MERLIN: Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, & Learning Innovations

The Population Health Innovation Lab (PHIL), a program of the Public Health Institute, provides research and evaluation services, tools, and resources in support of collaborative partnerships, health departments, and diverse health partners through its MERLIN team.

HOW WE WORK

PHIL connects collaborative partnerships and diverse partners with evidence to inform upstream, systems-level approaches that can drive measurable improvements in population health and equity. With expertise in participatory approaches, we support community needs assessments, health system evaluations, and program evaluation—from planning to applying findings in practice.

EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

Assessment & Technical Assistance: Local Health Department Data Use for Outbreak Response in Healthcare Settings

A collaboration with the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to assess LHD awareness, access, and use of infection and health equity data for outbreak prevention and response in healthcare facilities and provide technical assistance based on lessons learned. Check out the Outbreak Response and Prevention in Healthcare Settings Resources.

Scientific Research: Aligning Systems for Health

PHIL worked with 22 Accountable Communities of/for Health (ACHs) to learn how aligning across health care, public health, and social service sectors—in partnership with community residents and tribal nations—leads to outcomes in ACHs. *Check out PHIL's Aligning Systems for Health interactive data walk, toolbox for measuring cross-sector alignment, scholarly journal articles, research briefs, comprehensive series of policy briefs, research reports, book chapters & web discussions.*

Program Evaluation: Resilience Catalysts in Public Health Collaborative & Network

PHIL collaborated with NACCHO, CCR, and the CDC to conduct a mixed-methods evaluation of the Resilience Catalysts in Public Health (RC) initiative, a national network of 12 local health departments (LHDs) using the Community Resilience (CR) framework to reduce adversity, build resilience, and promote equity through policy, practice, and program changes. Check out the Resilience Catalysts in Public Health: Evaluation Report.

SERVICE OFFERINGS

Assessment & Evaluation

▶ Community health needs assessment & improvement planning support (CHAs/CHIPs)

▶ Utilization-focused evaluation

▶ Network & system evaluation

Data Collection & Management

▶ Primary data collection (surveys, interviews, focus groups, structured observations)

▶ Secondary data collection (existing datasets, record review)

▶ Business process automation

Data Analysis & Visualization

▶ Quantitative, qualitive, & mixed methods

▶ Network analysis & mapping

▶ Asset mapping

▶ Interactive, web-based visualizations

Training & Capacity Building

▶ Systems theory & methods

▶ Participatory & equity-centered evaluation

▶ Evidence-based decision making

▶ Quality improvement methods & tools

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A Program at the PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE