

A Logic Model for Evaluating the Academic Health Department

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Background

Academic Health Departments (AHDs) are collaborative partnerships between academic programs (i.e.-MPH program) and practice settings (i.e.-health department)

What we know

- Case studies tell us how AHDs are developed and describe common activities

What we don't know

- How do you evaluate AHDs?
- Do these relationships matter?

Research Objective

- Describe general theory of change logic model for how AHDs impact public health at the community level
- Identify potential research questions
- Provide specific AHD logic model for our AHD, located in Knoxville, TN



Methods

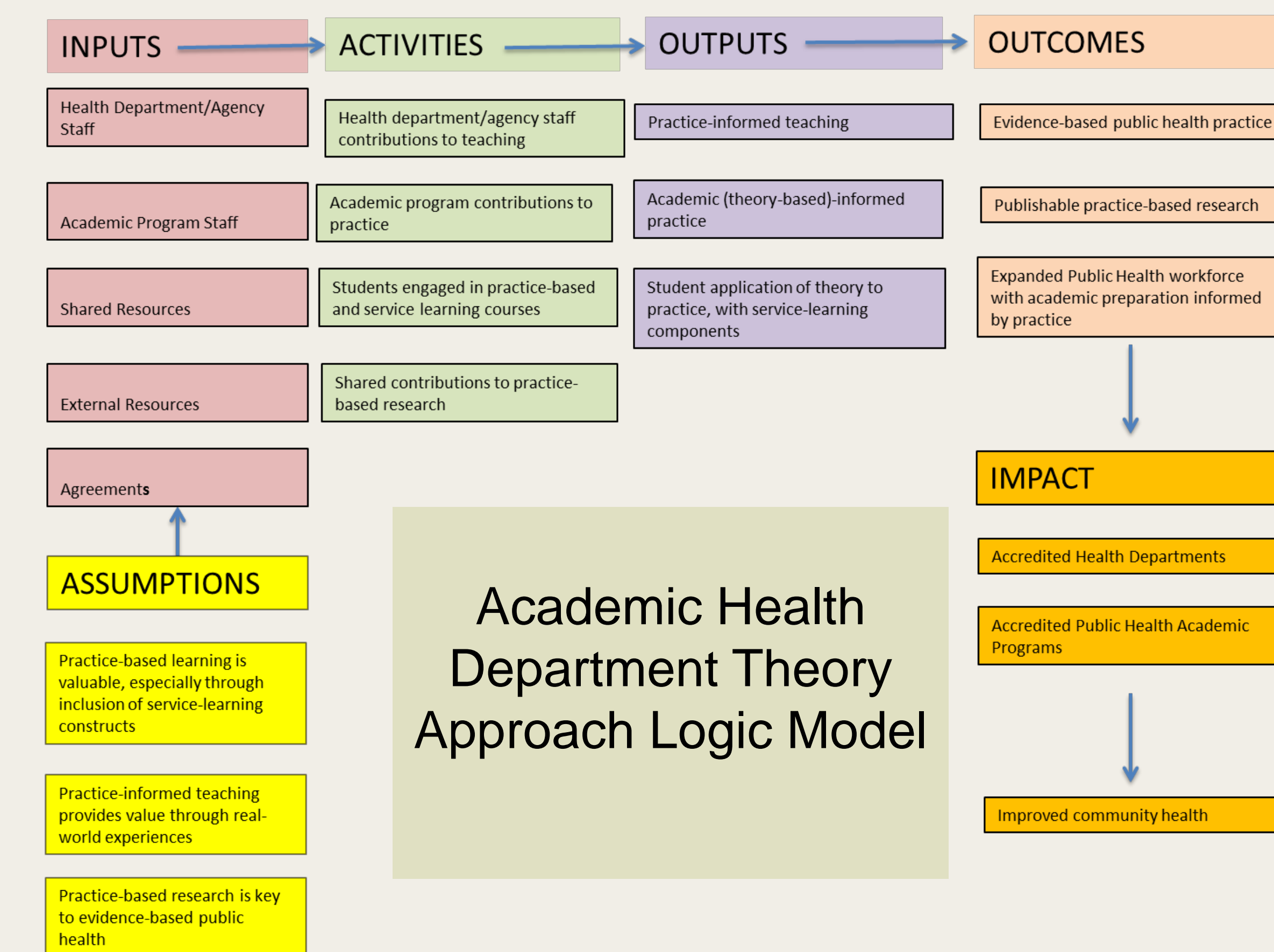
- Used **generalized logic model** as a foundation
- Created **specific logic model** for our AHD
- Developed **evaluation tool**
 - Identified metrics and frequency of data collection for items on logic model
 - Used iterative, participatory process led by faculty member with evaluation expertise carried out through AHD steering committee
 - Evaluated specific AHD using the evaluation tool

Findings

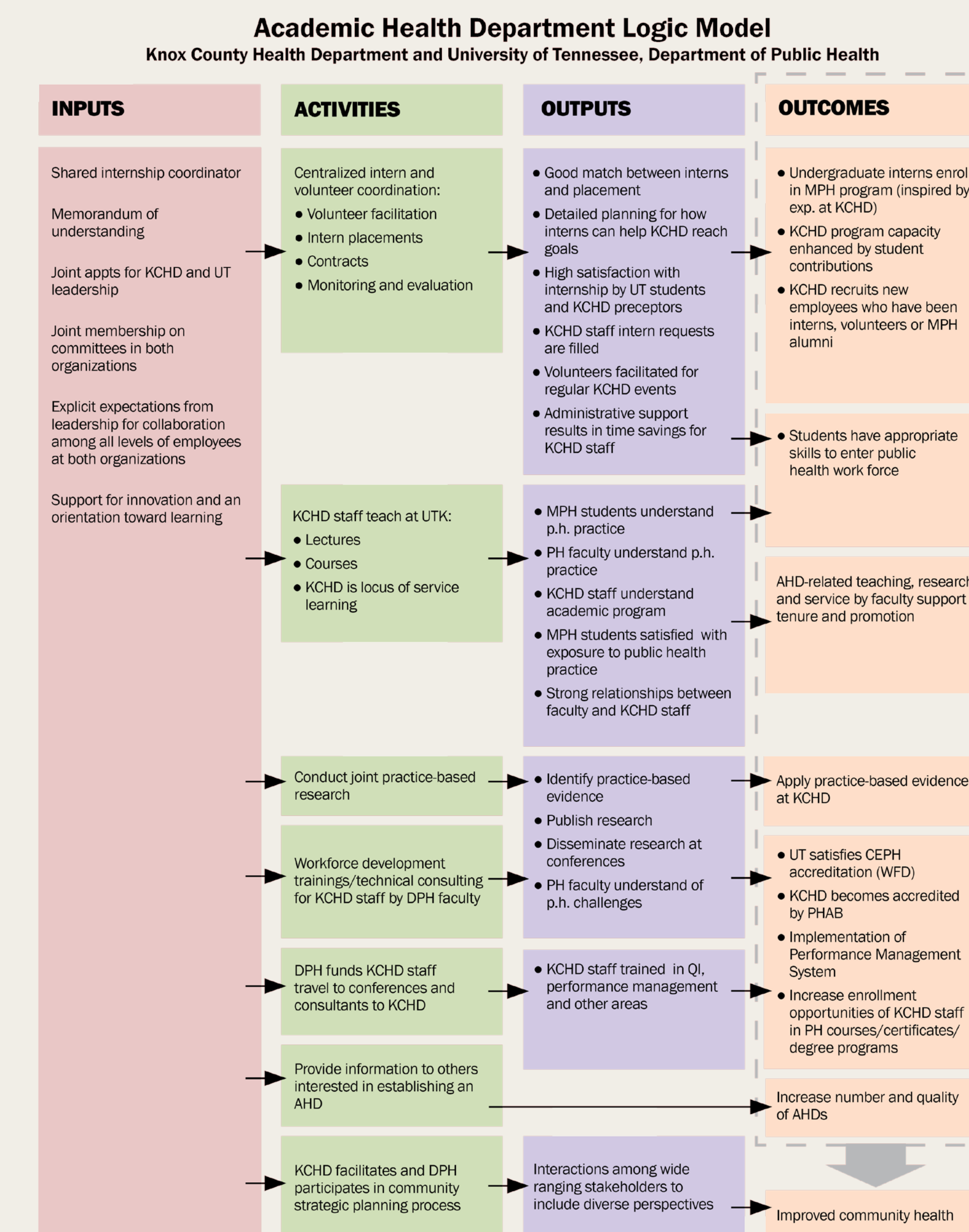
AHDs may facilitate administrative evidence-based practices recently identified in public health practice, including:

- Workforce development
- Leadership support of evidence-based decision making
- A learning orientation of public health practice staff
- Enhancing organizational relationships

Generalized Logic Model



Specific Logic Model



We used our specific logic model to evaluate our AHD. To the right are a few examples of what we found.

Example Specific AHD Evaluation

Inputs:

- A shared internship coordinator within the context of a formal, written MOU

Activities:

- Centralization of student and volunteer involvement
- KCHD staff serving as both guest lecturers as well as teaching full courses at the UT/DPH
- Joint practice-based research
- UT/DPH support for workforce development at KCHD

Outputs:

- Estimated value of student contributions (from 12 academic disciplines) at KCHD was \$130,549
- Four peer-reviewed publications in the past two years

Outcomes:

- Undergraduates who completed internships at the KCHD have enrolled in the UT/DPH MPH program
- Graduates of the MPH program have been hired into full-time positions at the KCHD
- One of the senior staff at KCHD was recently hired into a full-time faculty position at the UT/DPH
- The increased application of evidence-based public health is discernible through stronger workforce development, leadership, organizational climate and culture, relationships and partnerships, and use of resources

Example Research Q's

Table 1. Example research and evaluation questions for the Academic Health Department

Logic Model Element	Research questions
Inputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What models and theories of education and training are most effective in creating the conditions to establish an AHD? 2. How do practitioners and academicians in AHDs differ from practitioners and academicians in settings without AHDs, in terms of background, training, expertise? 3. What are the critical resources for establishing an AHD? What is the variability across AHDs in resource inputs, and how does such variability matter? 4. What is the value of shared personnel, and which ones contribute most to the AHD? 5. What are the types of formal agreements that have been established, and what are the critical elements of such agreements?
Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What value does the AHD add to service-learning courses? 2. What is the impact of the AHD on the development and delivery of academic curriculum? 3. Does involvement of practitioners in the classroom impact their practice? Does it impact student achievement of competencies? 4. What are the mechanisms by which academicians contribute to program development, implementation, and evaluation in the practice setting? 5. What are the ways in which the AHD can facilitate practice-based research?
Outputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do students in settings with AHDs achieve public health competencies at a higher level than students in settings without AHDs? 2. Does the presence of academicians impact the development of evidence-based practices in ways that are more effective and efficient in the AHD vs. non-AHD practice settings? 3. Are students in AHDs more capable of civic engagement? 4. Does the AHD enhance the potential for translating research into practice? 5. How can the AHD otherwise inform the field of dissemination and implementation science?
Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do health departments in AHDs implement Evidence-Based Public Health to a greater degree than health departments in non-AHD settings? 2. Do the AHD partners publish their work in peer-reviewed journals? 3. Are students in AHD settings more successful in obtaining desired employment? 4. What are the experiences of health departments which hire students from AHD settings? 5. Do health departments in AHDs achieve accreditation through PHAB more efficiently than health departments in non-AHD settings? 6. Do academic programs achieve accreditation through CEPH more efficiently than academic programs in non-AHD settings? 7. Will AHDs that involve medical students and residents serve as models for patient-centered primary care? 8. What are the roles that AHDs have in Accountable Care Organizations? 9. What are the roles that AHDs have in addressing the social determinants of health? 10. What is the return on investment for the AHD? 11. Does community health improve differently in AHD vs. non-AHD settings, and how can this be measured?

Implications

- Logic models are important tools for designing, implementing, and evaluating the impact of complex initiatives such as the AHD
- Theory-approach logic models are useful for considering the "big picture" and for clarifying underlying assumptions
- A specific logic model for the AHD provides a comprehensive framework for assessing the value and ultimate impact of the AHD
- These logic models become useful starting points for formulating research questions, aimed at ultimately answering the question, does the AHD matter?