

Summary of Outreach Efforts

**Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Sharing Public Health Services Project
Building Public Health Capacities through Collaboration: Accelerating
Progress in Northeast Ohio**

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Overview

Throughout the course of this project, the Portage County Shared Services Team has undertaken multiple efforts to outreach to public health stakeholders and others with public health interests in Portage County and elsewhere. The press accounts included elsewhere in our grant closure documents provide evidence of some of these efforts. In addition to broad based coverage of the project as a whole, we also undertook four focused outreach engagement efforts. These four efforts are described below.

Engaging the Task Force for Improving Public Health in Portage County

Throughout the grant project, the health departments and the Kent State University Center for Public Policy and Health (KSU-CPPH) engaged community stakeholders through the Task Force for Improving Public Health in Portage County. The Task Force provided structure to conversations about sharing public health services prior to this grant project, and its participating group of community stakeholders were involved in the project. Task Force members participated in quarterly Task Force meetings where RWJF project team members briefed the group on the project activities and received feedback and ideas on the progress being made. Task Force members were also active in the three workgroups formed around the objectives of this project, and also participated in the Community Health Assessment process. At this point, it appears that the Task Force will continue to be active after the grant period ends.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Northeast Ohio Site Visit

The Northeast Ohio project team hosted a site visit for Center for Sharing Public Health Services staff and other project teams from around the country. While this event allowed folks from outside of the state learn about the activities of our project team, it also served as an outreach and engagement activity for the local decision makers and stakeholders in Portage County. The site visit provided an opportunity for elected officials, boards of health members, Task Force members, and community stakeholders to be further educated on the project's purpose and objectives, as well as the recommendations that had been developed by project workgroups for improving public health in the county. The site visit was capped off with an evening Task Force meeting and dinner at the Kent State Hotel and Conference Center that involved the site visitors, Task Force members, and community members. More than 50 individuals attended this meeting, which represented a major outreach effort to educate people on the activities associated with the project halfway through the grant period.

Community Health Assessment (CHA) Partnership Initial Outreach

The RWJF Education Workgroup worked with Portage County's health commissioners to identify stakeholders to participate in a partnership to guide and inform a CHA process for Portage County. The workgroup brainstormed a list of 65 stakeholders who have an impact on the local public health system. The group worked with the commissioners to identify 21 stakeholders who were targeted for participation in the CHA Partnership. The stakeholders were invited to participate through a letter signed by the three health commissioners. Twenty stakeholders agreed to participate in the Partnership, and the group began meeting in June of 2014 and completed its work in guiding the CHA later that year.

Community Health Assessment Public Comment and Outreach

A key aspect of the CHA process is to share the findings with general citizenry to collect additional input and to facilitate discussion about community health needs. In an effort to ensure the public was aware of the CHA and their opportunity to review and provide feedback, members of the CHA Partnership conducted a public briefing for the three Boards of Health in the county, community stakeholders, and the public. Fifty-three individuals attended the briefing. The event took place at the Kent State Hotel and Conference Center on January 8th, 2015 at 5pm. Members of the Partnership presented a description of the assessment process, the results and findings of the process, and future endeavors within the county to promote public health. Members also participated in a public questions and answers session at the briefing. The local newspaper, The Record Courier, covered the release of the health assessment results, and provided notification to the public of the January 8th briefing.

The January 8th briefing marked the beginning of the report's public comment period, which extended through January 23rd. The report was posted on each health department's website and the KSU-CPPH website along with a comment form. Comment forms were submitted by commenters to KSU-CPPH and the comments received were then summarized and targeted changes to the report were made based on those comments.