



# Healthy People 2020-National Association of County and City Health Officials Partnership

## Collaboration in Action

A look at a strengths-based partnership between the local health department and the hospital in Norwalk, Connecticut that embodies nearly seamless co-leadership of a community health improvement process yielding a community health (needs) assessment and community health improvement plan. For this group, their ability to recognize their strengths and limitations is the foundation of their work.

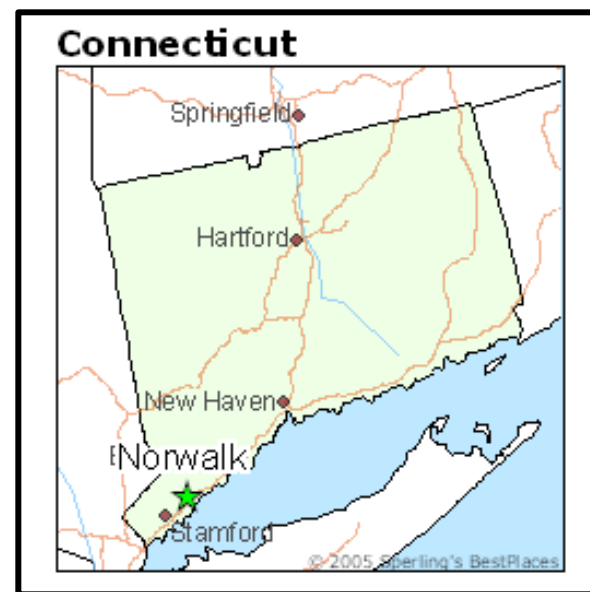


# Overview of Norwalk Case Example

- **Description of current landscape**
- **Definition of community and geographic focus area**
- **Roles and Responsibilities**
- **Critical Components and Strengths of the Partnership**
- **National, State and Local Alignment**

# What's happening in Norwalk?

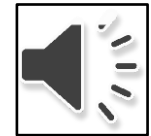
A strong partnership between the Norwalk Health Department and Norwalk Hospital in this Coastal Connecticut town are not new. In fact, the agencies have worked together on multiple initiatives over the years, including a previous community health (needs) assessment (CH(N)A) over a decade ago.



# Meet the interviewees!

(Click on one of the speaker icons to hear from Deanna or Joyce)

**Joyce Bretherton**, *Development Associate, Norwalk Hospital*



Describes history of the relationship

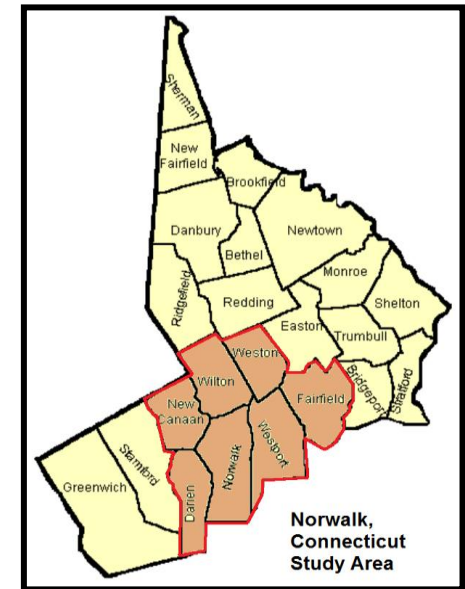
**Deanna D'Amore**, *Project Coordinator, Norwalk Health Department*



Describes strengths of co-leadership

# Defining Community

- The hospital's primary catchment area is larger than the health department's jurisdiction, involving six towns in addition to Norwalk
- “Our original intent was to focus on Norwalk first and then the hospital would complete a secondary CHA with the other communities. Then we realized this would be wasteful and we should include all the communities at the same time and that we wanted to work on the project at a regional level”.

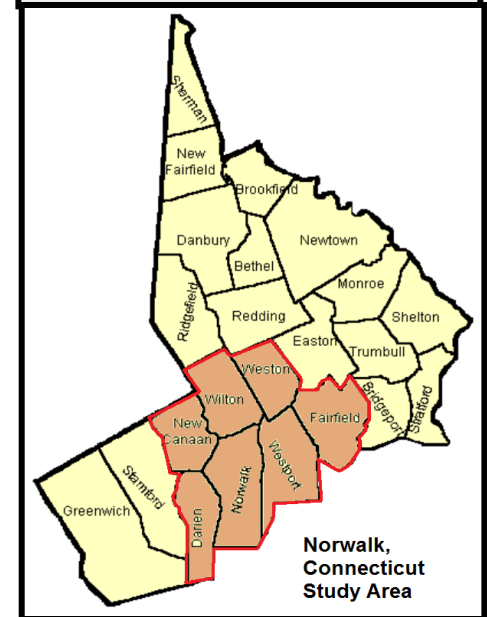
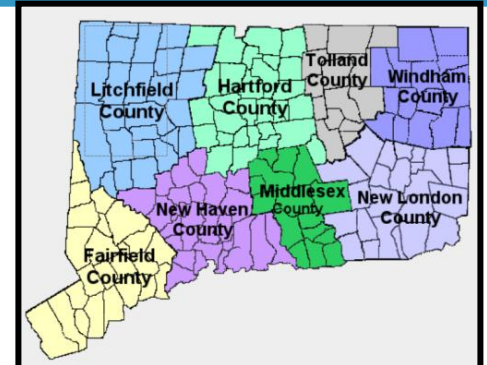


~Deanna D'Amore

# Geographic Area of Focus

## – Greater Norwalk Area:

- Norwalk
- New Canaan
- Westport
- Weston
- Wilton
- Darien
- Fairfield



Source for maps: Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools. Study area highlighted by HRIA.

# Guiding Framework

The marrying of the public health and health care perspectives in the partnership has become a hallmark of the team's work in completing the CHA and developing a CHIP along with the taskforce members that they're now working to put into action

# Roles and Responsibilities

- Core Team: comprised of the Director of Health, the Project Coordinator, and the Health Educator from the Norwalk Health Department and the Vice President of Public Affairs and Development Associate from Norwalk Hospital
- Larger Taskforce: comprised of representatives from a variety of partner organizations serving the area who rounded out the effort and assured partner and community voice and accountability in the process.



# Roles and Responsibilities

- Deanna and Joyce served as the day-to-day contacts and attributed their good health department-hospital working relationship, in part, to this. Having a staffing structure like this seemed to ensure a balance and helped divide the workload and responsibility across both organizations such that their work truly embodied a co-leadership model.
- “I think that it’s key to have someone at each agency who is the day-to-day coordinator. I can’t imagine doing this without Joyce there. We were constantly talking and e-mailing. I think that it is key to a successful partnership and co-leadership model”  
~Deanna D’Amore (LHD representative).
- Hear Joyce (hospital representative) describe roles and responsibilities:



# Strengths of Co-Leadership

- Deanna D'Amore (LHD representative) recalled, “As we started the work, we began to recognize each other’s strengths and capitalized on them through the project. Among the core leadership team, we were able to determine each member’s roles and assign project responsibilities based on those strengths”.
- Joyce (hospital representative) reported, “It is great to have [input] from someone on the other side who can give the public health or hospital perspective”.

# Critical Components of Partnership

- Open Communication
- Leadership Support
- Knowing and capitalizing on each organization's respective strengths

# Leadership Support

“The hospital CEO is very supportive, the Mayor is very supportive, and the Director of Health and hospital VP of Public Affairs are very committed and involved, and that’s made it easier work together and have that partnership,”

~Deanna D’Amore, LHD representative

“Mary, from the hospital [VP of Public Affairs] and Tim from the health department [Director of Health] provide important leadership that bridges all of our skills together into one cohesive team,”

~Joyce Bretherton,  
hospital representative

# National, State and Local Alignment

- Greater Norwalk or Fairfield County statistics were compared to the state figures and to Healthy People 2020 targets. This work also showed the team where some gaps in local data exist that will inform their CHA efforts in the future.
- To ensure that the strategies employed in their CHIP are evidence-based as PHAB requires, the team created an additional appendix listing the evidence-based strategies included in the CHIP. The County Health Rankings and the Community Guide also proved helpful in providing up-to-date evidence rating information to support a chosen strategy. This thoughtful approach has helped the team feel poised for success in terms of their respective requirements, but more importantly, in their ability to improve community health in Norwalk.



# Next Steps

- Focus on implementing their recently-completed CHIP and continue their close partnership as they move forward with these activities.
- The taskforce originally created to assist in completing the CHA and CHIP will continue to meet. Sub-committees of this group have been formed for each of the two CHIP priority areas and the structure to support action is taking shape.
- “We decided we wanted co-leads for each [priority] area. We determined the health department would co-lead the obesity initiative with a community leader and the hospital would co-lead the mental health and substance abuse initiative with two community leaders. We met with several interested community members and have determined our co-leads for each priority area” ~Deanna D’Amore, LHD representative

# Many thanks!

Learn more about Norwalk's work at:

<http://www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/healthy-people/stories-from-the-field.cfm>