



HERO Employer-Community Collaboration Committee

Committee Co-Chairs:

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Purpose:

There is an emerging appreciation of the value to both employers and communities if they collaborate to advance health objectives. The achievement of public health objectives for the population seems difficult to achieve without effective corporate health programs. And, employers will recognize a significant benefit if the communities in which they operate have high levels of population health and a community culture that is vibrant and dedicated to optimizing quality of life. At the intersection of employers and community, health and well-being may be considered one of many factors of considerable importance. This intersection of employers and community represents a two-way street that has the potential to operate in a synergistic manner.

Several groups, organizations and thought leaders are recognizing both the value and the need for employers to engage with communities for mutual benefit. The Community Preventive Services Task Force, in its annual report to Congress, outlines several ways in which community preventive services may support broad-based health enhancing impacts that result from partnerships among a variety of stakeholders in the community, including worksites, schools, health plans, care delivery organizations, faith-based organizations, and state government, among others. These important ways include:

- Increase in healthy longevity
- Reduce illness burden
- Reduce likelihood of becoming ill
- Reduce healthcare spending
- Make healthy choices easy choices
- Maintain or improve economic vitality
- Reduce waste
- Enhance national security
- Prepare communities for emergencies
- Empower individuals, families, employers, schools, and communities

However, it may not be exactly clear how to act on such potential or how this community-based health improvement may benefit employers. No one stakeholder or sector in the community has independent ownership, accountability or capacity to advance population health alone. It requires the collective engagement of multiple social forces and sectors to be successful. Given the fact that the health of the public is the result of behavioral factors, genetics, social circumstances, access to medical care, and environmental conditions, initiatives to improve health need to involve multiple stakeholders across the community (e.g., government, business, citizens, etc.), representing multiple sectors (business and industry, education, health care, non-profits, etc.), and acting at multiple levels (individual, inter-individual, organizational, environmental). Stakeholders bring energy, effort, expertise, funding, and other resources to the effort. It is important that each stakeholder can justify their investment by the value of the results they bring.

Charge to the Committee

This Committee is being charged to explore and document the reasons why employers may want to play active roles in community health initiatives. In addition, the Committee is charged to consider the nature of employer involvement, what activities make most sense for employers to participate in and how to go about conducting such efforts.

Committee Deliverables

This committee anticipates delivery of a summary document of this effort which will include:

- A HERO statement on employer-community connections (perhaps a joint statement in case other collaborators are identified)
- An organizing framework to support employers in the conceptualization of this kind of initiative within their own setting
- A roadmap to help guide implementation and collaboration among multiple stakeholders in the community including the employer, and to ensure measurable results.