

**CT PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS INITIATIVE  
SPE Consortium/PFS Advisory Council**

**December 16, 2015  
2:00-4:00 PM**

**Department of Transportation  
2800 Berlin Turnpike  
Newington, CT 06111  
Conference Room B**

**Meeting Notes**

**1. Welcome & Introductions**

**Attendees:** Carol Meredith, DMHAS; Jennifer Sussman, UCHC; Jane Ungemack, UCHC; Bonnie Smith, UCHC; John Suchy, DCP; Melissa Sienna, DCF; Janessa Stawitz, Judicial; Renee Coleman-Mitchell, DPH; Eugene Interlandi, DOT; Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, DSS; David Rentler, Board of Pardons/Parole.

Carol Meredith provided a brief welcome and background to the group and attendees introduced themselves.

**2. Recap of Last Meeting**

Carol Meredith (DMHAS) reviewed the participant evaluations from the last meeting, reviewed the current meeting agenda, then initiated a discussion about membership and meeting approach, encouraging participants to identify key participants to add to the Council membership. She also provided an update on actions taken to reach out to members suggested at the September meeting.

**3. Identifying, Tracking and Reporting Disparities and High Need Communities**

Carol Meredith guided the group through a review of the draft Table of Contents for the PFS 2015 Request for Proposals, to be issued in February, as a basis for discussion of how best to define the pool of applicants (High need, low capacity) as well as eligibility criteria and potential outcomes related to health disparities. Jennifer Sussman presented a revised version of the "Selecting Communities of High Need" document developed for the September 2015 meeting, as a basis for discussion of identification and outcomes measurement of high need communities. Bonnie Smith presented a handout on defining health disparities, based on SAMHSA and CAPT definitions, which included a summary of goals and objectives of the SPF 2015 grant.

The PFS grant application focused in on medium to large urban centers, based on a review of social indicator data, and the rationale for that focus was presented to the group, as well as the goal of funding communities not previously funded through SPF or not previously successful at implementing the SPF. Sylvia Gafford-Alexander (DSS) highlighted the presence of health disparities, high need, and low capacity in rural communities, as well as the potential for sub-population differences in those communities. She also highlighted the tribal communities in

**CT PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS INITIATIVE**  
**SPE Consortium/PFS Advisory Council**

Connecticut as communities of high need, and made the point that another barrier to obtaining grant funding is the lack of grant-writing expertise in smaller communities, with less money to hire grant writers and consultants to strengthen their proposals. Renee Coleman-Mitchell (DPH) echoed that because of fewer resources, these communities rarely have the chance or capacity to address risk factors and health disparities. Melissa Sienna (DCF) suggested that census tract designations be utilized to define community, as data on this level would be more sensitive to subpopulation differences and may highlight areas that can be more easily targeted. She also suggested a self-assessment that addresses capacity and resources, not just identification of the problem and subpopulations, be incorporated into the RFP process. Bonnie Smith (UCHC) honed in on the need for communities to prove grass roots relationships and possibly coalition infrastructure as a means of demonstrating basic capacity to implement the SPF, since community-based organizations (including tribes) are the targeted applicants for this funding (with or without a fiduciary). Carol Meredith noted that a Request for Qualifications model for the RFP might work better for this target population.

Potential inclusion of elements of the Health Disparities Impact Statement into the RFP was also discussed. Carol Meredith also raised the question to the group about whether it might be better to fund fewer communities at a higher funding level, in order to increase resources and support for capacity-building, infrastructure, and implementation. The group generally agreed with this proposition. Renee Coleman-Mitchell suggested stating in the RFP that DMHAS would fund up to a certain number of communities, and based on the content of proposals determine the actual numbers and amounts.

The group resolved that key elements of the RFP should be:

- Demonstration of infrastructure and capacity
- Evidence of established and reliable links to the target community as defined in the proposal (including letters of support, but more than that)

#### **4. Integration with Other Initiatives**

Carol Meredith discussed integration of the work of the SPE Consortium/SPF Advisory Council with other co-occurring and in-process efforts, including the ADPC and the SEOW. Carol noted that DMHAS intends to integrate substance abuse prevention and suicide prevention/mental health promotion (Garrett Lee Smith initiative, et. al). The CSAP RFA which was the basis for Connecticut's PFS 2015 funding requires this integration as well. Carol also initiated a brief discussion of proposed membership for the SEOW, and asked participants to consider who from their agencies might be appropriate to participate on the SEOW. It was noted that there are various data and advisory bodies in Connecticut doing similar or overlapping work, many as required by their funders. The group discussed ways in

**CT PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS INITIATIVE**  
**SPE Consortium/PFS Advisory Council**

which partnerships can increase the efficiency of this work (fewer meetings, increased communication between systems) and minimize duplication of efforts. Other resources to be considered and explored as supports/links to the work of the SEOW, and the efforts of the Council include:

- ADPC (DMHAS, DCF, and others);
- Community Transformation grant (DPH);
- Data Integration project (DCF);
- Open Data Portal (OPM, via Executive Order);
- Connecticut Data Collaborative (ctdata.org);
- Agency data sharing agreements.

**5. Next Steps**

- DMHAS will process this rich discussion and incorporate into the draft RFP;
- Identification of a sub-committee to review RFP and proposals;
- RFP draft and SEOW membership will be reviewed by the Council.

**6. Meeting Schedule & Adjourn**

Suggested dates for the 2016 quarterly meetings are the following Wednesdays, 1:30-3:30 pm: March 23, June 22, September 28, and December 14.