

Engaging Hospitals as Partners in Community Change

Thursday afternoon, 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Many NNIP partner organizations already work closely with hospitals to improve community health and broader neighborhood conditions. The interest and capacity of hospitals to collaborate in community efforts will vary from place to place. Knowing the range of engagement opportunities that are available to NNIP partners is the first step towards deciding how your organization can build stronger relationships with your local hospitals.

The purpose of this panel is to educate partners about how the requirements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and broader trends in health promotion are opportunities to engage hospitals in health planning and improving neighborhoods.

Following the implementation of the ACA, nonprofit hospitals are required to complete Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) at least once every three years to fulfill new regulations. CHNAs specifically require hospitals to engage with community members and the state or local public health agency, and expressly focus on the communities they serve (determined by the geographic area served; target populations; and principal hospital functions). With the establishment of CHNAs, NNIP partners can play many roles to make the CHNA process more valuable to the community. For example, NNIP partners likely know how to access local data sources needed for the CHNA, which might be unfamiliar territory for hospitals that have traditionally focused on internal data. Partners may participate in developing the content of the CHNAs, may be contracted to complete the assessment itself, and may help the hospitals' community engagement efforts by connecting them to other organizations who should be involved.

Beyond the CHNA, hospitals are large employers and some will be interested in contributing to neighborhood development in their surrounding areas. Also more hospitals are beginning to understand that health goes beyond health care and that they have a vested interest in studying social determinants of health.

In this session we will have about 45 minutes of presentations followed by 45 minutes of plenary discussion. After an introduction to the topic by the moderator Kathy Pettit, we will have three speakers followed by plenary discussion.

- Vickie Boothe from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will provide a national overview of the forces at work pushing hospitals and health organizations to do more transparent community planning and collaborative action.

- Mark Abraham from DataHaven will discuss how he has worked with local hospitals as investors in the Connecticut Wellbeing Survey, including how the information from the CHNA has been shared with the community.
- Laura McKieran, Community Information Now (CI:NOW), will share her experiences working with the Bexar County Community Health Collaborative and her advice on reaching out to other organizations in the health community.

Questions for Discussion:

- What are other partners' experiences in engaging or working directly with hospitals?
- What issues or perspectives are currently missing in the local discussions around community health?
- How can NNIP partners help build the internal capacity of hospital staff to understand and use data for community collaboration and interventions?
- How can NNIP partners help shift the conversation to health disparities and the environmental and socioeconomic factors that affect community health?
- Are there ways that NNIP as a whole can publicize the network principles and local NNIP partners' expertise to hospital associations or communications outlets?