clinical behavioral health issues?
- What are the barriers to accessing behavioral health and substance abuse/addictive services?
- What are the needs in your community and how can we work together to better meet them?
- How can we improve the quality/effectiveness of behavioral health and substance abuse/addictive services currently available?
- How do we monitor and improve outcomes of behavioral health services delivered?
- Can we develop measures and appropriate goals? A measurable goal could be to decrease poor mental health days as reported through BRFSS (in previous 30 days reported)?
- How can we redirect a portion of federal funds from categorical services to targeted community needs?
- How do we work to improve the continuum of care in our community?
- How can a community document its healthcare delivery assets to identify gaps now and in the future?

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<sup>3</sup> Rural Health Care; A Strategic Plan for Washington State Summer 2009 [www.wsha.org/page.cfm?ID=0316](http://www.wsha.org/page.cfm?ID=0316)

**TOPIC 4:** How do we provide responsive oversight of health professionals and institutions to support access to care and to help ensure patient safety?

- With federal health reform, how can the Department of Health (DOH) support changes to the health care delivery system in your community?
- What are your concerns about patient safety as more people have access to care under the Affordable Care Act?
- Are there things in state law or other regulations that you see as barriers to providing healthcare?
- How do we support telemedicine or other specialty services in rural areas?
- In the future, we expect more care will be delivered by midlevel professionals. What, if any concerns do you have about this change?
- How can DOH help support effective new models of care?
- How can public health better support the healthcare delivery system with their broad organizational goals of patient safety?
- What examples do you have of changes in state laws or rules that have had the unintended consequence of limiting access to care?

#### **LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBLE STRATEGIES**

We want to focus on strategies where we can make a measurable impact. Topic areas beyond the bounds of this workgroup include insurance reform, reimbursement rates, and ways the healthcare system should work.

Examples of strategies the subgroup could consider include supporting legislative changes designed to reduce barriers to accessing care, and ways to increase chronic disease prevention training to partners in the community and clinical providers.

#### **PRODUCTS AND TIMELINE**

##### **Meeting 1 (Orientation)**

September 12, 2011

1:30 – 3:00 pm

**TOPIC 1:** Identify barriers that restrict access to care. Propose improvement strategies.

##### **Meeting 2 (Review/Approve Topic 1 summary and strategies)**

November 7, 2011

DOH Offices, Kent

9 am – noon

**TOPIC 2:** Strengthen relationships between public health and the healthcare delivery system to improve access to care and preventive services. Propose improvement strategies.

**TOPIC 3:** Work to promote good mental health, reduce substance abuse, improved access to behavioral health services, therapeutic care, and substance abuse/addictive services.

**Meeting 3 (Review/approve Topic 2 summary and strategies)**

Date TBA, 2012

**CONTINUE WITH TOPIC 3.** Work to promote good mental health, reduce substance abuse, improved access to behavioral health services, therapeutic care, and substance abuse/addictive services. Propose improvement strategies.

**TOPIC 4:** Provide responsive oversight of health professionals and institutions to support access to care and to help ensure patient safety. Propose improvement strategies.

**Meeting 4 (Review/approve Topic 4 summary and strategies)**

Date TBA, 2012

Prepare subgroup recommendations. Submit to the Agenda for Change Workgroup (PHIP)

The *Agenda for Change* directs each subgroup to identify a set of recommendations, including 2-3 goals and 4-5 strategies for the public health system to act on over the next 2 years. These will be approved by the Public Health Improvement Partnership and reported in the 2012 Public Health Improvement Plan.

**CONTACT**

For more information about the work of this subgroup, please go to [www.doh.wa.gov/hip/workgroup/a4c/hcare/hcare.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/hip/workgroup/a4c/hcare/hcare.htm) or contact:

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HEALTHIER WASHINGTON