Innovations at Work: Working with Community, Rhode Island Department of Health Perspective

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• The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH)’s Strategic Priorities

• Two approaches to shift investments and promote health equity:
  - Clinic-to-community investments
  - Direct community investments
Higher spending doesn’t lead to better health

We spend a lot more on healthcare, but our life expectancy is worse.

(adjusted for inflation and PPP-adjusted for price differences between countries)
We don’t invest enough in social services

For every $1 spent on healthcare, most countries spend $2 on public health and social services. The US only spends 55 cents.
Health Starts in our Communities

80% of health happens in the community.

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• Drug overdose prevention and intervention
Community Health Workers

Hired for their understanding of the populations they serve (rather than just from expertise due to formal education).

Examples include:

- Family Home Visitors
- Chronic disease case managers
- Substance use disorder peer recovery coaches
- Bi-lingual health systems navigators
- Public Housing Resident Coordinators
## Important Workforce Distinction

### Community-Based Licensed Health Professionals

- Licensed Health Professional
  - May or may not obtain additional certification
- Travels out to the patient’s home or community
- Focuses on clinical education tailored to the recipient

### Community Health Workers

- No previous health professional license
- Obtains CHW certification
- Travels out to the patient’s home or community
- Focuses on helping to navigate social services
Community Health Workers

CHW Certification Credentialing
RIDOH and community partners, include Rhode Island College, established a Community Health Worker certification credential through the RI Certification Board

Community Health Worker Association of Rhode Island
Re-established as a pathway for professional advancement

Next Steps
Continue to develop payment opportunities for a CHW workforce pipeline in the health system
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Health Equity Zones

Place based
Community led
Data driven
Focus on root causes
Represent many sectors
Collaborate on shared goals
Serving as a national model
Health Equity Zones: Collaborative Members

- Residents
- City planners
- Educators
- Legislators
- Faith leaders
- Business leaders
- Medical and behavioral healthcare providers
- Community health workers
- Community-based organizations
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Drug overdose prevention and intervention
Overdose Prevention and Response: Sample Early Implementation Projects

Bristol Health Equity Zone

- Conducted opioid response and mental health first aid training for police and fire personnel
- Funding services at East Bay Recovery Center
- Developing campaign to decrease stigma

Pawtucket Central Falls Health Equity Zone

- Developing opioid prevention educational program for middle school students
- Promoting naloxone through local bus shelter ads
West Warwick Health Equity Zone

• Engaging community ambassadors with lived experience to implement action plan and promote recovery services
• Conducting critical stress management training for local police force

Woonsocket County Health Equity Zone

• Planning motivational interview training with clinical staff who work with patients with substance use disorder
Bristol Health Equity Zone:
• Conducted suicide prevention gatekeeper and Mental Health First Aid training
• Hosting community conversation on mental health

Washington County Health Equity Zone:
• Launched “Zero Suicide” initiative with $2M in SAMHSA funding
• Providing Mental Health First Aid training
• Hosted “Question, Persuade, and Refer” training for local clergy and RI National Guard staff
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