



Public Health Workforce Development Inventory Initiative Report

September 17, 2013

Overview

In the fall of 2012, the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice (Council), under contract from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA; Contract No. HSH250201100031C), launched the Public Health Workforce Development Inventory initiative to collect information from its member organizations on workforce development plans and activities. This inventory aimed to facilitate the sharing of information regarding workforce development within public health and encourage coordination and leveraging of activities across organizations.

Status of Initiative

As of July 2013, the Council had completed the Workforce Development Inventory and drafted a written report summarizing the information. Key concepts used to guide the collection of information on workforce development activities were developed in July and August 2012, and information was gathered from Council member organizations through phone discussions and written exchanges between September 2012 and June 2013. Eighteen Council member organizations and the Public Health Foundation participated in the inventory and shared information about their activities in the areas of:

- Strategic planning
- Defining the public health workforce
- Training
- Learning management systems
- Research and data collection
- Recruitment and retention
- Tools and systems
- Advocacy
- Partnerships and information sharing

Information provided was summarized, reviewed by the organizations, and analyzed to identify key findings. A report containing these findings, *Public Health Workforce Development Activities of Organizations Associated with the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice*, was drafted and submitted to HRSA in July 2013. This draft report is currently undergoing HRSA clearances.

Preliminary Findings

Council member organizations are actively engaged in a wide variety of public health workforce development activities. As summarized in the draft report, *Public Health Workforce Development Activities of Organizations Associated with the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice*, preliminary findings of the Workforce Development Inventory include:

- **Sharing information with other Council member organizations on workforce development activities is a high priority.** Organizations specifically highlighted the importance of sharing workforce development information to help them better support their members and constituents, including information collected through this inventory of workforce development activities. Organizations indicated a desire to know “how to tap into Council partners’ activities”; “what is having success and working well for others”;

and “areas of overlap and opportunities to collaborate”; as well as to not “reinvent the wheel.”

- **Organizations have strategic plans, but not workforce plans.** Strategic plans often address issues of workforce.
- **No consistent definition of the public health workforce is used across organizations.** Organizations frequently view the public health workforce within the context of their own organizational missions, target audiences, and activities.
- **All organizations provide training,** both in person and through distance learning.
- **The provision of training through distance learning will likely increase.** Organizations are planning to expand their distance learning activities, such as webinars, online training, and videoconferences.
- **No single learning management system supports public health workforce development.** Organizations use a variety of systems for managing learning.
- **Organizations conduct public health workforce research and collect workforce data.** Workforce data tend to be gathered on a fairly regular basis, often through member surveys.
- **Organizations actively support the recruitment and retention of public health professionals.** Engaging in direct outreach to students; providing internships, scholarships, fellowships, and career development opportunities; and promoting employment opportunities are all ways organizations help build and maintain a strong workforce.
- **Organizations provide a variety of online resources, tools, and systems,** but these tend not to be specific to workforce development.
- **Organizations advocate for the public health workforce,** focusing on issues that directly impact their members or constituents.
- **Organizations collaborate on workforce development activities.** A large number of partnerships exist, both between individual organizations and through coordinated activities, such as the Council and Partners in Information Access for the Public Health Workforce.

Next Steps

Information collected through the Workforce Development Inventory can help to identify needs and gaps in public health workforce development and contribute to efforts of Council member organizations to help strengthen the public health workforce. It is hoped this information will be useful to Council member organizations and others as workforce development initiatives are planned and implemented. The draft *Public Health Workforce Development Activities of Organizations Associated with the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice* report is included in these meeting materials.