



*“Pursuing Integration of Public Health Services in Genesee and Orleans Counties, NY”*

Counties across New York State (and elsewhere) continue to face unprecedented fiscal pressures without significant mandate relief. These burdens are often pushing counties to cut services and become more creative in how they deliver required essential services in a cost efficient manner. In response to this reality, the Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments have embarked upon an exciting joint cross jurisdictional sharing (CJS) venture seeking integration of select functions and services.

As a result of the Cross Jurisdictional Services initiative, direct fiscal savings have been actualized. Shared administration, staffing, travel expenses, medical and environmental engineering consultation, receiving a CDC PHAP Associate, and shared transportation savings have led to re-occurring annual savings/benefits of over \$400,000 per year.

In addition to fiscal savings, qualitative improvements have also been accomplished. Shared staffing between Genesee and Orleans County Department of Health has helped identify and reduce duplications of efforts and coordinate public health education and community messaging via calendar postings and news columns. The CJS venture has also helped develop common fee schedules for sanitary codes as well as standardization of septic changes that are up to date and streamlined. Lastly, sharing of personnel across counties have fostered collaboration that lead to joint community health assessment and improvement plans.

In addition to assessment in the communities, the CJS project has also developed self-assessment and improvement plans for the upcoming future. Through Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, senior leadership teams at Genesee and Orleans County Department of Health were able to identify three essential services for improvement. Furthermore, through Concept Systems (CS) analysis, the CJS team was able to survey all major stakeholders in order to identify the most important and feasible improvements to be made in the future.

Moving forward, Genesee and Orleans County will have a concise implementation plan in order to address and improve the essential services identified by Concept Systems the SWOT analysis and joint strategic planning. It is our goal that the findings from this CJS venture will be used to guide the health department’s accreditation process. We also hope that this endeavor will help shed light into innovative ways other public health agencies and other municipal operations might leverage resources, services and staff to respond to new world fiscal pressures while also better serving their respective communities.



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Actually first considered in thought and planning over six years ago, the two counties have over the past year and a half begun senior staff integration. Today the agencies now share three management positions, those being Public Health Director, Deputy Director/Director of Environmental Health and Director of Patient Services. According to Paul Pettit, the shared Public Health Director, “it has taken a lot of coffee and conversations with two county legislatures, two boards of health and the state health department to get things moving”. But moving, they certainly now are.

Besides sharing of senior management, other accomplishments to date include:

- Joint community health assessment activities
- Joint community health improvement plan development
- Joint purchasing of services in select areas
- The development of common fee schedules and sanitary codes
- Sharing of medical and environmental engineering consultation
- Coordination of Public Health Education and Community Messaging

As time passes, additional integration will be pursued as well specifically targeting ways to standardize and streamline operations and operational support while further seeking opportunities to conserve resources, improve quality, increase community engagement and to begin to prepare for potential national accreditation.

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