



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

Collaboration in Action

A look at how three hospitals, one local health department, and a Tribal health clinic in this small, rural county are navigating past organizational mistrust, competing priorities, and strong intra-community identities to examine their community's health status and take action to improve health and well-being.



Overview of Case Example

- What's Happening in Plumas County
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What's happening in Plumas County?

Plumas County, a community of approximately 20,000 people, including Maidu Tribe members, native inhabitants of this area, is busily working to translate its recently completed community health (needs) assessment (CHA) and community health improvement plan (CHIP) into action.

This small, rural county, comprised of four distinct communities is served by a cadre of health care providers, including Greenville Rancheria, a Tribal health clinic; Eastern Plumas Healthcare, Plumas District Hospital, and Seneca District Hospital, three district non-profit hospitals; and the Plumas County Public Health Agency, the local health department.

Completing a collaborative CHA and CHIP that identified and addressed the needs of the whole county, including the Tribal population, was successful and also had its fair share of challenges and lessons along the way that can be common to collaborative endeavors.

What's happening in Plumas County?



Meet the interviewees!

(Click on one of the speaker icons to hear from Mimi or Tom)

Mimi Hall, *Director, Plumas County
Public Health Agency, CA*



Describes how leveraging national initiatives can be used to build local partnerships

Tom Hayes, *CEO, Eastern Plumas
Healthcare, CA*



Describes overcoming hospital competition

Collaboration and Competition

“I think there had been a history of a lack of trust; primarily between Eastern Plumas [Healthcare] and Plumas District Hospital. But, as we started talking we saw a commonality; something that we needed to get done. I think that between all of us we saw the greater vision that we really need to have something much better that would work much better for our citizens. Not just for meeting the requirement for the community health assessment, but for really doing something valuable...[We could take advantage of] certain strengths within each organization and that’s where we could lend our support. Of course, that assumes that you’re not going to compete with each other, which is a whole different issue.”

~Tom Hayes, hospital representative



Hall describes how the collaboration had a vision beyond just meeting requirements.

Getting Started & Mutual Benefit

“... A little light bulb went off in my head because assessments are what we [local health departments] do all the time, but we’d never had the opportunity to do one that was community-wide with partners; really important partners in the local health system, which was the health care community. So, that was how it started...we got all excited about how we could go down this road to do a community health assessment all together and benefit the hospitals and benefit us [local health department] as well,”

~Mimi Hall, LHD representative



Describes the LHD
as a neutral driver

Getting Started & Mutual Benefit

“I think that what we want to do is ensure that whatever we’re going to do together is going to have mutual benefit. [We want to] make sure that each organization understands that; that there is opportunity for mutual benefit and [although] we talked about this early on, it has since faded quite a bit,” added Hayes. “It’s just that you have to have trust in each other and you have to make sure that people understand that just because we get together doesn’t mean I am going to take this as an advantage to take your patients away.”

~Mimi Hall, LHD representative

Values

“The real core of the matter that has kept this process driving is that it is valuable to improve the health of the community and engage the partners you need, both at the health system level and the community level to do it... “...What hasn’t been a challenge is that no one disagrees that improving the health of our entire county; the communities in our county, is a value that we all share. It’s important [to consider] when you’re thinking about partnerships and about who stays and who doesn’t. This project makes sense. It makes sense for the local health department. It makes sense for our hospitals. I think as we move forward and start addressing some of our health priorities, some of our priorities are going to make sense for our employer community and our educational community.”

~Mimi Hall, LHD representative



Hall describes how the collaboration just made sense.

Leadership Support

“I went to the [Eastern Plumas Healthcare] board and told them what the efforts were and I told them what they goals were. Then Mimi came to a meeting and talked about the whole thing and basically gave her viewpoint on what we should do and so on and so on. It lent credibility to the whole effort.”

~Tom Hayes, hospital representative



Hall describes the importance of leadership support

Overcoming Skepticism

“There was always, and still is, some portion of the community as well as the hospital boards and maybe some folks within the other hospital organization that feel like some of this work is a front for consolidation or some other motive. There is really nothing we can do with that except to keep on task and keep moving forward. I think that’s another reason why it’s important to have the local health department as a driver of this project. We really don’t have any interests whatsoever in whether the hospitals consolidate or not, whether they combine to purchase materials, equipment, or share services; we have no skin in that game. I think that if we weren’t a key player and the hospitals had tried to do this on our own, that they wouldn’t have gotten very far.”

“Throughout this whole [community health improvement] process it’s been a lot of work for everybody and our fear has always been scaring away our partners because there seems to be so much expectation on top of a lot of other competing priorities. So, we made it clear at each of those [administrator] meetings that our goal really is to take our health priorities that we all came up through a community engagement process together and identify areas that truly align with their own communities [i.e. districts] and their own organization’s strategic plan, operational goals, and quality improvement goals.”

~Mimi Hall, LHD representative

Many thanks!

Learn more about Plumas' work at:

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