

Building an Effective Coalition

COLLABORATION TO OVERCOME LEAD POISONING: 2015 UPSTATE NY LEAD CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER MEDICAL CENTER

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Identify an issue; surround it with accurate and compelling data

New York State's housing stock high-risk for containing lead paint. 43.1% of homes built prior to 1950. NYS has the most pre-1950 housing units in the country, over 1.0 million more than next highest state (PA).

Out of nearly 1,700 zip codes in NYS, 36 accounted for 41% of lead poisoning incidents. Buffalo (9), Rochester (6), Syracuse (5), Albany (5) – *cities along the Erie Canal*

High-risk zip codes in Rochester: 14605, 14608, 14609, 14611, 14619, 14621.

Home to **78%** of Latino children and **80%** of African American children under 5. In 2002, nearly 25% of children in these zip codes had EBLLs (nationwide rate 1.6%).

Identify an issue; surround it with accurate and compelling data

In 1999, Principal Ralph Spezio discovered that 41% of children entering School #17 had a history of lead poisoning or a current Elevated Blood Lead Level.

“GLO” was a project proposed by doctor at Health Ctr attached to School #17

- Small grant used to test homes of children in his practice
- Partnered with UofR, VISTA volunteers, and neighborhood groups
- Provided important info about extent of lead hazards and feasibility of repairs
- 98% of homes in study had lead hazards
- Estimated average cost of repair: \$3,300
- Data collected was used to build community support for local lead ordinance.

Who should be at the table? Who convenes the meetings?

An effective coalition *must be* inclusive.

Convene partners and ask, “Who else should be at the table?” “What areas of expertise are you missing?” “Do you have the necessary people to move your agenda forward?”

Are there *partners outside focus area* that can provide support and information?

Invite educators, neighborhood & community leaders, physicians & nurses, parents, scientists, risk assessors, housing and health officials, elected officials, childcare providers, students, dentists, realtors, healthcare insurers, faith community leaders, possible funders, etc.

Try to achieve a balance between grassroots (bottom up) & policy (top down)

Coalition co-chairs and committee members should be known community organizers & leaders as well as community members at all levels who bring visibility and credibility to the organization and the issue.

The Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning By-laws call for the Board of Directors to be composed of “at least 30% most highly affected community members.”

‘Most highly affected’ shall be defined as: individuals who have been lead poisoned or who are family members of a lead poisoned child; residents in a census tract classified as “high risk”; or those who work for an organization that primarily represents or advocates for the interests for those identified above.



By-laws? Yes!

Time spent creating by-laws, while sometimes cumbersome, is crucial.

By-laws define expectations and help avoid deviation from original goals/purpose of the coalition.

Develop Guiding Principles (*Primary Prevention, Right to Know, Community Organizing, Community Empowerment, Environmental Justice, Responsibility, Accountability, Outcome-Oriented, Collaboration, Science-Based, Respect*).

CPLP makes decisions through a consensus seeking process. If consensus cannot be reached after a good faith effort, a vote is taken. A quorum must be present and the affirmative vote of 75% of those eligible determines 1) whether attempt to reach consensus should end, 2) whether proposal should be adopted.

Any Committee Member with a conflict of interest (personal, organizational, business gain/loss as a result of a Coalition decision) must refrain from participating in the decision.

A coalition should consist of Working Committees

Determine goals and create committees focused on the areas to be addressed.

CPLP Committees: Education & Outreach, Government Relations, Screening & Professional Education, and Housing

Committee members should be allowed to utilize their expertise, feel engaged, and make contributions.

Each committee should have co-chairs, with one representative sitting on a Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee should meet monthly to report, assess programs and initiatives, and recommend action items to the Board of Directors. The BOD also meets once a month.

Map Community Assets & Barriers

There may already be good work being done in the community. Consider the following:

Are there resources available upon which to build on?

Are the current efforts and/or resources enough to adequately address the issue? Would it more efficient to join/combine efforts? Or have efforts stalled and it's time for a re-boot?

To reach coalition goals, there must be community support and commitment to address the issue. Is there an interest and desire in the community to tackle the issue?

Can the coalition make a significant impact on the issue and improve outcomes?

Don't blame or “finger-point”

In trying to assess blame, personal agendas can be created, which overtake the core issue.

In this case, children are being lead poisoned through no fault of their own and primarily because their homes contain a neurotoxin.

Important community allies may be those traditionally viewed as on the opposing side of the issue.

Ultimately, you may not be able to work together, but the attempt must be made and the door kept open.

Stay politically neutral

Remember, it's about the issue, not individuals.

Meet with any and all elected officials to educate them on the issue.

Make sure to provide information in easy-to-digest one-pagers. This is especially true if data is complex or filled with nuance.

Follow up with any additional materials requested.

Make sure to invite ALL elected officials to ALL events the organization produces.

“From little drops of water forms the mighty Genesee...”

Maintain focus on the problem to be solved. CPLP always remembers that *children are at risk*.

Most coalitions will never have the time or resources to solve all the problems they want to solve. To be successful, coalitions need to focus, and that’s why good coalitions have strategies. A strategy, when properly understood and implemented, focuses all efforts on a core problem and gives a framework to prioritize limited resources.

By prioritizing, the coalition can reduce where forces (time, money, people) are applied, creating greater pressure without needing more resources.

Celebrate small victories. Take the long view.

Understand that changing the conversation shifts the paradigm.

Data, data, data

Create new and innovative ways to use, evaluate, and mine data sources.

All Coalition decisions must be evidence-based and data-driven.

Transparency and third party evaluation are invaluable. A third-party evaluator is an impartial entity with credibility who analyzes how a program meets its objectives and goals and interprets them for laypersons and professionals from a neutral, objective perspective.

An outside consultant is more likely to demonstrate an objective viewpoint for:
Designing evaluation data collection tools/forms, Collecting the data with confidentiality, Analyzing the data, and Interpreting the data for the organization's stakeholders — including funders.

Benchmark progress, actively credit all participants

Give regular and consistent progress reports.

Give recognition to government, community leaders, community groups, organizations, and individuals.

CPLP holds an *Annual Meeting* every year where “Certificates of Appreciation” are given to all that have helped reduce lead paint poisoning in our community.

CPLP press releases or comments to the community try to praise and share successes rather than hog the spotlight for ourselves.

In some cases, even though we are responsible for the work achieved, CPLP gives credit to another entity because it's the right thing to do.

Long-term sustainability

Monitor progress

- Establish measurement metrics. Share with interested parties. Third-party evaluation.

Educate the community

- Press events, community outreach, work with local groups to educate and inform any/all possible audiences.

Maintain visibility

- Create events/programs that share information. CPLP maintains a web site, produces a quarterly newsletter, and maintains a 700+ email distribution list. GRANT WRITING!

Sustain vital community partnerships

- Keep inviting people to the table, provide data when requested, work collaboratively.

**COALITION TO
PREVENT
LEAD
POISONING**

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