

PATH
April 16, 2013, 11:30 noon – 2:00 pm
Education Building, LewisGale Hospital Pulaski

Present:

Laura Alexander, NR Health District
Vicky Collins, Radford City Department of Social Services
Lori DeLorenzo, Organizational Ideas
Deena Flinchum, Agency on Aging/RSVP
Holly Lesko, VA Tech Institute for Policy & Governance
Suzanne Lo, VA Tech Institute for Policy & Governance
Suzanne Marmagas, VA Tech MPH Program
Beth O'Connor, VA Rural Health Association
Molly O'Dell, NR Health District
Trina Porterfield, NR Community Action Head Start
Allyne Schoff, Valley Interfaith Child Care Center
Rhonda Seltz, RU School of Social Work Every Child Matters
Amy Sorensen, CHIP of NRV
Melanie Smith, Healthy Kids Campaign
Madison Stephens, Free Clinic of the NRV
Bob Suddarth, LewisGale Hospital Pulaski
Sophie Wenzel, NR Health District
Wanda Wylam, NR Health District

Lunch and Brief Introductions

Beth O'Connor, PATH Co-Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Bob Suddarth and LewisGale Hospital Pulaski for hosting the PATH meeting and providing lunch. The PATH attendees introduced themselves.

PATH Timeline

Vicky Collins, PATH Co-Convener, gave a brief description of PATH's history. PATH began in 1995 after a health and human services needs assessment revealed that access to affordable health care was the NRV's number one unmet need. Other barriers highlighted were lack of affordable medical insurance, having enough money to pay doctors and purchase prescriptions and stress, anxiety and depression. Mark Cruise (former Executive Director of the Free Clinic of the NRV) and Jody Hershey (former Director of NR Health District) were the first co-conveners. PATH membership has waxed and waned with the peak being 40+. PATH's strengths have been the incubation of projects that have spun off to other organizations and support of member organizations in their pursuit of grant funding. PATH's committee structure has waxed and waned but is at its peak when mobilizing around a specific focus/project. Through the years, other needs assessments have been conducted including MAPP (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships). In 2011, the PATH Steering Committee conducted a PATH Membership Survey to assess interest and level of time commitment. Members were interested in national healthcare reform, state-level healthcare reform, advocacy/legislation, PATHways sharing, mental health issues, FQHCs, dental access, and elderly/aging health. The members embraced quarterly meetings. They were divided about committee work—they liked committees forming around a particular issue and ending when work on the issue is completed. Assessment projects that don't generate a product/project were considered least helpful. Pathways sharing was a favorite of some and least favorite of others.

Livability Initiative Community Health Working Group Update

Vicky commented that today we want to consider how to incorporate into PATH a Livability Initiative strategy/intervention and move it forward. This type of project is consistent with the history of PATH and with what members have said they would like to pursue.

Molly reported that she, Vicky and Beth met to take stock of what PATH can do as the Livability Initiative planning process and working groups come to an end. One of Jody Hershey's recommendations from his study of MAPP for this doctoral dissertation was the need for a clearinghouse of services and accomplishments. Private providers aren't aware of what's available in other agencies, and we need to maximize the use of our existing services. PATH can be a mechanism to support and delve more deeply into issues identified. Today we will look at the Community Health Working Group's draft outline and have a conversation about PATH's role in facilitating the document and next steps.

Suzanne Lo stated that she took over the Community Health Working Group project mid-stream. She explained that the Working Group had an open brainstorming session which resulted in the *Draft Community Health Goals, Objectives and Strategies* (which was sent to PATH members via email) and is the focus of today's discussion. Five community health topics were generated: Collaboration, Healthy Built Environment, Healthy Natural Environment, Healthy Behaviors and Prevention of Chronic Conditions. Each topic includes a Goal, Indicators, Driving Forces and Objectives & Strategies. Some of the other working groups, for example housing and transportation, have health components in them. Suzanne reported that four issues arose to the top in the Community Health working group—health access, coordination of health care, substance abuse and teen pregnancy.

Two additional documents were reviewed with those attending today's PATH meeting: (1) *New River Valley: Community Health* and (2) *Available Indicators Resources*. *New River Valley: Community Health* describes local focus strategies and regional collaboration for five topics (healthcare, build environment, natural environment, behaviors, and chronic disease) in two tiers (low spending and higher spending). *Available Indicators Resources* lists specific general and Virginia sources for the key determinants and indicators of community health for each major topic area identified by the Livability Initiative Community Health Working Group.

Moving the work forward with no implementation money is an issue. Holly reported that there are opportunities to seek funding. Molly noted that the National Association of Libraries has funding to provide health related information. Lori reported on an RFP that speaks to access and coordination of health care. Molly noted that an MRC (Medical Reserve Corps) volunteer could be trained and utilized to write grants.

It was noted that all of the data are being tracked by the Planning District Commission (PDC) and that our local governments are paying attention. Holly asked if there are more data points to track and share with the PDC. Vicky reported that Carilion is getting ready to do a needs assessment.

Holly told PATH members about *NRV Tomorrow*--an interactive survey which gives citizens the chance to weigh in on some of the most pressing regional challenges and potential projects and policies that the Livability Initiative planning process has brought to light and is a culmination of all the hard work the topic-area working groups (aging, arts & culture, community health, economy & employment, energy, housing, natural resources, and transportation) have accomplished since the beginning of the Livability Initiative.

Vicky and Molly noted that PATH is at a critical juncture where we have an opportunity to have a role in facilitating the document and what transpires from here. Suzanne suggested that PATH might want to choose a topic to move forward by identifying a "champion" and working committee for the specific topic. Vicky stated that over the years PATH has accomplished much through working committees. One of PATH's most vibrant committees was our dental committee led by Rhonda.

Molly discussed the value that VA Tech's MPH program has added to the health department's work. One student mapped social determinants for the New River Valley and has prepared a pictorial representation that we can share and start conversations. An MPH student could help champion/support each topic.

Vicky suggested coming up with a template of strategies/interventions/activities that our agencies/organizations are already doing. Susan suggested that there might be other columns that need to be added to track going forward. It was decided that a "who" column needs to be added indicating those who are already engaged in current activities. Vicky mentioned an example of the "local food system sustainability" strategy/intervention. With the support of PLENTY, Floyd and Willis Elementary Schools have a functioning vegetable garden. PLENTY could share key "tricks of the trade" to help Radford City Schools get started with a school garden.

Susan suggested drilling down on the county health rankings—where does the data come from? Vicky noted that PATH could convene a meeting of local government once every three years focusing on the data and potential solutions. Beth suggested writing letters to the editor.

Summary of PATH's next steps:

1. Suggest to Planning District Commission data to track
2. Inventory current activities/initiatives
3. Prioritize identified strategies to champion
4. County health rankings
5. Convene local government every three years

Molly and Laura and will work on an inventory of current activities; the inventory will be brought to PATH meetings to update.

Next meeting: Review County Health Rankings and updated New River Health District Community Health Digest.

Upcoming meetings: July 9, 2013
October 1, 2013
January 7, 2014
April 1, 2014

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Wanda Wylam
New River Health District