The Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice

Academic Health Department Workgroup Meeting

January 7, 2011

SUMMARY

Overview of Academic Health Department (AHD) Learning Community Initiative
➢ The Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice (COL) has long had an interest in the AHD concept and has recently received funding to establish an AHD Learning Community. The AHD Workgroup will guide the development of the AHD Learning Community. Use of a workgroup is a well established practice for the COL, although the AHD Workgroup is unique among COL workgroups as it functions as an advisory body rather than to produce a product.
➢ AHD Workgroup meetings will occur approximately quarterly by conference call and will run for 90 minutes.
➢ AHD materials are available on the web:
  o AHD Learning Community webpage: http://www.phf.org/programs/council/Pages/Academic_Health_Department_Learning_Community.aspx
  o AHD resources: http://www.phf.org/resourcestools/Pages/default.aspx?showResources=false&tag=Academic Health Department
  o Bill Keck's blog post on AHDs: http://www.phf.org/phfpulse/Pages/CWK_Academic_Health_Departments.aspx
  o AHD Meeting Materials for Jan 7, 2011: http://www.phf.org/news/Documents/AHD_WG_Mtg_2011Jan7_Materials.pdf
➢ Any questions, comments, or concerns can be directed to Kathleen at kamos@phf.org.

Defining the Academic Health Department
➢ The draft "Academic Health Departments: Core Concepts" paper provided in the meeting materials was discussed. There is no definitive definition of an AHD; this paper is meant to provide a starting point. Feedback included:
  o When presenting attributes, it may be beneficial to acknowledge that an AHD may not necessarily have all of the characteristics listed. Also, compensation between partner institutions may take the form of resources other than money. Flexibility in defining attributes may be important.
  o There is a need to consider how broad/narrow to define the concept of partnering organizations. Should the definition be exclusive to local or state health departments or should it involve community-based organizations? Should additional academic disciplines be included? If the definition is too narrow, we risk excluding relevant groups; if it is expanded too much, we risk losing focus. Perhaps this topic could benefit from discussion by the AHD Learning Community.
➢ Staff will review feedback and revise the draft "Academic Health Departments: Core Concepts" paper prior to the January 2011 AHD Learning Community meeting.

Learning Community Plans
➢ In considering a stepwise approach to developing, growing, and sustaining an AHD, it could be useful to develop readiness assessments designed to determine whether organizations are ready to become involved in AHD relationships.
➢ Topics for the first AHD Learning Community meeting will likely include the definition of AHD and the step-wise approach to AHDs. Suggested topics for future meetings include the scope of the definition of AHD partner organizations and AHD readiness assessments. Additional discussion topic suggestions are welcome at any time.
➢ The draft AHD Learning Community Profile questions provided in the meeting materials were discussed. Each member of the AHD Learning Community will be asked to answer the AHD Learning Community Profile questions and this information will be used to build individual profiles that illustrate involvement with AHD-related activities. These profiles will enable Learning Community members to introduce themselves to others in the community and to identify other community members with similar positions or experiences. Feedback included:
   o Draft Question 1 may need to be altered to further address the variability that exists in types of formal written agreements.
   o Draft Question 8 may be difficult to answer as the word "organization" can be interpreted in multiple ways.
   o We could add a question addressing whether organizations serve rural, urban, or mixed geographic areas.
   o We could consider developing a list of specific activities occurring in AHDs to provide people with examples of the types of activities that might fall within the scope of such a relationship.
   o It is always important to keep in mind why we are asking a question.
➢ Staff will review feedback and revise the draft AHD Learning Community Profile questions prior to the January 2011 AHD Learning Community meeting.
➢ In the future, the AHD Learning Community might consider collecting written agreements between AHD partners to explore the complexity and variability of these documents.

Next Steps
➢ Additional feedback on the draft AHD concept paper and AHD Learning Community Profile questions may be sent to Kathleen at kamos@phf.org. Feedback was requested by January 14, 2011.
➢ Staff will schedule the first AHD Learning Community conference call for the end of January 2011.