

# Colorado Public Health Practice-Based Research Network

Measuring the Value of Public Health  
Through Practice Based Research Networks

*National Association of County and City Health Officials  
Annual Meeting  
July 2009*



Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

# CO PHPBRN Proposal

- To engage practitioners in Colorado's 54 public health agencies and the state health department along with researchers from the Colorado School of Public Health to establish a network that supports informed and strategic research in a setting that allows effective strategies to be rapidly put into practice.



# Progress To Date

- Partnership in place
- Founding Steering Committee is actively working
- Interest gathered from practitioners and faculty
- Gaining insight from other PBRNs in Colorado
- Pilot project is moving forward
- Taking advantage of other project opportunities



# Partner Institutions

- **Public Health Alliance of Colorado**
  - Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials (CALPHO)
  - 9 additional member organizations
- **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)**
  - Office of Local Liaison/Office of Planning and Partnerships
- **Colorado School of Public Health**
  - Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center
  - Center for Public Health Practice



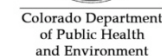
# Founding Steering Committee

- Urban LPH Community Health Director (Local PH)
- Rural LPH Community Health Project Director (Local PH)
- Urban LPH Medical Epidemiologist (Local PH)
- Professor, Occupational Health (CSU Director) (CSPH)
- Assoc. Professor, Cmty/Behavior Health (CSPH)
- Assoc. Professor, Cmty/Behavior Health (CSPH)
- Consultant (State/National/Academia)
- CDPHE Public Health Planner (State PH)
- CDPHE Health Statistics Director (State PH)
- Project Development, Center for PH Practice (CSPH)



# Initial Network Survey

- Brief practitioner and faculty surveys
  - To gauge interest
  - To create contact databases.
- 121 faculty replied
  - 11 with immediate projects
  - 29 interested in developing projects within a year
- 61 practitioners replied
  - 8 with immediate projects
  - 30 interested in becoming a network member



# Our First Project

Colorado passed major public health legislation for the first time in 60 years.

Public Health Act of 2008



**Colorado School  
of Public Health**



Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

# Our First Project

The PBRN provides an opportunity to track changes in:

- Staffing
- Qualifications
- Resources
- Services
- Partnerships
- Budgets
- Structure



# Public Health Act of 2008 (SB08-194)

Objective – *to restructure and update Colorado's public health laws*

## Key Principles

- Assuring provision of basic services to every person in Colorado with consistent standard of quality
- State and local collaboration
- Financial feasibility
- Functional regionalization



# Pilot Project: To Show Impact of Policy on Infrastructure

- Purpose
  - Evaluate impact of the Public Health Act of 2008
  - Inform future research agenda
  - Provide data for future funding opportunities
- Measurement
  - 2005, 2008, 2010 NACCHO Profiles data for baseline and change
  - Selected items to be added to local health department annual report

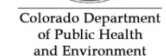
## *New developments*

- Validation study of selected survey items (NACCHO funding)
- In depth study of partnerships and regionalization (unfunded CCTSI proposal; RWJF Public Health Law proposal)



# Examples of Early Changes

1. Rural County in SE Colorado – Commissioners made \$15,000 available in budget for staff to receive continuing education, due to minimum qualifications requirement for PH Director.
2. Rural County in SC Colorado – Name change from County Nursing Service to Public Health Agency lead to public coming to agency with H1N1 issues and concerns.
3. Raising of profile of environmental health in rural areas.



# Examples of Early Changes

4. County in NW CO designated governmental public health agency and director rather than a non-profit that had fulfilled the roles.
5. Small county moved supervision of public health services to larger adjoining county public health agency for quality and access to expertise.
6. MPHs are seen as alternatives to public health nurses for leadership due to comprehensive services approach.



# Examples of Early Changes

Biggest impact yet!

In spite of deep budget cuts,  
local public health agencies have not lost  
\$1 in state general fund support due to the  
Public Health Act of 2008.



# SNOCAP

- State Networks of Colorado Ambulatory Practices & Partners
- Network of PBRN networks in Colorado
  - private practices (BIGHORN)
  - community health center clinics and other groups focusing on disadvantaged populations (CaReNet)
  - rural providers including some public health (HPRN)
  - palliative care (PoPCRN)
  - pharmacies
  - and now, public health (COPHPBRN)



# Other Opportunities Arrive

- Fabulous partnership with Dr. Julie Marshall of the Colorado School of Public Health
- Approached by School of Medicine Researchers regarding Immunization Studies
- Searching funding opportunities to track regional services, public health law, etc.
- Evaluation/Review as a new line of business
- Gives CALPHO/Alliance a “reason” to talk about research with practitioners



# Anticipating...

- Learning from other states and consultants
- New and stronger academic partnerships
- Stronger commitment to Essential Service on Research by Alliance
- Faster development of coordinated and integrated population health monitoring
- Increased capacity to respond to research funding opportunities
- Improved public health services over time



# The “promise” of PH PBRNs

- Rigorous public health practice questions linked with rigorous research methods
  - to produce externally valid evidence
  - that is more easily assimilated into practice
- Support of quality improvement activities
- Adoption of an evidence-based culture
  - Places of learning
  - Practitioners engaged in reflective practice inquiries
  - Collaboration in search of answers to improve delivery of public health services



# COPHPBRN Contacts

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