

Team Name: Northwoods

Major Activities: Seventeen health department and one tribal health department agreed to explore CJS opportunities in an effort to improve effectiveness, efficiency, capacity and performance as defined by the PHAB accreditation standards and measures.

The team conducted a literature review at the outset of their effort to identify existing resources and understand key issues associated with CJS arrangements. Moreover, the team interviewed each health official about their perceptions of CJS, specifically their general opinions, fears, strengths and challenges. The team also held a facilitated discussion with each governing body to obtain their input on what public health services are important to them, their criteria for sharing, and their perspectives on the value of public health. Throughout the duration of the project, the team issued monthly newsletters that focused on a specific topic related to CJS and included related results from the interviews and discussions, as well as related resources. Finally the team developed an inventory of sharing arrangements between the region's health departments, and analyzed the results of each jurisdiction's completed PHAB self-assessment to identify areas which might benefit from a CJS arrangement. All of these efforts yielded a great deal of rich information that informed the team's work.

Major Accomplishments: The team developed a comprehensive toolkit to facilitate in the exploration, planning and preparation, and implementation of CJS efforts. The toolkit includes a host of materials, including criteria for engaging in a CJS effort, a checklist to be considered in each phase, a range of resources to complete the steps in each phase, and a summary of survey results related to specific themes.

The team also generated a master grid and individual county grids showing current sharing arrangements. The grids reportedly were very popular with policymakers and health officials alike. All health departments had more than one CJS arrangement in place at the beginning of the project period, and additional activity during the project period included the following:

- 50% strengthened and/or formalized an existing CJS arrangement;
- 39% added a new CJS arrangement; and
- 39% began exploring a new potential CJS arrangement.

Challenges: A challenge for the continuation or development of new CJS arrangement is the turnover in policy boards due to local elections. Some health departments had high turnover in their boards of health in the Spring 2014 elections, presenting a challenge in terms of bringing new board members up to the same level of awareness and support of CJS arrangements.

Another challenge encountered by this group was the dissolution of the original Northwoods Collaborative, which had been formed around emergency preparedness. When the lead staff resigned and future funding for the collaborative was uncertain, the Collaborative itself dissolved. A new group, Emergency Preparedness North, quickly formed, led by a different (and smaller) health department. The new group comprises nine members, including eight county health departments and one tribe. Ultimately, despite the turmoil generated by the Collaborative's dissolution, the CJS work continued as planned until the grant funding had ended.