

## PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS: How Health Departments Work and How to Work with Health Departments

### WHAT HEALTH DEPARTMENTS CAN OFFER SCHOOLS: COMMUNITY LINKAGES

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Public health departments can be valuable allies to state and local education agencies seeking to achieve healthy schools. Helping to promote or improve these partnerships is the goal of *Partnering for Success: How Health Departments Work and How to Work with Health Departments*,<sup>1</sup> a publication developed by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD). *Partnering for Success* outlines 11 key ways in which public health departments can help advance school health goals. This document focuses on one of these: community linkages.

Mobilizing community partnerships to identify and solve health problems is one of public health's essential functions—and a critical component of coordinated school health. Health departments can help education agencies make new connections with other health resources in the community. Health department staff members often work with hospitals and other health service providers, professional associations, and community agencies. They are skilled at developing interagency councils, collaborations, and partnerships. Partnerships not only contribute to a more effective use of resources, but also help to ensure consistency of health messages. Health departments can facilitate interactions among agencies and community members, serving as bridge builders, translators, and interpreters.

Many state health and education agencies are already engaged in these partnerships at the state level. In many communities, health department representatives serve as significant contributors to coordinated school health teams. Health departments are often instrumental in assisting education agencies with organizing health fairs.

Relevant questions that public health agencies can help to answer include:

- What partners do you recommend for our school health advisory council? Can you help us recruit them?
- What coalitions or collaborations already exist in our community that might become allies for our school health efforts?

When it comes to addressing the health of our nation's young people, the public health system is an underutilized resource. Your state or local health department is the place to go for help in building healthy schools.

#### About NACDD

The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) is a national public health association for chronic disease program directors of each state and U.S. territory. Founded in 1988, NACDD links together more than 1,400 members to advocate for preventive policies and programs, encourage knowledge sharing and develop partnerships for health promotion. Since its founding, NACDD has been a national leader in mobilizing efforts to reduce chronic diseases and their associated risk factors through state and community-based prevention strategies. For more information, please visit <http://www.chronicdisease.org>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Partnering for Success: How Health Departments Work and How to Work with Health Departments* (the full publication) and one-page summaries describing how public health departments can help schools in 11 specific areas are available at: <http://www.chronicdisease.org/nacdd-initiatives/school-health/publications/Partnering-for-Success>