

Cross-sector Innovation Initiative Profile: Ledge Light Health District (CT)

Project Title and Tagline

The Health Improvement Collaborative (HIC) of Southeastern Connecticut - *Engaging community to pursue a healthy and equitable future by addressing structural racism.*

Project Summary

The HIC will advance systems alignment work in both a formal structured way – by developing by-laws, financing structures, membership agreements, etc., and in a project-based experiential way – by advancing its collective work on racism as a public health issue. We will expand community engagement so that community voice is centered at every level of the collaborative. While participating HIC organizations provide services to community members, too often service or care delivery is designed without incorporating the voices of people with lived experience and without considering a racial equity lens.

The HIC's established values include the intentional creation of a culture of trust, authenticity in seeking community involvement, inclusiveness, respectfulness of cultural consideration and differences, and social justice. Our systems alignment work will institutionalize those values in our governance and financing structures. The HIC also will advance its efforts to understand racism as a public health issue and create meaningful change as organizations examine their policies and practices through a racial equity lens.

Community Description

The HIC serves approximately 151,000 people who live in nine different towns along the Connecticut shoreline. There are significant inequities in multiple domains, including income, education, housing and employment; those inequities exist between and within the different municipalities.

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

We will intentionally develop finance and governance systems that assure participation is accessible and beneficial for organizations and individuals regardless of their resources. Leadership and decision-making processes will assure that community voice and participation are institutionalized and not dependent on the goodwill of a few members. Goals include formalizing and documenting transparency and accountability; effectiveness and efficiency; consensus-based decision making; and equity and inclusion. We will also build capacity to address structural racism through recrafting policies and practices through a racial justice and equity lens.

Key Partners

- Connecticut College
- FRESH New London
- Lawrence and Memorial Hospital/Yale New Haven Health System
- The New London Chapter of the NAACP
- Thames Valley Council for Community Action
- Truthteller Consulting

This group serves as the Coordinating Team for the HIC, which includes more than 30 organizations.

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

- Structural racism

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.