



Coalition Connections Create Powerful Partnerships

The "Web" We Weave

March 2017 – The Olympic Peninsula Healthy Community Coalition (OPHCC) conducted an exercise at our February 15 monthly meeting to determine the breadth of value attained from collaborating together between numerous government, health care, non-profit, business and community members. The OPHCC, in existence for 1-1/2 years and now formally a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, was founded under the mission of helping to make the Olympic Peninsula a healthier place to live, learn, work and play through the sharing of ideas, resources and relationships.

Participants at the meeting were polled to learn more about how being a partner with OPHCC had impacted individual partners, and what cross-sector benefits might have been gained from partnering with the Coalition. Though not an exhaustive list, the following represents some of the significant work described at that meeting.

Coalition partners are highlighted in blue.

- The **Sequim Food Bank** discovered a supportive partner in the **WSU Extension** program, and subsequently brought WSU staff in to conduct healthy food cooking demos at the food bank on a seasonal basis.
- **ShIPLEY Center** introduced their new consultant from Texas A & M's School of Public Health, **Joseph Sharkey**, Ph.D., M.P.H., R.D., who was conducting a feasibility study at the Center and had recently moved part-time to the area. Dr. Sharkey quickly became involved as a significant grant writing advisor to the Coalition's partners, working with the **Sequim Food Bank**, **Nash's Organic Farms**, the **WSU Extension** and the **North Olympic Land Trust**. His expertise with the USDA and population health, in addition to the services provided by his department, have been indispensable during the formation months of the Coalition.
- **WSU** and **Clallam County Health and Human Services** departments had never integrated their work with the county WIC program prior to meeting each other at the Coalition meetings. This important relationship has assisted in avoiding redundancy of services and resources between the two essential county departments.

Forming partnerships and networks that establish healthy choices as the standard in our community.



- Through collaboration between **Molina Health Care**, the **Boys and Girls Club**, **Olympic Medical Center** and the **YMCA**, a fall 5210 Challenge Event was held for the community with prizes for participants. Additionally, these relationships were leveraged with the **Sequim School District** Wellness Initiative and policy development, leading to a comprehensive wellness plan for the school district and an Advisory Council to implement the findings.
- The **Sequim Food Bank** collaborated with **Molina Health Care** to receive funding assistance for on-site Farmer's Market at the food bank with fresh produce supplied by **Nash's Organic Farms**. This resulted in food bank clients both receiving more seasonal produce, accompanied by **WSU Extension** representatives teaching them how to prepare it.
- Ryan Juel, a personal trainer employed by a local gym, expressed an interest early on in learning more about health in our community and attended our meetings. From her background in health and her desire to become a Registered Dietitian, she was hired by the **Olympic Peninsula Boys and Girls Club** to run their kitchen, including the USDA Summer Food Program, and was noted nationally for their exceptional healthy food offerings. She has since gone on to Bastyr University to pursue her R.D. studies and will be returning this summer again to oversee the preparation of 17,000 summer meals for our community's children.
- **Parenting Matters Foundation**, representing early childhood educators, was one of the initial partners in the coalition and has integrated the early learning community with the rest of partners, giving us access and information to this vital sector for health education.
- The **County Commissioner**, a partner in the coalition, provided the opportunity for Coalition representatives to present at the Clallam County Board of Health meeting, the **Olympic Medical Center** Board of Hospital Commissioners and the Community Health Assessment Steering Committee to raise awareness of coalition activities and chronic disease prevention efforts in our region.
- **Molina Health Care** partnered with the **Dungeness Valley Health and Wellness Clinic** to assist in funding patient access to insurance and wellness programs.
- As local 5210 program efforts continued to grow at community and school events, adjacent counties Jefferson and Kitsap recognized our efforts and pulled together to develop a regional Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL) group, meeting monthly to help share resources, ideas and maximize campaign effectiveness throughout the region. This resulted



in two collaborative grant writing efforts and a larger collaboration between the health systems and county health departments in the three counties.

- The **Sequim School District**, **Sequim Food Bank** and **Boys and Girls Club** have collaborated on developing, funding and providing a healthy weekend backpack program for students who would otherwise go hungry when school meals are unavailable. This program continues to grow, and this summer (2017) will extend to summer weekends in addition to the school year.
- The **Sequim School District** nurses are collaborating with the **Dungeness Valley Health and Wellness Clinic** to assist students and families in signing up for vital free clinic health care programs.
- The **Coalition Chair** has presented to the **Sequim City Council**, **Sequim School Board**, Peninsula College faculty, **Shiple Center** members, **Parenting Matters** parents and others about Coalition activities and healthy lifestyle benefits.
- **Olympic Medical Center** has been a major infusion to the heart and soul of the Coalition by providing essential marketing and branding support to our fledgling work, resulting in professionally designed handouts, logos, graphics and print collateral, but also connecting us to many marketing opportunities, such as writing for the Peninsula Daily News and speaking on KONP's Todd Ortloff radio show. Additionally, **Olympic Medical Center** developed a highly successful educational display depicting the hazards of sugary drinks, which has been used across the county at various events to impact hundreds of attendees.
- **Olympic Medical Center** went even further in their collaboration with the Coalition by purchasing Sqord fitness trackers for the fifth grade students of the Port Angeles School District and Crescent School District, and have offered additional support to other districts. OMC's CEO spent an evening educating Clallam County's Boy Scout leadership on the benefits of 5210 and how to integrate it into their programming.
- The **Shiple Center** and **Sequim Food Bank** have established a reciprocal referral network between the two organizations, due to meeting each other through Coalition meetings.
- **Peninsula Behavioral Health**, headquartered in Port Angeles, has learned about several opportunities for integration with Sequim-based events, and assisted in collaborating between the two communities through physician-referrals, food assistance and programming needs.



- The **Sequim Food Bank** has become part of a Food to Table project with the **North Olympic Land Trust** through meeting at the Coalition.
- **Nourish Restaurant** prepares our Coalition lunches and provides our meeting space, thus the Coalition became the recipients of their Fall 2016 Harvest Event. The restaurant has also begun a 5210-based children's menu and participated in our Fall 5210 Community Challenge.
- An ideal example of the benefits to our community of our coalition collaboration was our Community Thanksgiving Celebration Dinner in November of 2016, now to be held annually: The **Boys and Girls Club** provided the venue, the **Sequim Food Bank** provided much of the food and volunteers, **Molina Health Care** provided all of the paper products, Costco provided the pumpkin pies, Rainshadow Coffee the coffee and the **Olympic Medical Center** the flyer design in order to feed 147 community members and 15 shut-ins with a wonderful Thanksgiving Dinner.
- Many partners wear multiple "hats," and there's been significant traction gained by identifying these and building upon them. For example, one partner sits both on the **Olympic Area Agency on Aging** and the **Olympic Community of Health** Boards; another sits on the **Sequim Food Bank** and the **Dungeness Valley Health and Wellness Clinic** Board, yet another works at both the **ShIPLEY Center** and volunteers with the PTO's at the schools. These multiple roles have assisted us in "cross-pollinating" across sectors and beyond any singular scope we may have with one organization.

A perfect example of these wonderful, impactful partnerships was the posting on Facebook by a **Boys and Girls Club** Board member and Coalition member requesting knitted caps for needy Club children. A **ShIPLEY Center** partner immediately recognized the requester and volunteered the donation of hundreds of homemade hats, mittens and afghans by the Shipley members, which has now become a monthly donation program giving both the seniors making the hats a great cause, while addressing the children's needs for warm items. A local church's quilting guild learned of the Coalition through our partners, and a similar exchange to Club children has been set up with monthly quilt donations.



*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."
~ Margaret Mead*

