

Public Health Is Stronger Together (PHIST)

**A collaborative strategic initiative including
IPHA, IDPH, IAPHA, NIPHC, SIPHC, & UIC SPH MCPHP**

Short-term Goal: Increase effectiveness and strengthen the Governmental Public Health System through strategic improvements.

Overall Goal: Strengthen the entire public health system in Illinois.

Accomplishments

The PHIST Initiative is growing and evolving. There is a dual focus on developing an overall plan to strengthen the public health system and on implementing and aligning work as opportunities arise. To this end there have already been some accomplishments related to the identified focus areas even though the overall plan is a work in progress.

Progress Report as of 6/17

Focus Area 1. Clarify roles and relationship of LHD/SHD

- Preliminary information has been collected for further discussion.
- A face to face meeting is being planned for leadership for 9/17 to discuss roles further using a scenario as basis for discussion.

Focus Area 2. Improve Coordination and joint planning

- The IDPH Director's Local Liaison meetings are now both more frequent and more focused on strategic discussion and a more collaborative approach to issues.
- IPHA is taking the lead to ensure more coordination on legislative issues which has already resulted in joint Zika testimony, joint support led to adoption of immunization rules. A joint legislative reception was held on April 5th and weekly calls have been held during session.

Focus Area 3. Improve communication across the governmental public health system

- Each organization involved has collected issues related to communication between IDPH and local health departments. These issues have been discussed and the following areas are going to be addressed first:
 - IDPH Assistant Director has asked all IDPH staff to use full email signatures on all types of email.
 - Broader use of SIREN is being explored and will include templates for who gets what. These is a focus on decreasing volume and increasing consistency.

- Communication will likely be improved through better understanding of roles at local and state HD. Job shadowing opportunities are being explored including the possibility of having LHD staff on IDPH after action conference calls. Interest in this opportunity will be discussed with LHDs.
- IDPH has identified a need to be more out front on issues impacting LHDs.
- The Steering Committee will continue to work on identifying next steps.

Focus Area 4. Develop joint public relations and media messaging

- Communicating the value of public health has been a major focus and the PHIST Initiative has been integral to the trainings on Building Capacity to Share Stories and Speak with One Voice which have been offered and archived by UIC MidAmerica Center for Public Health Practice. Over 100 people have attended at least one of the sessions.
- Using materials and the approach from the Sharing Stories and Speaking with One Voice trainings IDPH has worked with the Regional PIOs to develop a joint (LHD/SHD) messaging campaign during National Public Health Week. A survey is currently collecting feedback on this campaign. Plans are also underway for evaluating the NPHW campaign and for sponsoring future joint campaigns.
- Strategic communication is a priority for 2017 IPHA Workforce Development Committee which is being formed. More training is being planned based on the survey conducted after NPHW.

Focus Area 5. Align and fund health priorities

- The current focus with the state without a budget is on trying to maintain current funding and on getting paid. Some advocacy has occurred on the need for funding on lead, opioid prevention, and chronic disease prevention.

Focus Area 6. Improve public health practice with an initial focus on workforce development

- A Workforce Development Committee has been formed to align workforce development opportunities across the system, it is chaired by Christina Welter and Guddi Kapadia. Members have been recruited and an initial meeting will occur soon. This is an IPHA committee and it will have two workgroups:
 - training on strategic communication chaired by Rani Saxena and Divya Little
 - training for new health department leadership chaired by Guddi Kapadia
- Members for all three groups have been recruited and the first meetings will occur soon. If you are interested in joining, talk to Cathy Ferguson.

Focus Area 7. Adapt the public health role within the transforming public health system.

- Once the current relationship and processes are improved then the focus will turn to the future.