



The Team representing Adams County, Illinois, in the second cohort of the National Leadership Academy for the Public's Health was composed of representatives from four institutions, each of which is committed to data collection and analysis aimed at improving community health: Adams County Health Department, Blessing Hospital, Tri-State Health Care Coalition, and United Way of Adams County.

This team first came together to lead a steering committee organized to guide the development of a community health assessment. The results of that assessment were compiled into a report that provided information for all four partners and met requirements of the health department and hospital to the state and federal governments respectively.

Based on various past experiences, no one wanted to go the route of producing a report with specific recommendations that would sit on a shelf, and dissolving the partnership to use the information in four different ways likewise had no appeal. The decision was made to remain intact, greatly aided by the resources made available through NLAPH, to create a structure that would engage community members in developing and implementing solutions to the identified priority health issue areas. In this way the implementation plan would be continuously reviewed and updated, hopefully making future versions of the community health assessment something to update rather than create from scratch.

The resulting groups – Community Building Council, Leadership Delegations, and Community Solutions Teams – all have transition plans, allowing for new members to join and bring new perspectives to the table, and action plans tied to the desired community outcomes identified in the community health assessment. United Way has taken the lead in facilitating group meetings and keeping them organized. Because of United Way's focus on three impact areas – Income, Education, and Health – Leadership Delegations were organized around all three. The NLAPH Team will remain engaged primarily with the Health LD but will meet quarterly with leadership from the other two groups to share experiences and best practices. The NLAPH Team is now focused on providing professional development opportunities to the members of the Delegations and Solutions Teams and developing an ongoing method of communication so that all volunteers will know what each group is doing.

An important part of the NLAPH fellowship was setting personal and Team goals. In respect to the first, all Team members report making progress toward the goals set for themselves with a commitment to continued focus toward achievement and then sustainability. All Team goals have been achieved and efforts from this point will be directed toward maintenance, evaluation, and revision as needed.

Preparation for the next iteration of the community health assessment will begin in 2014, and because of the community engagement structure in place and the tools provided by NLAPH participation, expectations are for a document that will eventually be able to demonstrate positive outcomes, building on success.

Many thanks to the CDC and Center for Health Leadership and Practice for the opportunity to be part of NLAPH. Thanks as well to Dr. Art Chen for his patient guidance and commitment to the larger effort and our specific needs.

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