



# Keys to Successful Community Health Advisory Councils

Promoting Healthy  
Communities

*As a nation, we cannot afford to base our approach to good health so heavily on disease treatment and repair. We must establish a better balance-with a greater focus on prevention.*

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## Session Objectives

- Understand the role and function of Community Health Advisory Councils in supporting the prevention, early detection, and management of chronic disease through policy and system change.
- Discuss criteria for council membership and successful recruitment of community partners.
- Develop 3 action steps to get started in developing your community's Community Health Advisory Council

# Why?

## Community Health Advisory Councils

- o County health departments can't do it alone.
- o Research endorses community connections and involvement for community members (adults and youth).
- o Changing systems requires infrastructure to support that change over time.

# What are Community Health Advisory Councils?

*A Community Health Advisory Council (CHAC) is an advisory group composed primarily of leaders selected from segments of the community who share a desire to reduce the burden of chronic disease. The group acts collectively in providing guidance & leadership to the county health department on the prevention, early detection, and management of chronic disease.*

# Benefits of a Community Health Advisory Council

- Increase community involvement in reducing the burden of chronic disease.
- Link community public health with schools, worksites, and health systems.
- Provide a means for improving public health policies and systems.
- Increase awareness and educate the community about the burden of chronic disease.
- Increase effectiveness & sustainability of local public health initiatives

**Community Health Advisory Council:**  
*Steps in building capacity to address the  
prevention, early detection, and management of  
chronic disease*

Step 1: Recruit and orient your CHACs.

Step 2: Create a shared vision.

Step 3: Review local data and priorities.

Step 4: Develop an action plan.

Step 5: Implement your action plan.

Step 6: Evaluate and enhance your efforts.

## What are the functions of a CHAC?

- Create a vision and goals for prevention, early detection, and management of chronic disease in your county
- Assess, advise, assist and support the local public health department on all parts of its tobacco-related and other chronic disease program
- Promote and advocate for policy and system change in the community, schools, worksites, and health systems

# Recruit and Orient Your CHACs

- Gain administrator commitment to work on the prevention, early detection, and management of chronic disease
- Invite and involve the right people
- Use the first meeting to orient members to the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section's Framework, and the burden of chronic disease in your county
- Establish group norms and decision-making processes.
- Identify next steps.

# Keep in Mind: Membership Should...

- Represent all segments of your community.
- Involve people with a variety of backgrounds & experiences.
- Involve people with a passion for eliminating the burden of tobacco-related and other chronic diseases.
- Include people who can commit the time.
- Include key players/influencers in the community, schools, worksites, and health systems

# CHAC membership might include...

- Government leaders (county commissioners, city councilors, state legislators)
- Business leaders
- Government agency administrators
- Health systems, hospitals and clinicians
- Tribal leaders (where appropriate)
- School administrators
- County and city planners
- Parks and recreation administrators
- Leaders from communities experiencing tobacco and obesity related disparities
- Clergy/faith community leaders
- Health voluntary organizations

# Before You Recruit CHAC Members...

- Be able to articulate your purpose.
- Draft CHAC roles and responsibilities.
- Have a meeting structure in mind (how often, how long), but don't be wedded to it.

# When approaching new CHAC members...

- Put yourself in their shoes.
- Help them understand what they can contribute and how they can benefit.
- Be sensitive to constraints on their time and resources.

# What we've learned...

## Factors that support successful community advisory councils:

- Active Administrative support (get one on the team!)
- Take the time to carefully plan your member selection process
- Dedicate meeting time (longer, less often)
- Communicate effectively
- Committed team members who “step up to the plate”
- Involve as much as the community as possible in some way
- Create smaller, achievable goals
- Share & celebrate your progress & success with others

# What's Next?

- What else do you need to know to support a community health advisory council?
  - Set 3 **Action Steps** you can accomplish in the next 4 weeks to “start up” your school’s CHAC.
  - Develop a list of potential CHAC members and identify how they can benefit from being involved.
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*Act as though it is  
impossible to fail.*

