

Demonstration of Readiness for Designation

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Prepared for the Health Care Authority
By the Center for Community Health and Evaluation

Background

Accountable Communities of Health (ACH) were designed to recognize and leverage the innovation and collaboration occurring in local communities by bringing public and private entities together to work on shared health goals. Through these diverse multi-sector partnerships, ACHs will be an integral part of the statewide [Healthier Washington initiative](#).

As part of the ACH continuum of development, two regions were chosen as Pilot Communities for January – June 2015. These Pilots were:

North Sound Accountable Community of Health (North Sound) and Cascade Pacific Action Alliance (CPAA).

At the end of this Pilot demonstration, North Sound and CPAA submitted designation applications to describe their progress in establishing functional ACHs that exhibit a strong foundation for regional health improvement efforts and collaborative partnership with the State. To demonstrate readiness for the next phase of development and activity, Pilots were required to meet a set of minimum requirements related to governance, ACH membership, community engagement, backbone functions, sustainability frameworks, progress on regional health assessments, and emerging priorities for a regional health plan. They also shared progress on their collaborative regional health improvement projects.

ACH designation allows continued regional health improvement planning and implementation. The following summaries include highlights and quotes from each region's demonstration of readiness proposals and are informed by initial conversations with their backbone organizations about the regions' strengths and progress during the demonstration grant period.

North Sound Accountable Community of Health

The Washington State Health Care Authority designated North Sound ACH as an Accountable Community of Health on July 1, 2015. Collaboration in this region spans five counties: Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom. During the Pilot demonstration period, North Sound successfully transitioned from an Organizing Committee to a Governing Body structure, guided by a mutually agreed upon common agenda. This Body leveraged a strong regional history of collective action on key health issues, the expertise of its members, and existing partnerships between many stakeholders to help build trust and a functioning governance structure for the ACH. One of North Sound's key pilot

“At the core of a successful Accountable Community of Health are working relationships built on inclusiveness, trust, respect, transparency, continuous learning, and data-driven decision-making.”
- North Sound Common Agenda



accomplishments was to expand its Governing Body’s membership to include representatives from housing, first responders, small business, and three tribes. The ACH prioritized outreach to tribes because they “consider all eight tribes in the North Sound region [to be] essential partners in health innovation.” As a result of these efforts, North Sound ACH welcomed representatives from the Lummi, Upper Skagit, and Swinomish Tribes. The ACH also transitioned to a managed care organization caucus format that allows for one vote for the caucus on the Governing Body.

North Sound adopted bylaws early in the Pilot period and continued to refine them as the group gained experience. The ACH developed an Interim Steering Committee to review key briefings, prepare for Governing Body meetings, and “consult with [backbone] staff as time sensitive questions regarding administrative matters arise.” This group reflects the multi-sector composition of the ACH and will soon transition to a formal Steering Committee. The backbone organization for this designated ACH is the Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement (WAHA), due to its “experience working with coalitions of diverse interests, and its integral involvement in the pre-planning process for the North Sound.”

“Governing Body members are expected to represent the interests, needs, and concerns of their sector they were appointed to represent, not only the organization or agency for which they work.”
– North Sound Bylaws

During the Pilot period, a Regional Health Needs Inventory work group updated an analysis of local Community Health Assessments (CHAs) and Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) to better understand the region’s needs. The group also expanded existing inventories and collected additional data to better understand the work already occurring in the region within the areas that the ACH names as the “broad priorities that have consistently come to the forefront: **care management and behavioral health.**” To augment these data, they interviewed additional health leaders and service providers and implemented an online survey of North Sound residents.

North Sound’s first regional project is the CASE initiative: **Coordinate, Align, Standardize, Enhance and Expand Care Coordination Efforts in North Sound.** This effort is considered “a critical first step in developing a collaborative, regional safe table to facilitate shared learnings.” This work was re-scoped during the Pilot phase to develop a set of lessons learned, an inventory of existing care coordination programs, and a survey of existing related measures, as well as a look at future collaboration.

“The single biggest lesson learned in the initial stages of CASE was that trust is critical and must be built and nurtured before collaboration can happen. More simply put, **collaboration moves at the speed of trust.**”

North Sound developed a set of sustainability considerations to help guide discussions and highlight possibilities for long term sustainability of the ACH and the CASE initiative.

The North Sound ACH Readiness Proposal can be found online:

http://whatcomalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/North-Sound-ACH_Readiness-Proposal.pdf

Cascade Pacific Action Alliance (CPAA)

The Washington State Health Care Authority designated CPAA as an Accountable Community of Health on July 2, 2015. Collaboration in this region spans seven counties: Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Thurston, and Wahkiakum. CPAA has developed a “shared and distributed leadership approach” designed to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders while also ensuring all members have equal voice. The CPAA Charter orients their work around four core values: inclusiveness, equality, consensus, and shared learning. Decisions are made at the CPAA Regional Coordinating Council through a consensus based decision making

process, which is perceived to be effective at building stakeholder trust while still making difficult decisions. The CPAA governance structure “carefully balances geographic representation with sector diversity.” As part of the structure, each county established a local forum that meets regularly and is formally linked to the regional effort through one or more county-specific representatives on the CPAA Council. The Council also includes county-specific representation from medical care, public health, and elected officials, as well as representatives from behavioral health, multiple managed care organizations, and other key stakeholders that work across counties on issues such as housing, education, and social services. A Support Team, consisting of volunteers from the Council, works closely with backbone staff to frame issues and work on policy recommendations in advance of Council meetings. The backbone organization for CPAA is CHOICE Regional Health Network. As stated in their ACH Pilot application, CHOICE was appointed the backbone for CPAA due to its “long history of leading collaborative efforts in the health care arena” and previous partnerships on health improvement initiatives in the region.

“Our region also decided early on to build on existing community structures to the greatest extent possible and adopt a bottom-up approach that links individual communities in the seven counties coming together within the CPAA with a regional coordinating group.”

CPAA identified five regional health priority areas: access to services, care coordination and integration, chronic disease prevention and management, preventing and mitigating Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), and enhancing economic and educational opportunities. They collected region wide metrics, identified a set of objectives for each area, and are now working to develop ‘actionable strategies’, with a goal of completing a Regional Health Improvement Plan by the end of 2015.

The goal of the ACH’s pilot project—the **Youth Behavioral Health Coordination Pilot Project**—is to “identify children with behavioral health challenges (mental health and chemical dependency) as early as possible in both education and health care settings, and connect at-risk children with community-based interventions and treatment services.”

“This pilot project is an excellent illustration of what can be achieved in a very short time by different community sectors working together toward a common goal.”

During the pilot period a work group selected behavioral health screening tools, inventoried existing community based resources, and mapped potential workflows between members of the educational and medical sectors. They successfully identified four project test sites through a process that included developing selection criteria, researching potential school partners, designing a scoring matrix, and reaching out to selected schools. The region is “eager to move from planning to action” in the second half of 2015.

CPAA also examined long-term ACH sustainability and started to identify potential funding sources. Their readiness proposal “lays out a logical progression for attracting potential funding sources over time (three-phase approach) based on potential funders’ relative risk tolerance.”

The Cascade Pacific Action Alliance ACH Readiness Proposal can be found online:
https://crhn.org/Files/ach/CPAA_DesignationProposalPortfolio.pdf

Summary

In July 2015, Washington State officially recognized two regions as Accountable Communities of Health (ACH). These two regions were North Sound Accountable Community of Health (North Sound) and Cascade Pacific Action Alliance (CPAA). This brief summary document has been prepared by the Center for Community Health and Evaluation, in partnership with the Health Care Authority.