



COUNCIL ON LINKAGES BETWEEN ACADEMIA AND PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

MISSION

The mission of the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice (Council) is to improve public health practice and education by fostering, coordinating, and monitoring links between academia and the public health and healthcare community, developing and advancing innovative strategies to build and strengthen public health infrastructure, and creating a process for continuing public health education throughout one's career.

BACKGROUND

The 1988 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report entitled, *The Future of Public Health*, stated "...some schools of public health have in recent years become somewhat isolated from the field of public health practice," (IOM, pg. 128). To help bridge this perceived gap between the academic and practice communities, the Association of Schools of Public Health, American Public Health Association, Health Resources and Services Administration, and Centers for Disease Control (former name for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) established the Public Health Faculty/Agency Forum in 1990.

The four principal goals of the Public Health Faculty/Agency Forum were to develop recommendations for: 1) strengthening relationships between public health academicians and public health practitioners in public agencies; 2) improving the teaching, training, and practice of public health; 3) establishing firm practice links between schools of public health and public agencies; and 4) collaborating with others in achieving the nation's Year 2000 health objectives.

After nearly two years of deliberations and an extensive public comment period, the Public Health Faculty/Agency Forum issued its final report entitled, *The Public Health Faculty/Agency Forum: Linking Graduate Education and Practice*. The report recommended a variety of initiatives and strategies to improve the teaching and practice of public health by building meaningful collaborative relationships. In addition, the Public Health Faculty/Agency Forum issued a list of "Universal Competencies" to help guide the education and training of public health professionals.

The desire of *The Public Health Faculty/Agency Forum* to see the recommendations and competencies implemented led to the formation of the Council in 1992. The overall objective of the Council is to improve the relevance of public health education to practice by strengthening links between the academic, practice and healthcare communities through quality improvements in education, research and service.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

The Council is comprised of 17 national public health academic and practice organizations that have been working together to help build academic practice linkages in public health. Council member organizations include: the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), QUAD Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations, Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA), American Public Health Association (APHA), Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH), Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine (ATPM), American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM), Council of Accredited Masters in Public Health Programs (CAMP), Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH), Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE), National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH), National Library of Medicine (NLM), National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), with staff provided by the Public Health Foundation (PHF).

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Prologue:

There is broad consensus among academic institutions and agencies that continued leadership in public health is needed at the national level to:

- 1) Develop, document, and disseminate information on cooperative and collaborative activities;
- 2) Encourage and promote the further development of a diverse and culturally competent public health workforce capable of working collaboratively with other community groups to eliminate health disparities and improve access to the underserved;
- 3) Provide technical assistance to foster, coordinate, and monitor implementation of Council objectives and strategies;
- 4) Advance public health systems research;
- 5) Strengthen linkages between public health and health care professionals; and
- 6) Improve the relevance of public health education to practice.

Since its inception in 1992, the Council has developed and maintained a list of on-going objectives and strategies to help guide and prioritize its work. It is the intent of the Council to mount a sustained effort to advance each objective and strategy until they become part of the culture of public health. To this end, the objectives and strategies are revised and refined on a regular basis. New objectives and strategies are formulated in accordance with the Council's mission, recommendations of the Faculty/Agency Forum, and new developments in the field.

Current List of Objectives and Strategies:

The Council and its staff will put forth a sustained effort to achieve the following objectives:

Objective 1 - Encourage Linkages

Encourage all public health educational programs in academic institutions to engage in collaborative partnerships with public health and healthcare agencies, associations and organizations.

- Strategies:**
- 1) Maintain communications and relationships with practice coordinators at schools of public health.
 - 2) Foster collaboration between the HRSA Public Health Training Centers and CDC Centers for Public Health Preparedness.
 - 3) Encourage graduate public health programs to establish and maintain public health practice coordinators.
 - 4) Initiate outreach activities to state associations of county health officials (SACHOs), state health agencies and associations to encourage educational initiatives and linkages with area public health education and training institutions.
 - 5) Recognize the academic and practice communities for their collaborative activities through the Annual Linkages Award.
 - 6) Invite representatives of U.S. Public Health Service agencies to Council meetings to discuss ways they can promote linkage activities through existing grant and contract funding mechanisms.
 - 7) Promote opportunities for public health agencies to discuss and present the linkage activities they have developed, especially during the annual meetings of ASTHO, NACCHO, and NALBOH.
 - 8) Create public health practice offices/programs in all public health educational programs in academic institutions dedicated to establishing and strengthening public health practice ties.
 - 9) Explore opportunities to create linkages with other environmental health organizations.

Objective 2 – Encourage Racial/Ethnic Diversity

Encourage all public health agencies, organizations and academic institutions to promote a diverse and culturally competent public health workforce.

- Strategies:**
- 1) Encourage Council member organizations to include activities related to the promotion of a diverse and culturally competent public health workforce in their organizational updates.
 - 2) Regularly include, as a Council meeting agenda item, issues surrounding racial/ethnic diversity in the public health workforce.
 - 3) Invite representatives from organizations with expertise in cultural competence and ethnic/racial diversity to Council meetings to discuss expanding the diversity of the public health workforce.
 - 4) Periodically examine the impact of the Council's efforts to improve the diversity of the public health workforce and the role diversity

plays in influencing the Council's discussions and actions.

Objective 3 - Enhance Education

Enhance the quality of public health education by encouraging the incorporation of nationally agreed upon public health competencies into curricula, and Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accreditation guidelines for Schools of Public Health and Graduate Public Health Programs.

- Strategies:**
- 1) Promote and encourage accreditation of all schools and programs that offer public health degrees.
 - 2) Promote the use of the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals and the importance of accreditation through *The Link* and other media, and at meetings of practice and academic organizations.
 - 3) Promote the incorporation of culturally appropriate education in the development of curriculum and accreditation of all public health programs.
 - 4) Work with schools of public health, graduate public health programs and public health agencies to promote the integration of the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals into training and education programs.
 - 5) Collaborate with schools of public health and graduate public health programs to help ensure that students, at a minimum, receive educational preparation to help achieve a mastery of the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals.
 - 6) Promote the need and provide support for the integration of public health education into undergraduate academic programs.
 - 7) Work with the Public Health Practice Council of ASPH to provide assistance in its efforts to implement Public Health Faculty/Agency Forum recommendations.
 - 8) Work with ASPH to encourage participation of public health practitioners and students in activities of the Public Health Practice Council and to promote the Award for Student Excellence in Public Health Practice.
 - 9) Seek input from public health students and student organizations to identify ways in which practice can be better integrated into academic training in order to address the emerging needs of the public health workforce.
 - 10) Document, develop and disseminate models for creating and sustaining academic health departments.
 - 11) Support and assist in implementing the recommendations of the IOM report, "*Who Will Keep the Public Healthy? Educating Public Health Professionals for the 21st Century.*"

Objective 4 - Evaluate Education

Monitor activities of schools of public health and accredited graduate public health programs related

to Objectives 1 and 3.

- Strategies:**
- 1) Periodically assess the status of implementation of Public Health Faculty/Agency Forum recommendations and other appropriate subsequent reports regarding the needed outcomes of public health education.
 - 2) Reexamine the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals to determine their continued appropriateness and make revisions, if appropriate.
 - 3) Work with the ASPH data committee to develop a survey tool to assess the use of the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals as a means of establishing baseline data for HP2010 developmental objective 23-9.
 - 4) Conduct periodic surveys of schools of public health and graduate public health programs to assess the degree to which they have implemented Council objectives and strategies.

Objective 5 - Enhance/Assure Training

Promote a greater level of awareness about the need for more continuing education opportunities and a system of lifelong learning to improve the knowledge and skills of the public health workforce through collaboration with academic and practice public health agencies and organizations.

- Strategies:**
- 1) Periodically invite representatives of the private health care sector, providers, and consumer representatives, such as boards of health, to a Council meeting to discuss their future public health activities and training needs, and the role the Council might play in helping to meet those training needs.
 - 2) Encourage assistance from the U.S. Public Health Service and national associations to promote financial and contextual support for public health education, training, and retraining.
 - 3) Assess the need for credentialing the leadership of the public health workforce.
 - 4) Promote the development of “Academic Councils,” similar to the ASPH Public Health Practice Council.
 - 5) Promote the use of core and discipline-specific competencies in the development of education and training curricula to enhance their relevance to practice.
 - 6) Encourage public health agencies to incorporate cultural competence training into their workforce development initiatives.
 - 7) Collaborate with public health practice associations to identify, develop and promote training initiatives within academic organizations.
 - 8) Work with academic and practice organizations to assure access and availability of quality resources sufficient to develop a competent public health workforce able to achieve the core functions of public

health and the Essential Public Health Services.

Objective 6 – Promote Council Activities and Initiatives

Disseminate information on plans, projects or initiatives which advance Council Objectives and Strategies to Council member organizations and public health professionals through *The Link*, PHF E-news, the Council website, and additional media sources when available.

- Strategies:**
- 1) Identify potential authors from the academic and practice communities to write articles for *The Link* and other widely-read publications in the field.
 - 2) Expand the Council's communication capacity and explore new media formats to reach a larger audience of public and private sector organizations and individuals.
 - 3) Regularly update Council resources and materials, in particular the website, promotional flyers, and the Council CD-ROM.
 - 4) Actively track and disseminate tools and information on best practices that come out of the HRSA Public Health Training Centers and CDC Centers for Public Health Preparedness.

Objective 7 - Share/Develop Practice Guidelines

Ensure development, dissemination and translation of community preventive services guidelines.

- Strategies:**
- 1) Work with agencies of the U.S. Public Health Service to assist in the development of community preventive services guidelines.
 - 2) Work with agencies of the U.S. Public Health Service to assist in the promotion and dissemination of the CDC Guide to Community Preventive Services.

Objective 8 - Link with Health Care Professions

Foster collaboration between public health and health care professionals and support the teaching of relevant population-based health principles in clinical and health professions curricula as outlined in IOM's report, *The Future of the Public's Health in the 21st Century*.

- Strategies:**
- 1) Invite representatives of various health professions to Council meetings to further define population-based health care and foster the development of more training in this area.
 - 2) Work with the managed care sector to identify population-based health training needs, research opportunities, and potential avenues for the development of academic/practitioner teams to address these needs and conduct research.
 - 3) Support ATPM initiative to establish a faculty Point Person for Prevention in every accredited medical school.
 - 4) Work with associations such as the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), the Association of Academic Health Centers (AHC), and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing

- (AACN) to strengthen the link between health professions education and public health practice activities.
- 5) Support initiatives, such as the Medicine and Public Health Initiative, which aim to strengthen partnerships between members of the health system.
 - 6) Help facilitate coordination of public health and clinical training in the area of terrorism preparedness.
 - 7) Work with the Healthy People 2010 Curriculum Taskforce to develop and refine a population-focused framework for integration into health professions education curricula.
 - 8) Work with the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and academic health organizations to promote integration of the ecological model of health and a subset of the Core Competencies of Public Health Professionals into health professional education and training, as recommended in the two recent IOM reports, *Who Will Keep the Public Healthy? Educating Public Health Professionals for the 21st Century*, and *The Future of the Public's Health in the 21st Century*.
 - 9) Work with health professions agencies, associations and organizations to determine the feasibility and desirability of integrating the Core Competencies into health professions training.

Objective 9 – Performance Standards

Advance the improvement of quality, accountability, and the overall performance of public health agencies, systems, and the workforce.

- Strategies:**
- 1) Link academic institutions with key players in the implementation testing sites for the National Public Health Performance Standards Program.
 - 2) Promote the use of the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals to improve the performance of public health agencies, in particular, through competency-based personnel needs assessment.
 - 3) Work with practice and academic organizations in the exploration of credentialing as an option for building capacity and performance of the public health workforce.
 - 4) Encourage the use of performance improvement tools among Council member organizations and the academic and practice communities.
 - 5) Explore the relationship between competency-based education and training, and improved performance.

Objective 10 – Strengthen Research

Promote collaborative research to advance the field of Public Health Systems Research (PHSR) and build the evidence base for public health practice.

- Strategies:**
- 1) Provide leadership and coordination to the process of establishing a comprehensive and coordinated PHSR agenda.
 - 2) Periodically assess the PHSR agenda-setting process to ensure that information gaps continue being identified and research activities continue being coordinated.
 - 3) Ensure the development of Centers of Excellence and PHSR fellowships.
 - 4) Establish and maintain a PHSR Leadership Forum to help build political support and ensure resources for the advancement of PHSR.
 - 5) Seek to sponsor or co-sponsor, with other academic and practice organizations, an annual PHSR meeting.
 - 6) Document and develop models of collaborative research involving the public health academic and practice communities.

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