

Virtual learning summary: Multi-sector partnerships

May-June 2019

Presenters:

- Jane Erickson, Project Director, ReThink Health
- Katherine Wright, Senior Program Associate, ReThink Health
- Gregory Paulson, Executive Director, Trenton Health Team

Session descriptions:

To address individuals' array of needs, the field of complex care must work across sectors at both the individual and systemic levels to break down silos. Effective multi-sector partnerships are essential to building a lasting ecosystem that provides whole-person care for vulnerable populations and helps to address the social determinants of health.

The presenters on this webinar shared their experiences from studying and advising a wide range of multi-sector partnerships around the country. **ReThink Health's** Jane Erickson discussed the national landscape of multi-sector partnerships for health, the challenges they face, and key factors for building partnerships' momentum. Katherine Wright of ReThink Health discussed how partnerships can foster sustainability via innovative funding structures.

In the Office Hours session, presenters provided a deep dive into a case study of a specific multi-sector partnership working to improve population health. Jane Erickson and Katherine Wright returned, joined by Gregory Paulson of **Trenton Health Team**, for an in-depth discussion of Trenton Health Team's path towards sustainability and a shared vision across sectors.

Discussion summary:

Webinar

1. **What can those in healthcare delivery do to start building multi-sector partnerships?**

As a first step, they need to identify the outcomes they are seeking to change. Then, think about who might need to be engaged in order to achieve that outcome. This can be accomplished through stakeholder mapping. Next, the engaged stakeholders need to build a shared vision. This is especially important when working across sectors because partners may not use the same terminology and may have different beliefs about how to create change. Building a shared vision helps teams of diverse leaders understand each other's priorities and interests so that they are better able to navigate the collaboration in the future. Additionally, stakeholders should attempt to address "low-hanging fruit" at the beginning of a partnership. This helps build trust and a sense of accomplishment while simultaneously building a broader strategy and sense of stewardship.

Expert highlights

- Broad stewardship, sound strategy, sustainable financing, and shared vision are essential pillars of any successful multi-sector partnership.
- A wide range of sectors participate in multi-sector partnerships, and their work spans four major areas: healthcare access, quality, and/or cost; health behaviors and risk factors; social, economic, and educational conditions; and physical environments.
- Financing multi-sector partnerships is an active practice that requires navigating difficult relationships and difficult questions.
- Multi-sector partnerships, like Trenton Health Team, use data to establish common ground and guide challenging conversations that may arise.

2. **What is a realistic timeline for this initial work? When can a partnership expect to begin hitting benchmarks?**

It depends. A shorter term project can be structured like a campaign, while it may take much longer to stand up an enduring, sustainable collaborative. A financing timeline can vary because it is contingent on the funding structure a partnership plans to use and stakeholders' level of understanding of that structure at the outset.

3. **How did the Affordable Care Act (ACA) fuel multi-sector partnerships for complex care management?**

The confluence of events around the passage and implementation of the ACA helped to fuel thinking about new kinds of partnerships for health. A number of large, federally-incentivized programs, like the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP), encouraged care coordination in unprecedented ways at a systems level. Many of the multi-sector partnerships discussed on the webinar started to flourish during this time because of these programs.

4. **What is your vision for the field of population health to build more sustainable financing structures?**

Population health has to follow the path of community development and other fields that have created their own sustainable financing structures. This will likely take a significant number of years to accomplish and will require small, incremental policy changes at the local, state, and eventually the federal level in order to institutionalize large, sustainable financing structures. Taxes may also be an interesting avenue for building sustainable financing structures for population health work.

Office Hours

1. **How is Trenton Health Team (THT) working to move beyond grant funding and towards financial sustainability?**

THT has a services agreement with Trenton's health department to fulfill certain public health mandates required under state statute that relate to community convening and monitoring health data. At the state level, THT is in the process of transitioning New Jersey's Medicaid ACO Demonstration Project to the Regional Health Hub model. Under this model, Hubs will serve their particular regions with ongoing structural funding from New Jersey Medicaid.

2. **What is the best process for creating a systems diagram that illustrates up-stream influences and downstream outcomes?**

It is easiest to create this type of diagram in a facilitated process with a professional who has expertise in this method. A simpler way to start mapping the health ecosystem (that may be more effective for engaging others in a dialogue than a causal loop diagram) is ReThink Health's "[Pie Chart Exercise](#)." This tool helps to align partners around a shared vision by looking at the full range of drivers of health and wellbeing in a community—all of the vital conditions and urgent services that have to be present for a community to thrive. This creates the opportunity for a dialogue about the current state of the vital conditions and urgent services in your community, where there is a need to shift, and where there are leverage points.

3. **How do we further integrate and encourage the private sector to address population health in a way that truly serves the community?**

ReThink Health's [Pulse Check survey](#) found that business and private industry tend to be less engaged in multi-sector partnerships than other sectors. In order to shift that dynamic, partnerships need to articulate the economic value of improved health outcomes to open the door to engagement with the business community. In Michigan, the [THRIVE partnership](#) encouraged private industry to invest in their multi-sector partnership by creating value cases that illustrated how specific investments would help their bottom line.

Emphasizing the financial benefit of workforce wellness to employers can be another effective strategy for engaging private industry in this work. In the [Finger Lakes region](#), for example, private industry executives participate in the leadership of robust multi-sector collaboratives. They see the conversation around improving health and wellbeing in their community as critical to their bottom line.

There are also some examples of the private sector investing in health and wellbeing via equity investments, bonds, loans, pay for success models, and other financing structures. However, much of this private investment is typically for capital expenditures. Collaborating on a capital project can be a way to initiate private industry's participation in a multi-sector partnership.

4. **What major policy barriers and threats to sustainable funding is Trenton Health Team facing?**

Many of the barriers THT is currently facing have less to do with policy and more to do with framing its work as a marketable service that should be paid for. Since THT produces improved outcomes that generate financial value, it is working to build a business case to generate investment from those entities who are financially benefiting from its work, including managed care organizations.

Resources:

- Webinar: [Multi-sector partnerships for population health improvement](#)
- Office Hours for Complex Care: [A discussion of multi-sector partnerships for population health improvement](#)
- ReThink Health, [Progress along the pathway for transforming regional health: A pulse check on multi-sector partnerships](#)
- ReThink Health, [Beyond the grant: A sustainable financing workbook](#)
- Exercise: ReThink Health, [Negotiating a well-being portfolio](#)
- Video: [ReThink Health Ventures](#)
- [Additional tools from ReThink Health](#)

About the National Center

The National Center is an initiative of the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers in Camden, New Jersey. The National Center works to engage a wide range of national stakeholders across the spectrum of healthcare and health policy around improving care for high-cost, high-need consumers. The founding sponsors of the National Center are the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Atlantic Philanthropies, and AARP. Learn more about the National Center on our website: nationalcomplex.care.

Contact

Shelby Kehoe, Program Assistant, Policy & Engagement: skehoe@camdenhealth.org, (856) 365-9510 x3014

