

# Partnerships to Improve Health Outcomes



**Script:** The Michigan Public Health Training Center welcomes you to this module, Partnerships to Improve Health Outcomes.

## Module Objectives

- Define the role of other sectors in enhancing public health
- Describe the board of health's role in fostering partnerships

**Script:** In this module, you will learn about the importance of cross-sectoral partnerships to improve population health outcomes. You will also explore how the board of health can contribute to fostering those partnerships.

## Cross-Sector Partners for Population Health

- Social determinants of health require interdisciplinary approaches

- Boards of health have a role in partner engagement



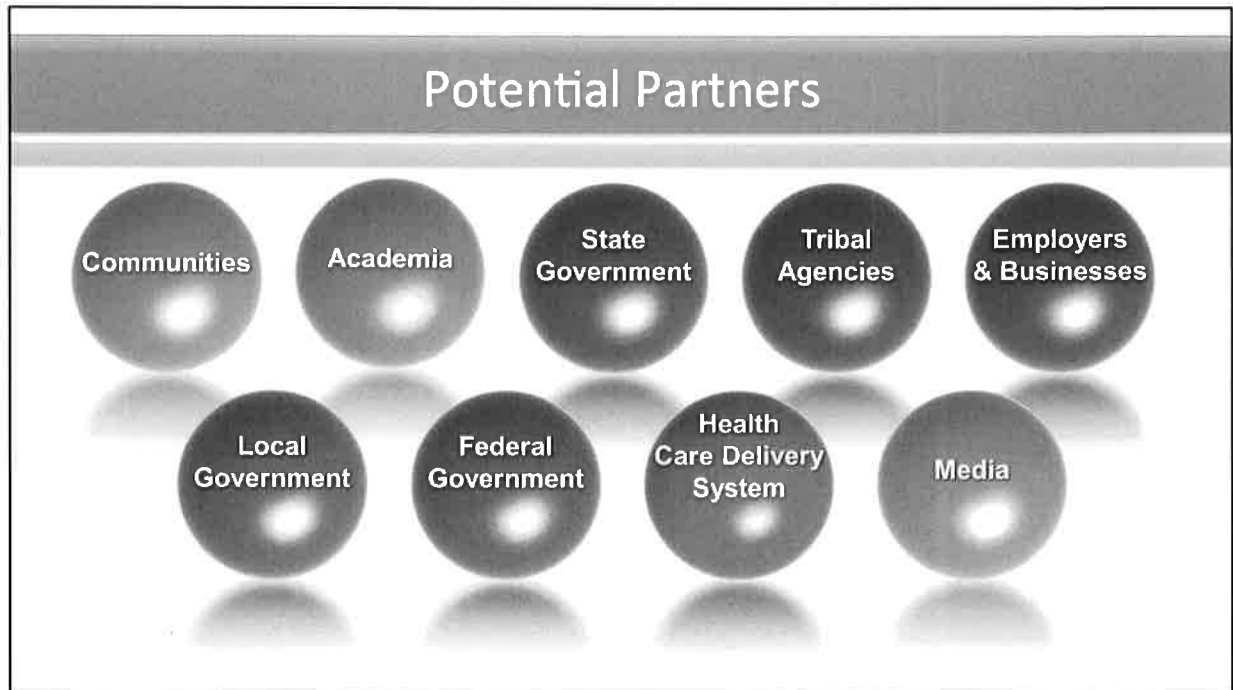
**Script:** The module, *Contributing to Health Equity*, described how the health of a community is influenced by the distribution of power, money, resources, and social advantage. These influences are apparent in the social determinants of health that are at play for individuals and communities. It is important to recognize that the multi-faceted nature of the social determinants of health means that the public health sector alone cannot achieve population health. Rather, interdisciplinary approaches and the involvement of government, the community, and other partners are needed. In order to address health inequity and health disparities, boards of health must focus on their governance function of partner engagement. Boards of health, which are often interdisciplinary themselves, have the capacity to facilitate partnerships with other public health and non-public health agencies, public and private stakeholders, and consumers.

## Benefits of Partnerships for Population Health

- New perspectives and insights
- Higher quality services, programs, and initiatives
- Efficiency in avoiding duplication of effort
- Obtain and share resources



**Script:** Let's look at some of the benefits of multi-sector partnerships for population health. Partnerships with individuals and organizations from other disciplines offer new perspectives on public health issues and may generate innovative approaches to address them. Partnering builds the capacity of those involved to have a streamlined approach to providing higher quality services, programs and initiatives, and to succeed in ways they may not be able to achieve on their own. It also allows for the efficient use of resources by avoiding duplication of effort. For these reasons, reviewers often look for collaborations in grant proposals, making partnership an important part of the funding process as well.



**Script:** So, who are potential partners for population health? You may recall this list of constituents in the public health system from an earlier module. Within each of these categories are important collaborators to engage. Depending on their sector, partners may have legal authority to make changes that affect health or may provide services that impact it.



**Script:** For example, within state and local government ,the departments of education, planning, and transportation are just a few key partners in addressing related social determinants of health. Let’s say your local health department and board of health want to establish a school-based health center. The board and health department would need to work with the local board of education to outline specific needs and establish the health center. Human service agencies and non-profit organizations such as food banks, United Way, or the American Cancer Society also play important roles in connecting people to needed local resources. Likewise, many businesses may be interested in public-private partnerships to support the health and wellbeing of their patron communities. Ultimately, all of these organizations are stakeholders in public health not only because they can have an impact on population health outcomes, but because they also rely on a healthy workforce to implement their own missions. Importantly, the examples listed here are just a few of the possible partners in other sectors that local health departments and boards of health should pursue in collaborative efforts.

## Boards of Health & Partnerships



**Script:** Boards of health play a vital role in supporting local health departments' cultivation of partnerships.



## Boards of Health & Partnerships

- Identify individuals, agencies, and resources that could advance public health dialogue
  - Interdisciplinary relationships of board of health members
- Help local health department convene partners

**Script:** The National Association of Local Boards of Health suggests that the partner engagement function of public health governance includes creating linkages between partners. Most communities have active partnerships in place, and board of health members must be aware of the conversations already occurring regarding public health issues. You may find opportunities for collaboration sitting next to you at a board of health meeting. Public health governance officials selected to represent their community are quite often leaders in other organizations with connections inside and outside their jurisdiction. This means that they often have established relationships with local and state elected officials, business leaders, and other influential people. As a board of health member, you may be expected to use your networking skills to help identify individuals, agencies, and resources to advance public health dialogue.





## Boards of Health & Community Engagement

- Opportunities for citizens to express concerns
- Bridges to the population
- Engage community and represent local concerns

**Script:** Boards of health may draw upon these connections to support and actively participate in the health departments' convening of strategic stakeholders for specific causes. Board of health meetings provide an opportunity to do so. These meetings are public and can provide opportunities for citizens to express concerns regarding the community's health. Local health agencies use board of health members to act as the eyes and ears of the community and to serve as bridges to the population. When you sit on a board of health, you are in an ideal place to engage the community in the public health mission, represent local concerns and expectations, and promote community dialogue.



**Script:** Whether partnering with another agency or engaging the community, it is important to be thoughtful in your communication in order to build trust between stakeholders. Boards of health must recognize the implications of their role as decision makers. Historically, many communities have struggled for empowerment to have their voices heard by decision makers. Relationships between boards of health, the local health department, their organizational partners, and the community must be based on shared goals for the community's health improvement.

## Effective Board of Health Example



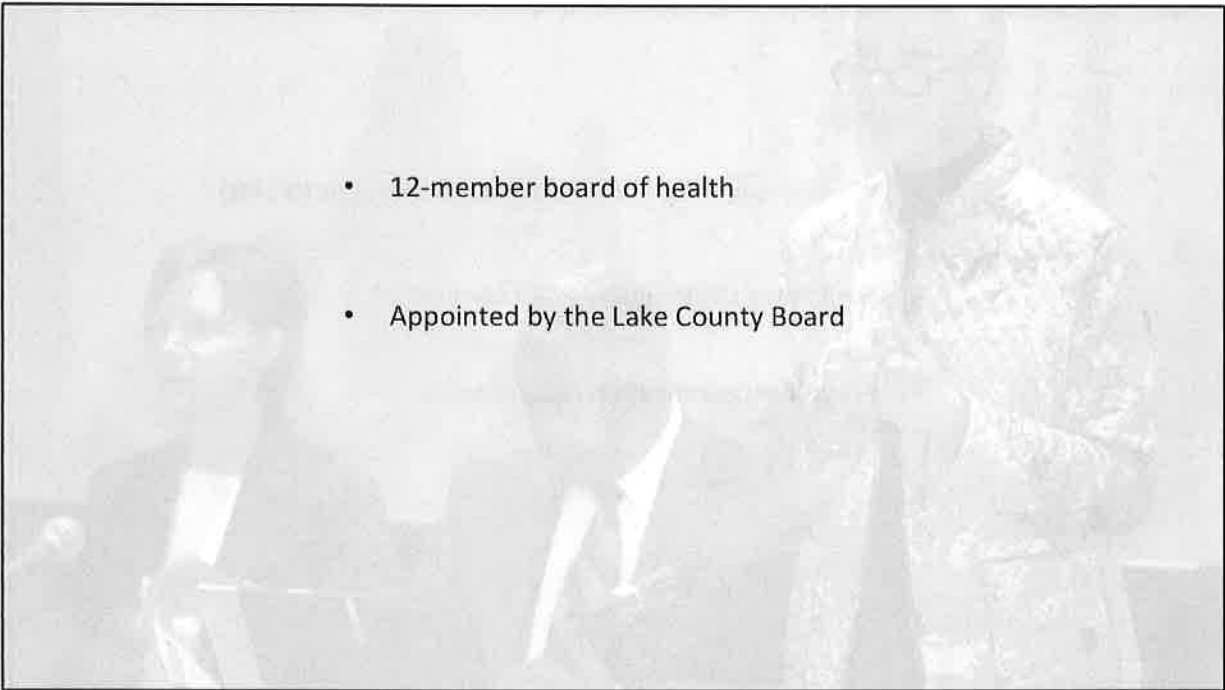
**Script:** Now that we have explored all of the module objectives, let's look at an example of what an effective board of health can do for its community. As you listen to the following example, which is just one of many possible examples from various settings across the country of a board of health success, think about what role a board of health plays in collaborative efforts to improve population health outcomes.

## Effective Board of Health Example

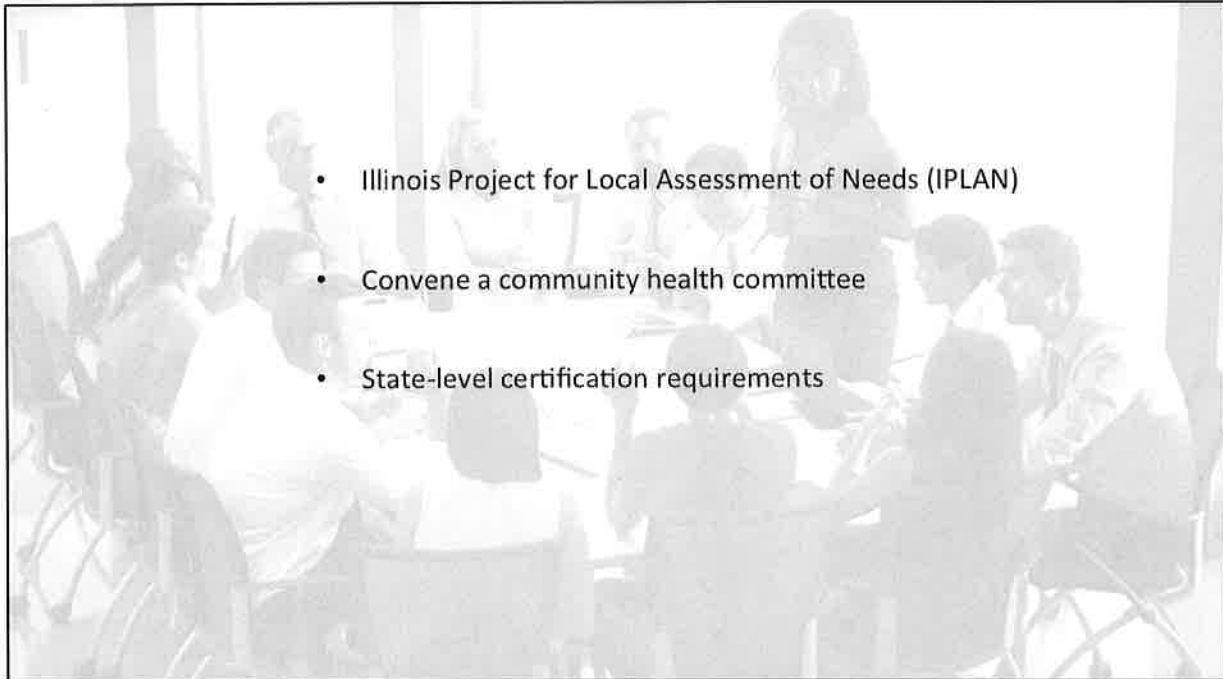
- Lake County, Illinois
- Population more than 700,000



**Script:** Lake County is located in the north east corner of Illinois and has a population of more than 700,000 people, making it the third most populous county in Illinois.



**Script:** The Lake County Health Department is governed by a 12-member board of health whose members are appointed by the Lake County Board.



**Script:** Illinois Administrative Code requires that certified local health departments complete the Illinois Project for Local Assessment of Needs, or IPLAN, every five years for recertification. IPLAN is a collaborative process that includes convening a community health committee. A health department that completes the IPLAN fulfills most of the requirements for state-level certification.



**Script:** The Lake County Health Department went through the IPLAN process in 2011 and 2012. The Lake County Board of Health supported the partnership-based approach to population health activities that the health department was leading in two key ways. First, the Lake County Health Department chose to use the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships, or MAPP, tool to guide their IPLAN, and a board of health member participated in the health department's MAPP steering committee. Second, the board of health embraced the findings of the health department's collaborative assessment and planning process.

“...review, approval, and adoption by the Board of Health is vital to being able to proceed with this entire collaborative process.”

- Lake County IPLAN

**Script:** One of the practice standards recommended in the completion of the IPLAN process was to include board of health adoption of the community health plan. The Lake County IPLAN states that the “...review, approval, and adoption by the Board of Health is vital to being able to proceed with this entire collaborative process.” The board of health endorsed and adopted the resulting community health plan in August 2012. In this example, the board played an active role in the health department’s partnership efforts by participating alongside other partners and officially supporting the initiative.



## Partnerships to Improve Health Outcomes

- Define the role of other sectors in enhancing public health
- Describe the board of health's role in fostering partnerships

**Script:** You have now completed this module, Partnerships to Improve Health Outcomes. In this module, you learned about the importance of cross-sectoral partnerships to improve population health outcomes as well as how the board of health can contribute to fostering these partnerships. Please continue on to the next video in the series.

Training Provided By



**HRSA Grant Number: UB6HP20200**



**Script:** This training is provided by the Michigan Public Health Training Center at the University of Michigan School of Public Health, Office of Public Health Practice. Funding for this project was made possible by the Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Workforce. This training was developed in collaboration with the Michigan Public Health Institute.

## Special Thanks To:

- National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH)
- Phyllis Meadows, PhD, MSN, RN, University of Michigan School of Public Health

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This Course is in Memory of Marie Fallon

## Photo References



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