More Opportunities when Health and Education Agencies Collaborate

Patti Van Tuinen, M.Ed., CHES
State Adolescent Health Coordinator
Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
COLLABORATION is a cultural expectation of Missouri Health and Education Agencies.

- It is about RELATIONSHIPS, and
- RELATIONSHIPS and COLLABORATION are over time.
## Missouri State and Local Structures to Connect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)</th>
<th>Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>556 Public School Districts and Charter Schools</td>
<td>114 Local Public Health Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local School Boards</td>
<td>Local Health Boards and Commissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and School Partners and Stakeholders</td>
<td>Community and School Partners and Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Health Advisory Councils (SHACs)</td>
<td>Health Advisory Councils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Local school districts are autonomous.
- Local public health agencies have strong ties (contracts) with DHSS.
Key Collaborative Efforts (Strategies and Teams) in Missouri

1) Council for Adolescent and School Health (CASH).


3) Preconception Health for Adolescents Action Learning Collaborative (ALC) Missouri Team.
It’s important to recognize challenges...and keep moving forward

- The “name” of the project/work
  (Preconception health, sex ed, sexual health.)

- Limited funding
  (Must integrate work into existing structures and resources.)

- Time
  (Staff have multiple responsibilities across programs, unanticipated and competing priorities/assignments.)

- The need to elevate this student health and education issue among competing priorities.
Policies and Opportunities

- It’s important to know the policies (ground rules) regarding health education and sexuality education in schools.

- And it’s important to identify timely opportunities and appropriate venues to provide input, information, and resources.
Examples of Missouri Sexuality Education Policies

“Any course materials and instruction relating to human sexuality and STDs shall be medically accurate and shall...present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice.”

Contraception is included in DESE’s *Curriculum Framework for Health and Physical Education.*

However, public school districts are not required to teach sexuality education.
Examples of Missouri Sexuality Education Policies continued

“Developmentally appropriate HIV/AIDS prevention education is required at every grade level, including primary grades.”

One half unit (semester) of health education in high school is required for graduation.

The health education credit may be earned in courses taught by health or family and consumer sciences teachers.
Council for Adolescent and School Health (CASH)

Shared Vision:

Missouri adolescents will be Healthy, Safe, and Successful.

Missouri Framework for Promoting the Health of Adolescents
CASH Members

State Agencies:
- Health
- Education
- Mental Health
- Social Services
- Universities

Adolescent Medicine Specialists
Local Public Health

School Partners:
- Nurses
- Social Workers
- Counselors
- Health Teachers
- Outreach Worker
- School Board Member
- Parents

Various Youth-Serving Organizations
CASHing in on Opportunities

- Wealth of expertise advising state and national adolescent health priorities, programs, and policies
- Forum for sharing information and resources and facilitating collaborative relationships.
- Professional development.
- Healthy People 2010 and 2020.
- Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP).
HIV/AIDS/STDs and Pregnancy Prevention Interagency Teams

National Stakeholders Convene (2005) and Reconvene (2009) State Teams

- Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (Adolescent Health Coordinators)
- National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors
- National Coalition of STD Directors
- The Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation
- CDC funding support
Missouri Team Accomplishments

- Effective working relationships across programs within our own agencies and with other state agencies were established.

- Increased focus on youth engagement (HIV/STD Prevention Program Youth Health Educators who are resources to schools; Youth Advisory Councils or YACs).

- Presentations on evidence-based approaches to HIV/AIDS/STD and teen pregnancy prevention.

- MSIP recommendations.
Preconception Health for Adolescents
Missouri Action Learning Collaborative (ALC) Team

11/18/2009
Preconception Health for Adolescents
Action Learning Collaborative

The participating six states’ Action Plans support CDC Preconception Health Recommendations.

Keys to Missouri’s successful proposal were: supportive data and having DESE at the table to plan strategies that fit within state/local education structures.

Missouri’s overall goal:
Educate and motivate teens to choose and practice healthy behaviors now and in the future.
Missouri’s Key Objectives

1. Reframe preconception health in an innovative way to attract and motivate young people.

2. Enhance existing school-offered curricula that address preconception health issues with teens in Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) and health education classes.
Successful Strategies

- Developed survey for FCS teachers and survey for student input.
- DESE sent memo (with student survey) to FCS teachers to encourage participation at upcoming conference.
- Family, Career, and Community Leaders (FCCLA) State Conference for students and teachers.
- “Survey Ladies” Exhibit at FCCLA Conference.
- Health education “starter kit” for FCS teachers.
- Drawing for computer notebook was incentive for returning surveys.
Exhibit at FCCLA
Survey Questions

Teacher

➤ What health topics do you think are important for your students to learn about in school?

➤ What ways do you prefer to learn new information that will be incorporated into new curriculum?

➤ Check the health topics in which more information and resources would enhance your classroom instruction.

Student

➤ What health topics do you think are important for you and your classmates to learn in school?

➤ What health topics are of greatest interest to you?

➤ Check the top 3 sources where you get your information about health.

➤ Check the top 3 sources where you would like to get more information about your health.

Teachers also took a separate survey regarding the *Ounce of Prevention* curriculum.

87 teachers returned surveys.

517 students returned surveys.
The Health Topics
(relating to preconception health)

- Nutrition and healthy eating
- Fun fitness activities
- Health care for teens to prevent illness
- Now and future health risks of:
  - Alcohol
  - Energy drinks
  - Drug use and misuse
  - Tobacco, smoking, secondhand smoke, nicotine effects
- Emotional health
- Developing healthy relationships
- STDs
- Sex education
- Pregnancy
- Responsible parenting for dads and moms
- Media advertising influences on your health decisions
Application of Results (data)

- Surveys assessed learning interests and needs of both teachers and students.

- 70% of the students returning the survey believed it is very important to learn about drugs, pregnancy, STDs, and sex education in schools!

- Survey results re-energized funding support for updating the *Ounce of Prevention* curriculum developed by University of Missouri Extension, March of Dimes, DHSS, and DESE FCS teachers.

- Results identify additional student health education needs (including sexual health-related topics).
The final survey question:

What does the term “preconception health” mean to you?

“Using abstinence during sex.”

“I just know what it means, but it doesn’t relate to me at all.”

“What you need to do to prepare for pregnancy.”

“Health before you are pregnant.”
Benefits and Strengths of Missouri State Education and Health Agencies Working Together

- Shared vision, beliefs, and commitment to the health of students.

- Sharing knowledge, resources, and methods of outreach, including access to teachers (and students).

- DESE and DHSS have contributed staff time and expertise.

- Timing of strategies.

- Including FCCLA student leader and other youth.

- Funding for components of the work is being pursued.
We couldn’t have done it without each other

“The collaboration with the family and consumer sciences teachers through the use of the survey and workshops during the Missouri FCCLA conference would not likely have happened if the agencies had not collaborated. Knowledge of working directly with students, high school program structure, and curriculum content was very important.”

DESE Team Member
Lessons Learned

✓ “It is important to develop positive working relationships between the agencies, especially sharing how each agency can complement the other with resources, knowledge, and implementation of expertise.”

✓ “The inclusion of the student voice and perspective is critical in determining projects that are meant to get their attention and ultimately motivate change.”
More Lessons Learned

✓ Relationships and projects take time. Teams don’t always reach anticipated goals, but these efforts can be incremental and influential steps for the future.

✓ Through the challenges—focus on what has been and can be done.

✓ Be ready for future opportunities.

✓ Continue to support each other.
Patti Van Tuinen, M.Ed., CHES

State Adolescent Health Coordinator

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
Section for Healthy Families and Youth
Bureau of Genetics and Healthy Childhood

Patti.Vantuinen@dhss.mo.gov
573-751-6188