

Using "The CDC Guide" to Strengthen Partnerships and Inform Evaluation Planning for the Maryland Asthma Control Program

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Background

Partnerships are a key component of a state asthma program's infrastructure. They aid in the effective, efficient, and sustainable delivery of asthma services. To guide state asthma programs in conducting infrastructure evaluations, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) National Asthma Control Program (NACP) developed the award-winning *Learning and Growing through Evaluation: State Asthma Program Evaluation Guide* (the "Guide"). The Guide offers state asthma programs a programmatically-sound, data-driven approach to evaluation that can be implemented in multiple contexts. This poster provides an overview of the partnership modules and describes how the guidance has been applied by the Maryland Asthma Control Program (MACP) to evaluate and improve program infrastructure.

Methods

The MACP, funded by the NACP, addresses asthma burden through partnerships, surveillance, and interventions. To strengthen its infrastructure, the MACP completed a partnership evaluation between December 2011 and November 2012. Strong partnerships are fundamental to the MACP's long-term success because they give the program the ability to leverage resources and coordinate interventions with multiple partners. The MACP utilized the Guide to develop a detailed plan that included stakeholder input, a logic model, evaluation questions, and a dissemination plan. Specifically, the evaluation focused on four areas: partnership roles and responsibilities, network functionality, partner expertise, and communication. In response to the evaluation findings and in order to address the partnership needs in each of these focus areas, an "intranet" using the Google for Nonprofits Application Suite was set up to facilitate communication between partners outside of meetings.

Results

The following recommendations informed MACP evaluation planning in the subsequent program year:

- Partners who are not actively engaged members of the executive committee (EC) should be replaced or shifted into different roles
- Partner meetings must occur quarterly (at minimum) to preserve momentum and continuity of activities
- The EC should make a targeted effort to recruit new partners to represent populations in rural areas of the state (specifically in Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore)
- The intranet developed for EC members should be expanded to include portions of the site that would be publicly accessible for external community members and intervention partners

Comments

Partnerships can be challenging to evaluate due to unique and dynamic interpersonal relationships and variable organizational structures. Although the MACP failed to achieve all of the evaluation targets proposed, the Guide proved to be a valuable tool for MACP to effectively evaluate its partnerships in order to improve planning, implementation, and sustainability of program efforts.

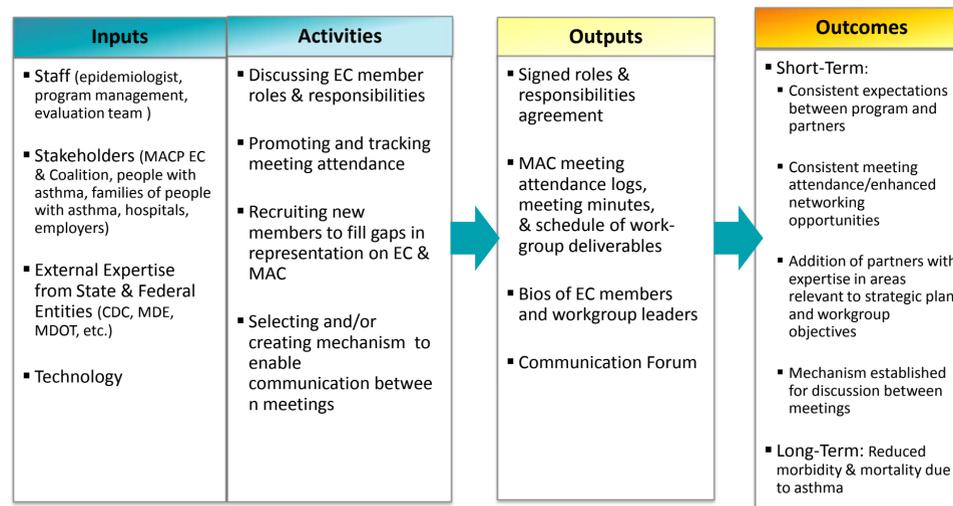
Reference

CDC. (2010, April). *Learning and growing through evaluation: State asthma program evaluation guide*. Atlanta, GA: Author.

Figure 1. Learning and Growing Guidelines for Partnership Evaluation: Six-Step Evaluation Process



Figure 2. Partnership Evaluation Logic Model



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Table 1. Partnership Evaluation: Plan, Indicators, and Findings

Evaluation Question	Criteria or Indicator	Standards	Outcome
Focus Area 1: EC Member Roles and Responsibilities			
a) What are the specific expectations of EC members?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal agreement defining EC member roles & responsibilities signed by all EC members Meeting attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of EC members submit signed agreements 75% meeting attendance by member over one-year period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> →75% of EC members signed agreements → 19 of 29 members (65%) attended at least 75% of meetings over one-year period
b) Have EC members accepted their roles and responsibilities?			
c) To what extent are EC members engaged and effective?			
Focus Area 2: Coalition Networking Functionality			
a) Is workgroup attendance consistent and continuous?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workgroup meeting attendance logs Correspondence between workgroup activities and strategic plan objectives Workgroup activity presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% meeting attendance by member over one-year period 100% of activities reported by workgroups correspond to a strategic plan objective 100% of workgroups deliver at least one activity presentation annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Not enough data (Two Coalition meetings in one-year period are not sufficient to establish and assess attendance patterns) √100% of activities reported by workgroups correspond to an objective → Under Development (first presentation Coalition meeting on 12/10/12)
b) What deliverables have resulted from interactions during workgroup meetings and activities that enable strategic plan implementation?			
c) Have new collaborations developed as a result of networking during workgroup meetings?			
Focus Area 3: Partner Expertise in Areas Relevant to the Program's Strategic Plan			
a) To what extent are the MAC/EC memberships inclusive of agencies and individuals relevant to and capable of accomplishing the goals and objectives stated in the Action Agenda?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bios submitted by each EC member and workgroup leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of existing members submit bios 100% of new EC members have work experience directly relevant to strategic plan objective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 72% of current members submitted bios → One new EC member was recruited √ That new member did have work experience directly relevant to strategic plan objectives
b) To what extent do the MAC and EC represent the health interests of priority populations, as identified by asthma hospitalization rates?			
c) To what extent are the MAC and EC structured to perform their stated functions optimally?			
Focus Area 4: Communication between Meetings			
a) What have been the limitations of previous efforts to facilitate communication between meetings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus group responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Method of communication to be selected & implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √Method of communication (Google site) was selected and implemented
b) Is a method for communication between meetings currently available to enable exchange of information in a functional and user-friendly format?			
c) Have EC members been successfully engaged in utilizing the new method of communication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User login record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EC members use method at least monthly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 52% of EC members logged in