

New Public Health Initiative Supports Kansas Local Public Health System

CCSR has established a new Public Health Initiative to provide technical assistance, training and evaluation support for local health departments and other organizations that provide public health services. The initiative is largely supported by a contract from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) that focuses on public health and prevention efforts for the Medicaid population. The new initiative includes several related components to strengthen the Kansas public health system.

First, it includes a Local Public Health Leadership Series whose purpose is to enhance the ability of local health department administrators to exercise leadership in the delivery of Medicaid services to residents in their communities.

“The Leadership Series (in Scott City) has given me the opportunity to identify and respond to innovative concepts and methods using decision making processes as well as identifying, creating and balancing theories and concepts to practical situations used in day to day Public Health operations,” said Mila Bandel, administrator, Cheyenne County Public Health Agency.

The Public Health Initiative includes training and educational opportunities for health departments and others. CCSR has helped in developing and delivering initial training and educational opportunities related to Medicaid Health Homes and opportunities for health departments to better understand best practices, including chronic disease prevention programs, diabetes prevention, new mother programs, and asthma programs.

CCSR’s Research and Evaluation Team assists the public health system by assessing workforce, program offerings, technical assistance needs, and readiness for accreditation. The results are being used by the Public Health and Medicaid Coordination Workgroup, facilitated by CCSR, to build understanding among public health system partners, meet local health department needs and continue public health systems improvements across Kansas.

Finally, CCSR has convened partners from across the state regarding how to strengthen the public health system. Meetings have focused on how public health and primary care providers in communities and regions can partner. A Public Health and Medicaid Coordination Workgroup has convened to review service delivery models from other states, as well as upcoming changes to KanCare. This Workgroup has been a forum to

discuss roles and opportunities among KDHE Health Care Finance, KDHE Local Public Health, the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments, local health departments and representatives from the Medicaid Managed Care Organizations.

For more about the Public Health Initiative, please contact Sonja Armbruster, CCSR Public Health Initiatives Coordinator, at sonja.armbruster@wichita.edu or (316) 978-3988.

Photo caption: Public Health administrators discuss new ways to exercise leadership at a recent training in Salina.