Community Needs Assessment

The goal is to:

- identify environmental health issues
- prioritize the identified issues
- develop action plans
- evaluate the progress to address selected issues.

PACE EH improves the environmental health decision-making process by strengthening community involvement so that public values and priorities are considered.

Environmental Justice

- Large % of people of non-white origin
- Low-income
- Disproportionately affected by environmental and health threats
- People with less political power
- Exposure to multiple environmental problems
- Our support is welcomed by the community
- Availability of existing data on that area
Applying an Equity Lens to Healthy Housing Policy

People of Color

People in Poverty

Exposure to multiple environmental problems
Exposure to multiple environmental problems

Asthma Mapping

Health equity

Health equity is the fair and just distribution of power and resources

Health inequities are unjust and avoidable, for example, by incorporating democratic leadership in your decision making process
Why Asthma?

- Chronic and life-threatening, asthma is one of the scariest diseases for families.
- We were able to help parents and children gain control over a health problem that causes stress, financial hardship and leads to children missing school days and parents missing work days.
- We were also able to tackle housing problems that contribute to other chronic health conditions, lack of safety and the feeling of being insecure in one’s own home.

Our Healthy Homes Programs

- Low-income children with asthma through our Healthy Homes Asthma Program.
- Landlords and Tenants through our Healthy Affordable Housing Project.
- Doctors and nurses with pediatric asthma patients through our Asthma Inspection and Referral Program (AIR).
- Policy makers through various initiatives that address root causes of environmental health hazards.
What is policy?

- A set of guidelines designed to govern decision-making and actions
- A plan or course of action selected from evaluated choices

Examples of policy
- A city habitability code that guides neighborhood inspectors in citing violations on rental housing.
- A state law that states tenants can be evicted within 30 days without a cause on a month-to-month lease.

What is the goal of policy change?

To define or change policies that affect one’s or a population’s life, health, and livelihood.

Questions to consider:

- What law, code, set of guidelines, or agreements in your area impact housing?
- What public health hazards or conditions are impacted by this policy?
- How does your department impact or could your department impact this policy?
Questions to consider:

• What is the social determinant of health you are addressing?
• What environmental health issues and hazards are prioritized by the community as problems and concerns?
• How is your goal shaped by health inequities?

Questions to consider:

• Are impacted communities involved in the policy making decisions that impact them? If not, why? How could they be?
• What data exist and what data need to be collected that shows the relationship between health effects and communities of color and people in poverty?
• What is the return on investment or cost benefit for preventing these health effects?

Step 1: Assess Internal Capacity

– What is our internal capacity to advocate or create a policy?
– Do we need to build our own internal capacity? Do we have enough people, with the time and skills to implement the plan? What skills do we need that we may or may not have?
– What are our internal strengths and weaknesses as advocates? What skills do we need to obtain to turn our strengths into weaknesses?
– Is our goal winnable? What is our timeline so that we can successfully achieve our goal?
Step 2: Ensure key stakeholders are involved

- Equity in practice means involving the community in decision making at the initial phase of developing a policy agenda.
- The community must be the driving force of policy decisions because the community is impacted by policy decisions.

Step 3: Set Clear Policy Goal

- What is the issue being addressed?
- Who is affected by the issue?
- What are the causes of the issue?
- What are possible solutions? (include all viewpoints)
- What action is needed next?

Step 4: Gain Further Community Input through Outreach and Media Engagement

- Create key messages for community members that are simple, easy-to-understand
- Create a simple website
- Conduct multiple outreach methods to inform the community of the policy
- Release a time sensitive press release.
Step 5: Analyze and frame the issue

- Data reflecting health disparities and children with asthma in Multnomah County
- Results from our Healthy Homes Asthma Program
- Create talking points

Case Study: Creating a Targeted Case Management Code for Healthy Homes

Goal: Amend the State Health Plan to provide sustainable funding

Phase I

- Educate yourself on “policy making basics”
- Research legislators and key issues
- Connect with your Government Relations Liaison
- Identify organizations that can be allies
- Engage Public Health colleagues
- Schedule meetings and listen, listen, listen
Phase II

- Set a clear policy goal
- Revise key points
- Directly advocate and educate
- Engage the media
- Tell the facts and personal testimony of success
- Carefully plan and hope for good luck
“New Program Highlights Household Asthma Triggers”

PORTLAND, OR 2006-08-10 The Multnomah County Health Department has started a new program to raise awareness about asthma and to help struggling families. Asthma is becoming increasingly common in the U.S. It’s a disease that harms people wheezing and panting for breath. Those who live in cities are at higher risk, but asthma is growing even faster among minority populations, who often live in older homes and closer to large industrial areas.

Maribel Correa, who moved to the U.S. from Colombia 7 years ago, lives in Northeast Portland with her husband and four kids. Her two youngest have had problems with asthma. Last spring one got sick with a cold.

“It started to fill up his throat and she went to the hospital and they said he had bronchitis and it had never happened before and she got scared,” translates Correa’s 11-year-old daughter, Melissa. “They gave her some medicine to give to the kids and in three days it got worse and so she took him to the hospital.”

Correa says eventually they found out it wasn’t bronchitis - it was asthma. Doctors told her that her son’s respiration was half the level it should be.
### Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Presenter/Initiative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:15-10:20</td>
<td>Introduction, Welcome and Thanks</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:20-10:40</td>
<td>Why Asthma? Why Now?</td>
<td>Lila Wickham, Multnomah County Environmental Health</td>
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<td>10:40-10:45</td>
<td>The Price of Pollution</td>
<td>Oregon Environmental Council</td>
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<td>10:45-10:50</td>
<td>Oregon State of Asthma Report</td>
<td>Oregon Environmental Council</td>
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<td>10:50-10:55</td>
<td>The Community Health Nurse Model and Value</td>
<td>Lila Wickham</td>
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<td>10:55-11:00</td>
<td>Community Health Worker and Family Perspective</td>
<td>Community Outreach Specialist</td>
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<td>11:00-11:05</td>
<td>A Health and Housing Perspective</td>
<td>David Williams, King County Health Department</td>
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### Key Steps to Final Policy Goal

- **Set a clear policy goal** – Pass legislation for funding for Healthy Homes
- **Analyze and frame the issue** – Asthma is a health disparity
- **Gain input through advocacy** – Meet with legislators, lobbyists, allies
- **Engage media and influence policymakers** – Coordinate state briefing, press releases
- **Set new goal** – Amend Health Plan, Acquire Medicaid Funding
- **Start new advocacy** – Educate Managed Care plans, Medical Assistance Programs
  
  ... and you keep doing it all over again...

### Key Steps to Final Policy Goal

- Convene the Directors of Managed Care Plans
- Re-vise talking points
- Identify a champion within DMAP to help carry our work forward
- Research national efforts
Key steps to final policy goal

- Research statewide existing Targeted Case Management groups and core functions
- Adapt core functions to Healthy Homes
- Identify key steps to implementing a TCM
- Develop a plan and timeline and coordinate monthly meetings with DMAP staff.

TCM Healthy Home - Risk Criteria

The target group is Medicaid eligible children with poorly controlled asthma or a history of environmentally induced respiratory distress which can result in a life threatening asthma exacerbation or exacerbation of respiratory distress.

Risk factors could include, but are not limited to:
- (a) Unscheduled visits for emergency or urgent care;
- (b) One or more in-patient stays;
- (c) History of intubation or Intensive Care Unit care;
- (d) A medication ratio of less than or equal to .33;
- (e) Environmental or psychosocial concerns raised by medical home;

Helpful Hints:

- Be intentional – Know what you want to accomplish and being focused.
- Be strategic – Be well thought out, and take into account all challenges, even unexpected ones.
- Be flexible – Adjust talents as needed and adapt to changes in political climate.
- Be organized – Have a plan of action that informs, connects and involves people.
Conclusion

• Know and use your strengths
• Admit the areas you need help
• Learn the different cultures of the organizations with which you are advocating
• Give yourself permission to make mistakes, to feel awkward in these new and unknown settings, to trust and rely on those who knew more than we did and, of course, to be frustrated at times
• This is tough work!

Questions and feedback:

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