



## Roundtable on Innovations to Improve Community Health

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### Name of project or collaborative

Community Health / Population Health Improvement

### Geography

Dignity Health has an acute care presence in California, Arizona and Nevada and is the largest health care provider in California.

### Brief description

In the Catholic tradition, we understand the common good to mean the social conditions that allow human beings to flourish. Echoing the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, our Statement of Common Values asserts: "The common good is realized when economic, political and social conditions protect and promote the basic rights of all persons and enable them to reach their common goals. This obliges us to reach out to those who are disadvantaged by their economic or social status and suggests that we have a special responsibility for persons who are poor or vulnerable—to help them through direct service and through advocacy, to help lift the burdens that society has placed on them." Our approach to community health promotion addresses not only the pressing health concerns in communities, but also the causes that underlie those concerns. Through our community health initiatives we seek to unleash the power of human kindness in the communities we serve.

The comprehensive approach to community health includes not only community benefit programs and services to address priority needs in our communities, but also community economic initiatives: including a community grants program that supports nonprofits addressing community needs and a community investment program that provides low interest loans, lines of credit and guarantees to non-profit organizations. It is in all three of these focused efforts that we partner with others in the community to improve quality of life.

At Dignity Health we recognize the interdependence between human health and the environment we live in. How we contribute to the total environmental health of our communities and our planet has been a key measure of our success for 18 years, and it will continue to be so as we go forward. System staff is responsible for overseeing ecology initiatives, developing and implementing policies that support the reuse, recycling and minimization of Earth's resources and ensuring that the products and processes we use are as environmentally responsible as possible. Through shareholder advocacy, Dignity Health leverages its investment portfolio to advance corporate social and environmental responsibility. In collaboration with the members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) we engage companies on issues that impact the health of individuals, communities and our planet.

### Target population/community:

In each of the communities we serve our community health initiatives have a primary focus on populations with disproportionate unmet health needs as identified through the community health needs assessment, utilization data and the Community Need Index.

### Health issue or condition that is the focus of the project/collaborative:

Dignity Health has been a pioneer in bringing evidence-based practices to community benefit in order to support those in need in their journey from chronic illness and unhealthy behaviors to fuller, healthier lives. Our evidence-based chronic disease self-management programs offered in collaboration with state and community-based organizations have resulted in better self-care behaviors and improved outcomes for participants in the three states where we provide acute care.

Since its inception in 1990, Dignity Health has awarded more than \$51 million in community health grants to 3,006 projects in the following areas: prevention, health care services, access to health care services, primary care services and dental health services, behavioral health, nutritional education, and HIV/AIDS services. During 2014, Dignity Health awarded 204 community health grants totaling \$4.6 million. A majority of awards went to organizations involved in: promoting greater access to health care, especially for underinsured and uninsured children, pregnant women, veterans and persons with disabilities; helping to manage chronic disease conditions such as diabetes, asthma and heart disease; promoting nutrition education and reducing obesity, especially in children; and providing mental health services, especially for victims of domestic violence.

The Dignity Health Community Investment Program has had a total loan volume of \$143 million since its inception in 1990. The investment impacts have included: Housing, nearly 500 rentals and homes for sale constructed or improved in California, 180 units of affordable senior rental and assisted living units developed in Nevada; Community Development, access to shelters serving homeless individuals discharged from hospital emergency rooms in Central Los Angeles and Phoenix; Community Clinics, expansion of two health centers in Santa Cruz and helped finance an innovative transit oriented development project in the Watts District of South Los Angeles by refurbishing a 140-unit rental complex that will have a new federally qualified health clinic on the premises; Fresh Foods, FreshWorks Fund invested over \$31 million in 11 healthy food projects and created nearly 400 new jobs; Microlending, financed 55 small businesses in Arizona, Nevada and California; and Intermediaries, loans will leverage \$25 million for the construction of affordable housing and community facilities (primary health clinics) for the elderly and disabled.

Main strategies used by the project/collaborative:

The system initiative focusing on enhancing the self-efficacy of individuals living with chronic conditions utilizes evidence-based interventions, including the Stanford model Chronic Disease Self-Management Education programs, has engaged through state and local partnerships that have included departments of public health and aging, schools, churches, clinics, senior centers, residential care facilities, and various other community-based organizations.

Partners/Sectors that are part of the project/collaborative:

Dignity Health staff members work with the California Department of Public Health and the Department of Aging, with support from the Partners in Care Foundation, to enhance statewide access to evidence-based programs for individuals with chronic health conditions and disabilities. In Arizona we are partnered with the Arizona Living Well Institute; and in Nevada **b**Both the State of Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health and State of Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division awarded grants to [Dignity Health's St. Rose Dominican Hospitals](#) to provide chronic disease self-management education. Our investment program engages with various partners, depending upon the project and its location, but we have worked with other investment and grant funding organizations.

Duration/when it was initiated:

The focus on addressing chronic conditions was implemented in 2008 and continues. The community grants and community investment programs were initiated in 1990. The Community Need Index was developed in 2005 and made available online in 2011.

### Relevance of project to this breakout session

The comprehensive approach of Dignity Health is a demonstration of our commitment to community health promotion that addresses not only the pressing health concerns in communities, but also the underlying causes for health problems – the approach has been a comprehensive and innovative one from the start.

### Contact

<http://www.DignityHealth.org>.