Accreditation Preparation & Quality Improvement Demonstration Sites Project

Final Report

Prepared for NACCHO by the Logan-Hocking County Health District, OH

November 2008
Brief Summary Statement
The Hocking County Health Department is located in the Appalachian region of South-eastern Ohio and serves a population of approximately 29,000. Logan is the county seat of Hocking County and has a population of approximately 17,000. The Hocking County Health Department is governed by a Board of Health composed of 5 members.

After using the NACCHO LHD Self-Assessment Tool for Accreditation Preparation and a quality improvement process, the Hocking County Health Department decided to focus on staff education. Initially we looked at the need to initiate a community health assessment. However, based on timing and the work involved with a community health assessment, we decided to narrow our project and focus on our county fair booth. When looking at our self assessment we did find that we needed to improve on Standard III D. – Health Promotion Programs for behaviour and environmental/community change. With this project, we specifically targeted – LHD staff has health promotion knowledge and skills.

Background
The Hocking County Health Department, which includes the city of Logan, is seeking passage of a renewal levy in November. This is a 1 mil 10-year replacement levy. The levy enables the health department to provide general public health programming such as; immunizations, health promotion, BP clinics, etc. It was decided by the Board of Health that a replacement levy as opposed to a renewal would be placed on the ballot. The replacement levy would reimburse us at current tax dollar value as compared to 10 year old value. Our recent annual budgets have been around $1.9 Million. Our revenue comes mostly from grants and a 1 mill operational property tax levy.

Leadership at the health department believed that all potential opportunities to interact knowledgeably and positively with citizens in the county will help raise awareness of the value of the health department. The major opportunity to interact with the public in the next six months is the county fair. The thought behind this project was that increasing our staff’s knowledge of health department programming and the importance of the levy passage would enable them to feel more confident speaking to the public and encouraging them to vote for the levy.

Goals and Objectives
Increase the knowledge level of all persons staffing the county fair booth about all of the services provided by the health department so that they are able to convey to the citizens the value of the local health department.

Self-Assessment
The self-assessment was conducted by members of the management team. The management team includes directors of WIC, Nursing, Environmental, Public Health Infrastructure and the Health Commissioner. We allotted a half a day for the assessment, and another half day for data input into the online tool. We did not have difficulty completing the assessment. We had just finished our 5 year strategic plan for the health department and so we had an idea of our areas of weakness as well as our strengths.

Highlights from Self-Assessment Results

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<tr>
<th>Standard/Indicator #</th>
<th>Standard and Significance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV. A.2</td>
<td>The planning team uses CHA to inform selection of priorities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• This was an area of great weakness for our department, as identified through the self-assessment. This was not a surprise, as we identified the need for a community health assessment during our strategic planning process this past spring. Initially we wanted to work on this for the project, but realized it was too large of a project for this grant.</td>
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<td>IV. B</td>
<td>Raise Awareness and Gain General Public Support for the Plan and Deeper Understanding</td>
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of PH issues
- This low scoring area helped us target our final plan. We decided we needed to start with staff education in order to prepare them to better educate the community.

III. C.2 Staff has capacity to create materials and campaigns to improve health behaviors
- Staff at the health department is dedicated to educating the public and we do understand the importance of this, but not all staff has the right tools. This is a main reason we chose the fair booth project, so all staff would feel comfortable education the community on our health department.

Quality Improvement Process

AIM Statement: Increase the knowledge level of all persons staffing the county fair booth about the services provided by the health department so that they are able to convey to the citizens the value of the local health department.

PLAN: The Hocking County Health Department had a number of changes in 2007, with the retirement of the Administrator and Director of Nursing. The department engaged in the development of a five year strategic plan in the spring of 2008. Upon completion of the strategic plan, a number of goals were created and committees formed. Instituting quality improvement into the department was a major goal for the strategic plan.

The Logan-Hocking Health Department began their QI efforts by conducting a self assessment and then identifying an area for improvement. The health department is seeking passage of a renewal levy in November. Leadership at the department believes that all potential opportunities to interact knowledgeably and positively with citizens in the county will help raise awareness of the value of the health department. The major opportunity to interact with the public in the next six months is the county fair.

After using the NACCHO LHD Self-Assessment Tool for Accreditation Preparation and a quality improvement process, the Hocking County Health Department decided to focus on staff education. Initially we looked at the need to initiate a community health assessment. However, based on timing and the work involved with a community health assessment, we decided to narrow our project and focus on educating staff regarding our county fair booth. With a replacement levy on the ballot in November, we felt it necessary for our staff to have the needed tools to educate citizens on the benefits of the health department.

When the team examined their current approach they realized that they were assigning staff to the booth at the fair without providing training and without designing activities at the booth to provide information about the value of the health department. The team decided to ensure that everyone had baseline knowledge of the services of the department and that the booth was designed to provide an opportunity to communicate the value of the health department.

We felt that if the health department provides a staff training regarding the fair booth and health department services, health department staff will have increased knowledge of the county fair booth and the services provided by the health department so that they are able to convey to the citizens the value of the local health department. Fair training has not happened in the past, so this was a new project.

Pre and Post tests were given to employees to see if the fair training was beneficial.

DO: The health department committed the time of several managers including the health commissioner, nursing director, public health infrastructure coordinator and the PR committee. A pre-test using survey monkey was conducted regarding staff members past experiences working the fair booth. Staff training was conducted and the fair booth was set up in the conference room for staff to see prior to them working the booth. The PR committee was involved with the creation of the booth.
Talking points were prepared regarding simple health department facts, programs, benefits, etc. These talking points were distributed and reviewed at the training with staff. In addition, a laminated set of talking points was left as a resource at the actual fair booth.

The training also included a tour of the fair booth. The fair booth was set up in the conference room in order for staff to see it prior to their shift at the fair. Staff was led through the booth and was instructed on what to do during their shift. Activities during their shift included; passing out hand sanitizer, explaining the 3 boards in the booth (hand washing, recycling and health department activities in the community), and answering any questions regarding the levy. The booth was left up in the conference room for 5 days. This enabled staff to re-visit the exhibit before their shift.

The training was conducted and the fair booth left up in order for the staff to feel confident and comfortable talking to the public because of an increased knowledge of the booth and the department in general. This increased staff confidence would be evident to the public and then the public would leave the fair booth feeling confident in this health department and what we are doing.

A post-test was done to evaluate the effectiveness of the training.

**CHECK:** The post test showed that 100% of staff found the fair training beneficial. 100% of staff stated they felt more comfortable while working the fair booth because of the training.

Staff stated they appreciated us even holding the training, since this training has never happened in the past. They commented that the training made them more aware of the impact they could have on the levy and they wanted to do the best they could. Because of that they also felt an increase pressure on the importance of working the booth, so they took advantage of the training and stayed focus while working the booth.

**ACT:** The health department believes that the fair training was beneficial to staff and will become a yearly event prior to the start of the fair. If staff are given hands on experience and provided education, than they will have the tools necessary to convey to citizens the value of the health department.

Staff was able to staff the booth as planned. There were 2 staff members in the booth in the evenings and 1 during the day. Staff members knew their way around the fair booth and had adequate resources available to help them answer any questions that came their way. Staff worked the fair booth the way they were trained.

**Results**
The post test showed that 100% of staff found the fair training beneficial. 100% of staff stated they felt more comfortable while working the fair booth because of the training. 100% of staff felt that they were adequately prepared to educate citizens while working the fair booth. The booth was staffed adequately for each shift. 64% of staff reported more interaction with the public as opposed to past years. This increased interaction was mainly contributed to our staff members knowing how to “work” the booth and how to handle the people that came into it. This increased interaction with the public was beneficial in portraying the purpose and benefits of the health department.

Fair training has not happened in the past, so this was a new project and was successful. In addition, the data collection tool (survey monkey) was convenient and easy to use for staff.

Results were positive and did support the theory that educating staff would help them feel more prepared to work the fair booth. This education led the staff to feel more comfortable conveying the health department’s message to the community and enabled some to volunteer to speak at Township Trustee Meetings and other events around the county during the levy campaign.
In the end, the levy did pass by 235 votes. The close passage of this levy made us appreciate each vote we received. Every opportunity we had to speak to members of the community was beneficial.

**Lessons Learned**

Start with a small project when first learning the QI process. We started with a big idea and realized that not only were we limited with time, but it probably was not the best way to learn QI. Don’t pick a project that may be too complicated initially. It was nice to see positive results.

**Next Steps**

Take what we have learned as management staff and apply it to teach staff the importance of QI and why it’s important. We will involve all staff in deciding the next QI project and educating them on the process from beginning to end so they feel comfortable with the concept. The more staff feels comfortable with QI, the more it will be used and that will help in our accreditation preparation.

**Conclusions**

Our participation in this project wasn’t exactly as we had anticipated. Our initial ideas for the project changed and that led us down a different path, not only with the project, but expectations and trainings with staff.

It did enable us to set aside time for QI and help us start this process that will hopefully continue and help prepare us for accreditation.

**Appendices**

Appendix A: QI Storyboard