



Academic Health Department Learning Community Report

April 11, 2017

Overview

The [Academic Health Department \(AHD\) Learning Community](#) supports development of AHD partnerships between public health practice organizations and academic institutions. As a national community of practitioners, educators, and researchers, the AHD Learning Community stimulates discussion and sharing of knowledge; the development of resources; and collaborative learning around establishing, sustaining, and expanding AHDs. The Learning Community currently has approximately 700 members.

Update on Academic Health Department Learning Community

AHD Learning Community meetings continue to be held on an ongoing basis. A [meeting in December 2016](#) highlighted the unique Academic Health Collaborative of Worcester (MA), which fosters collaboration between the Worcester Division of Public Health, UMass Memorial Health Care, and academic partners. A [March 2017 meeting](#) focused on the [New River AHD](#) in VA. Upcoming meetings are planned for May and [July 26, 2017](#) to share the AHD partnerships of the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health/Chicago Department of Public Health and East Tennessee State University's College of Public Health. Additional meetings are also being planned for later this year, on an approximately bimonthly schedule.

The [AHD Research Agenda](#), which aims to support and encourage collaborative research on the structure, functions, and impacts of AHD partnerships, was released in October 2016, and the AHD Learning Community has recently launched a new activity – an *Ask the Expert* column featuring questions from Learning Community members and providing guidance related to AHD partnerships. Published on the [PHF Pulse blog](#), the [first column](#) in this quarterly series was released in late March 2017. In addition, the list of [AHD partnerships](#) compiled by the Learning Community continues to grow, and work continues to enhance resources that support partnership development, such as the collection of [partnership agreements](#) used to formalize AHD relationships. Planned future activities include drafting a staged model of AHD development and documenting stories of successful AHD partnerships. Contributions for any of these resources are always welcome by email to Kathleen Amos at kamos@phf.org.

The AHD Mentorship Program, which launched in June 2015, also continues to develop. Led by [Bryn Manzella, MPH](#), of the Jefferson County Department of Health (AL), this program connects individuals seeking guidance in an area of AHD development or operation with those having experience in that area. Participation in the program is growing, with thirteen existing mentor/mentee matches, and additional matches continuing to be created. Expressions of interest in participating as either a mentor or mentee are welcome by email to Janelle Nichols at jnichols@phf.org.

The AHD Learning Community offers a unique source of support for those within the public health community developing academic/practice partnerships, and contributions of the Learning Community have been highlighted in various ways. Both mentors and mentees participating in the AHD Mentorship Program have shared positive feedback about their experience, and Learning Community resources have been featured in presentations about AHD partnerships, such as that on the New River Health District at the recent Learning Community meeting, which noted the role that informal mentoring and [resources and tools](#) provided by the Learning Community played in the development of the partnership.