



## **Academic Health Department Learning Community Report**

**April 28, 2014**

### **Overview**

The [Academic Health Department \(AHD\) Learning Community](#) supports 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 AHDs. The Learning Community has grown rapidly since its launch in January 2011, with current membership numbering over 350.

### **Needs Assessment Results**

To help support this growing membership, in February 2014, an [AHD Learning Community needs assessment](#) was conducted to identify activities, topics, and resources of interest and value to community members. Having knowledge of what members hope to gain from participation in the Learning Community is crucial in planning future community activities.

Forty-nine people participated in the needs assessment, providing feedback on the AHD Learning Community's current activities and suggestions for new efforts. Highlights from this needs assessment include:

- In terms of new activities, respondents are most interested in subgroups to explore specific topics of interest, a mentorship program, and a listserv to facilitate communication among Learning Community members
- If subgroups are established within the Learning Community, priority topics should be education and training, developing an AHD partnership, and funding an AHD
- A majority of respondents are interested in participating in a mentorship program, with more seeing themselves in the role of mentee than of mentor
- In terms of resources, respondents would be most likely to use partnership agreement templates and more examples of partnership agreements, case stories and a list of existing AHD partnerships, and resources to generate buy-in for AHD partnerships
- Respondents would like to receive information about the Learning Community through webinars or virtual meetings, emails, and monthly electronic newsletters
- To provide value to members, the Learning Community should offer tools and resources to support AHD partnerships, guidance related to AHD partnerships, and opportunities to connect and share experiences with others who are exploring or working on AHD partnerships

A more detailed [summary of needs assessment results](#), including demographics of respondents, is included in the meeting materials.

### **Plans for Future Activities**

Results of the needs assessment are being used to plan future AHD Learning Community activities. Two Learning Community meetings have been scheduled, one on [June 23<sup>rd</sup> from 2-3 pm EDT](#) and one on [August 6<sup>th</sup> from 3-4 pm EDT](#); although the first meeting will be held by conference call, use of a webinar format is being explored for the second. In addition, the August Learning Community meeting will focus on the development of a mentorship program, and early planning for establishing such a program will occur prior to the meeting. The Learning

Community is hoping to hold two meetings in the fall as well, one virtual and one in-person. A [call for partnership agreement examples](#) remains on the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice (Council) website, and two new agreements have been added. Finally, a preliminary list of existing AHDs is being prepared and will be shared through the Council website.

Exploration of the needs of AHD Learning Community members and possible activities and resources that could be provided to meet those needs will continue. Results of the needs assessment will be discussed during the June Learning Community meeting to gather further feedback from community members. As well, the needs assessment remains open and will be incorporated into the Council website. In the future, sharing this needs assessment with new members will allow the Learning Community to better determine and meet priority needs of members from the start.