

New Mexico Community Health Councils: Documenting Contributions to Systems Changes

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What are the Goals?

- To develop a theory of change linking intermediate, systems-level changes to longer-term community health outcomes.
- To create an evaluation system to document intermediate outcomes.

Purpose of the Paper

- To present data on four intermediate, systems-level outcomes for 23 community health coalitions in the areas of substance abuse, diabetes/obesity, teen pregnancy and access to care: 1) Networking and partnering, 2) joint planning of strategies, programs, services, 3) leveraging resources, and 4) engaging in policy change initiatives.

What Are the Findings?

- Councils identified local public health priorities and addressed those priorities by:
- Strengthening networks and partnerships which lead to the creation and enhancement of strategies, services and programs;
- Leveraging \$1.10 for every dollar invested by the funding agency; and
- Serving as a hub for information on policies; advocating for changing existing policies, identifying new policies, assessing the potential impacts of proposed or existing policies, and introducing ballot initiatives.

Who Should Care Most?

- Community-based coalitions working on multilevel, long-term public health issues.
- Public health practitioners and researchers working with community coalitions in planning and evaluation.

Recommendations for Action

- Build community coalitions capacity to identify and evaluate systems-level goals and objectives.
- Provide adequate funding for sustained planning, implementation, and evaluation of community-based coalitions.