



## Academic Health Department Learning Community Report

September 16, 2024

### **Overview**

The [Academic Health Department \(AHD\) Learning Community](#) supports the 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 AHD partnerships.

### **Sharing AHD Partnership Expertise**

Throughout its 13-year history, the AHD Learning Community has seen sustained interest from the public health community, with membership numbers rising from less than 100 to more than 1,500 and engagement continuing to grow. This active participation has led to a wealth of knowledge about AHD partnerships being shared among Learning Community members and with the broader public health community. Highlights of ways this information is shared are described below.

### **Training**

The Council regularly shares AHD partnership expertise at national, regional, and local events, building awareness and knowledge of this concept, how it can be operationalized, and the value it offers to public health practice and academic organizations. For example, Council staff recently participated in the Tennessee Department of Health Academic Practice Linkages Symposium 2024 to provide an overview of AHD partnerships, and presentations are being prepared for the 2024 [Public Health Learning Forum](#) and [American Public Health Association Annual Meeting](#) this October.

Webinars play a significant role in the Council's educational offerings as well. The Council's [series of AHD webinars](#) has been running for 10 years, and webinars are also presented in collaboration with other organizations upon request. Later this month, Council staff will join with members of the AHD Learning Community to present a virtual seminar for [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) staff on AHD partnerships and how they contribute to health department capacity. In addition, work is underway to make the collection of archived webinars in the AHD Webinar Series accessible as a training plan on the [TRAIN Learning Network](#), and details will be shared through the *Council on Linkages Update* when that becomes available.

### **Technical Assistance**

Direct technical assistance is provided to public health professionals and organizations to support developing and sustaining AHD partnerships. Council staff regularly receive requests for such assistance, responding to 8 requests from 7 organizations in 5 states, DC, and Kenya since the last Council meeting.

AHD partnership expertise is also beginning to be applied in more in-depth technical assistance engagements. The first such engagement in which Council staff are involved is underway now, working with a local health department to conduct an environmental scan that will lay groundwork for building AHD partnerships.

## **Resources**

Since the start of the AHD Learning Community, resources and tools have been developed based on the learning and sharing that is occurring. In a new approach, AHD Learning Community Chair Bill Keck, MD, MPH, and Council staff have collaborated on a book that is set for publication, *Academic Health Department Partnerships: Bridging the Gap Between Town and Gown*. Capturing learnings from decades of work with AHD partnerships and the AHD Learning Community, this book will offer readers something of a how-to guide for developing and maintaining AHD partnerships, exploring a variety of elements related to these partnerships and making the case for why they are of value. Information about purchasing this new resource will be shared through the *Council on Linkages Update* when the book is published.

More information about the AHD Learning Community and its activities is available through the [AHD Learning Community](#) section of the Council website or by contacting Mayela Arana at [marana@phf.org](mailto:marana@phf.org).