

Cross-sector Innovation Initiative Profile: Better Health Together (WA)

Project Title

A Collaborative Approach to Community Equity in Spokane County, WA

Project Summary

In 2020, the Spokane Collaborative will begin to address three equity priorities in Eastern Washington: reducing family violence & trauma, increasing access to affordable housing, and access to behavioral health treatment. During the course of the grant, Better Health Together (BHT) and the Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) Data Center will develop an evaluation plan for the Collaborative's equity projects and priorities, as well as evaluation of collaboration and interactions between partners. Through workshopping and partnership-building activities, Collaborative members will collectively develop equity workplans and commit to activities, staffing, ongoing partnership-building, and supporting evaluations.

Community Description

The Collaborative was formed in March 2018 by BHT, a nonprofit Accountable Community of Health working to radically transform health in Eastern Washington. The Collaborative is the formal, local convening body for BHT's clinical and community partners in Spokane County. Spokane County is located along the eastern edge of Washington State. In 2018, Spokane County was the fourth most populous county in the state with 507,950 individuals. The City of Spokane and other incorporated municipalities accounted for 70.9% of the County population, with 29.1% living in unincorporated areas of the County.

As the Spokane Collaborative was reviewing data to select equity gaps, the same four ZIP Codes showed up as having worse outcomes and access, with rates of child abuse and neglect 2.36 to 6.90 times higher in those neighborhoods and a rental vacancy rate of 0% in nearly half of the census tracts evaluated. According to 2017 data, Spokane County was not very racially diverse. However, many health outcomes and access to services are persistently worse among racially diverse County residents. In 2016, the median household income in Spokane County was \$53,043, lower than that in Washington State (\$67,106) and the United States (\$57,617).

Expected Impact on Systems Alignment, Population Health, and Health Equity

The Spokane Collaborative is implementing workplans to address three equity priorities: 1) reducing family violence & trauma, 2) increasing access to affordable housing, and 3) improving access to behavioral health treatment. While it is not expected that major movement in data will occur during the grant period, intermediate measures will be evaluated to gauge the effectiveness of a multi-sector, collaborative approach to impacting community equity gaps and to measure the effectiveness of the Collaborative in building partnerships and alignment across sectors.

The Collaborative's equity project is part of BHT's larger organizational strategy to include equity in all aspects of health transformation work. Over the next year, Collaborative members will participate in an equity training series with topics including structural racism and why race matters, Native American history and culture, trauma-informed approaches, and more.

Key Partners

- Excelsior Wellness Center
- Peer Spokane
- Spokane Fire Department CARES Team
- Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners (SNAP)
- Spokane Regional Health District
- 54 total partners with MOUs, including: 3 FQHCs, 2 public school systems, 3 peer-led organizations, 2 Tribal health partners, 2 housing organizations, 3 food security organizations, YWCA and YMCA, Medicaid payers, and dozens of clinical organizations representing primary care, behavioral health, and oral health

Grantees are working toward population health and health equity priorities, as well as addressing one or more pillars of alignment (as indicated by a checkmark below).

Population Health and Health Equity Focus

- Access to care
- Housing
- Injury and violence prevention, trauma informed care
- Maternal, child and adolescent health
- Mental and behavioral health, substance use disorder

Systems Alignment Areas

- ✓ Share a vision and a set of priority outcomes
- ✓ Create a shared data and measurement system
- ✓ Establish appropriate financing with incentives and accountability
- ✓ Strong governance with leadership and defined relationships driven by the voice and participation of community members

Cross-sector Innovation Initiative Overview

With funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Center for Sharing Public Health Services and the Public Health National Center for Innovations are co-leading the Cross-sector Innovation Initiative, a joint effort that aims to understand and support innovative multi-sector partnerships between public health, healthcare, and social services that ultimately transform practice towards working in alignment to improve population health, wellbeing, and equity for all.