

HEALTH OUTREACH PARTNERS

# Taking Collective Action to Ensure Health Access

A Collaboration Toolkit for Community  
Health Organizations



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

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Since the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), over 3 million California residents now have affordable health care coverage through Medi-Cal and Covered California's health insurance marketplace.<sup>2</sup> Despite the increase in coverage and available health insurance options, there are an estimated 3-4 million Californians who remain without health insurance. The highest numbers of remaining uninsured are shown to be low-income communities and communities of color. Thus, collaborations to coordinate and enhance efforts are needed by those who are concerned for the health and well-being of underserved communities, such as community health centers, free clinics, and other safety net providers and community-based organizations, in order to keep pace and address barriers to care.

Through funding from The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF), Health Outreach Partners (HOP) created this collaboration toolkit to support health centers, other safety net providers, and community-based organizations in ensuring health access for the remaining uninsured in California. The purpose of this toolkit is to provide the user with guidance and practical tools on engaging in collaborations to increase their *collective impact*. This toolkit is grounded in the concept of collective impact in "that large-scale social change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from the isolated interventions of individual organizations."<sup>3</sup> In essence, by working together and maximizing resources, organizations can not only have a much broader reach, but also make considerably better progress in addressing many of the most prevalent issues adversely affecting access to health care.

Collaborations can signify a variety of relationships, spanning from informal agreements between two partners to large-scale coalitions with dedicated funding and their own employees. HOP designed this toolkit to include a broad application of the term *collaboration*. We recognize that the type of collaboration that best fits your needs will vary depending on target population, geographic location, available resources, and much more. While there are many structures that one may consider for a collaboration, for the purposes of this toolkit the term "collaboration" is used to encompass a broader definition that includes: 1) coalitions, 2) partnerships, and 3) referral networks. HOP recognizes that the three areas of collaboration identified here are not mutually exclusive, but we hope that the toolkit can support you in finding one approach or a combination of approaches that best fits your needs.

This toolkit has been created as a guide for the steps of initiating, creating, and sustaining collaborations, and is organized into four sections. The first section provides the concepts and principles around collaborations, and includes various tools, such as worksheets and templates, to apply these concepts. Then, the next three sections are organized by the specific categories of 1) coalitions, 2) partnerships, and 3) referral networks. Each section includes an overview, tools, and a case study. Whether you are starting from scratch to build relationships with

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<sup>2</sup> The Kaiser Family Foundation, <http://kff.org/health-reform/state-indicator/state-marketplace-statistics/#note-1>. Accessed on 7/17/14.

<sup>3</sup> Kania, John and Mark Kramer. "Collective Impact." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Leland Stanford Jr. University, Winter 2011.

individuals or groups, or are looking for strategies to expand your current partnerships, this toolkit can be referenced as one comprehensive resource or any section can be used on its own. If you would like further assistance with any of the topics in this toolkit, please contact HOP by visiting our website at [www.outreach-partners.org](http://www.outreach-partners.org) or call us at (510) 268-0091.

## HEALTH OUTREACH PARTNERS

### Who we are

Health Outreach Partners (HOP) is a national organization providing training and support to community-based organizations striving to improve the quality of life of low-income, vulnerable, and underserved populations. HOP has over 40 years of experience in the field of outreach, and offers support to organizations interested in exploring a more customized application of these ideas.

### Why outreach

Outreach plays a critical role in facilitating access to primary care, case management, health promotion, disease prevention, and social services for underserved communities. HOP's mission is to build strong, effective, and sustainable grassroots health models with a particular focus on health outreach programs.

# COLLECTIVE IMPACT

*“There is no other way society will achieve large-scale progress against the urgent and complex problems of our time, unless a collective impact approach becomes the accepted way of doing business.”<sup>4</sup>*

There is no one root cause to the host of social problems facing society today. Rather, a complex set of factors influences the health and well-being of individuals and communities. Thus, finding solutions to ensure enrollment into health insurance or access to health care services cannot be undertaken by one individual or organization, but requires a comprehensive



From *The Collective Impact Framework*,  
<http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/collective-impact/>

approach and coordinated response from a range of different stakeholders. Collaborations can be an effective way to address these complex sets of factors, yet the type of collaboration matters too. A helpful way to think of how to structure collaborations is to use the framework of “collective impact”.

Introduced in 2011 in an article in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, the concept of “collective impact” is based on the idea that traditional approaches to health and social challenges are not effective in solving all problems, and too many organizations are working in isolation of each other. No one solution or individual person or organization

can solve all problems related to improving access to care and the overall health of a community. For example, there is a need to involve non-traditional partners, such as the economic development and legal sectors, just as much as traditional health partners. The concept of collective impact highlights the importance of bringing together people from across different sectors in a structured way in order to achieve large scale, fundamental change.

There are five basic components of a collective impact project:

1. **Common agenda:** Organizations involved in the project should have a shared vision with the same goals.
2. **Common progress measures:** Organizations should share similar data collection tools and measurement indicators.
3. **Mutually reinforcing activities:** Organizations should engage in activities that are supportive and coordinated.

<sup>4</sup> Kania, John and Mark Kramer. “Collective Impact.” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Leland Stanford Jr. University, Winter 2011. Available at [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact).

4. **Communications:** Organizations should have a clear communication structure and work to develop and build trust with one another.
5. **Backbone organization:** One core organization should be responsible for planning, managing, and supporting the activities of the larger collaborative.

Building and sustaining collaborations is not easy. A collective impact framework can provide guidance to more effectively bring different sectors to work together in order to achieve lasting transformation of our health care system and improve the overall health of our communities.

For more information about collective impact, please see the following resources:

- **"Collective Insights on Collective Impact":** The Stanford Social Innovation Review compiled nine articles addressing collective impact into one publication, available at: [http://www.ssireview.org/supplement/collective\\_insights\\_on\\_collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/supplement/collective_insights_on_collective_impact)
- **"The Collective Impact Framework":** The Collaboration for Impact hosts in-depth articles as well as brief videos explaining collective impact, available on its website at: <http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/collective-impact/>
- **"Collective Impact Resources":** The Results Leadership Group (RLG) has an extensive list of resources available on its website at: <http://resultsleadership.org/fsg-collective-impact-resources/>