

Developing a High Performance Health System Through Assessment of Public Health Alliances

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Learning Objectives

- Define characteristics of a high-performing health system
- Review drivers for health-care system collaboration
- Analyze models of health system integration
- Evaluate the San Antonio/Bexar County health system experience in developing a strategic alliance
 - San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (SAMHD)
 - Bexar County Hospital District d/b/a University Health System (UHS)

The Health System

- Inclusive of both health care and public health sectors
- Historical divergence of health system despite complementary roles and approaches¹
- A high performance health system² is characterized by:
 - Quality
 - Efficiency
 - Accessibility
 - Innovation

¹ Lasker, R. Medicine and Public Health: The Power of Collaboration, NY Academy of Medicine, 1997

² Commonwealth Fund, Commission on the High Performance Health System, Framework for a High Performance Health System for the US, August 2006

Drivers of Public Health – Public Hospital Collaboration

- Common interest in community health and underserved populations
- Shared response to public health emergencies
- Financial pressures on health system
 - Health care providers - increased demand for services for largely preventable diseases, increasing health care costs and decreasing reimbursement levels
 - Public health - decreases in local general fund support and heavy reliance on grant funding

San Antonio/Bexar County Health System

Why Collaborate Now?

- Political interest in governmental consolidation
- Changes in the orientation of organizations
 - High rates of preventable chronic disease
 - Significant health disparities
 - Increased health care costs with level or decreased funding
 - High rate of uninsured
 - Public health role in assurance rather than direct services
- Experience of 2005 Hurricane season response
- Recent success in joint prenatal services program

San Antonio/Bexar County Response

- Interlocal agreement used to formalize collaboration
- Joint Planning and Operations Council (JPOC) formed October 2006
 - Senior management staff of both UHS and SAMHD participate and co-chair JPOC
 - Accountable to San Antonio City Manager and Council, UHS Board of Managers and Bexar County Commissioner's Court
 - JPOC charge:
 - enhance programmatic cooperation
 - explore opportunities for organizational consolidation

Assessment of Collaborative Local Health Systems

- Purpose:
 - Inform JPOC of potential avenues for programmatic/organizational consolidation
- Objectives:
 - Understand organizational features of integrated health systems
 - Assess comparability of local health systems to San Antonio/Bexar County
 - Benefit from the experiences of local health systems and identify lessons learned
 - Better define key features of successful local public health – urban public hospital partnerships

Strategic Alliances

- “intentional inter-organizational collaboratives created to benefit the partners and ultimately the stakeholders they serve”
- The Strategic Alliance Formative Assessment Rubric (SAFAR) utilizes collaboration theory to define levels of integration with common criteria
 - Purpose
 - Strategies/Tasks
 - Leadership/Decision Making
 - Interpersonal/Communication

Gajda, R. Utilizing Collaboration Theory to Evaluate Strategic Alliances, Am. J of Eval, 2004, 25(1): 65-77

Strategic Alliances

- Alliances may fall along a continuum of formal integration
- Levels of integration:



Methods

- Inclusion Criteria
- Identification of Health Systems
- Sample
 - 11 local health systems (city, county or district)
- Data Collection
 - Key informant interviews
 - Document reviews
- Analysis
 - Full JPOC review of case studies and comparative matrices
 - Rating of level of collaboration using SAFAR

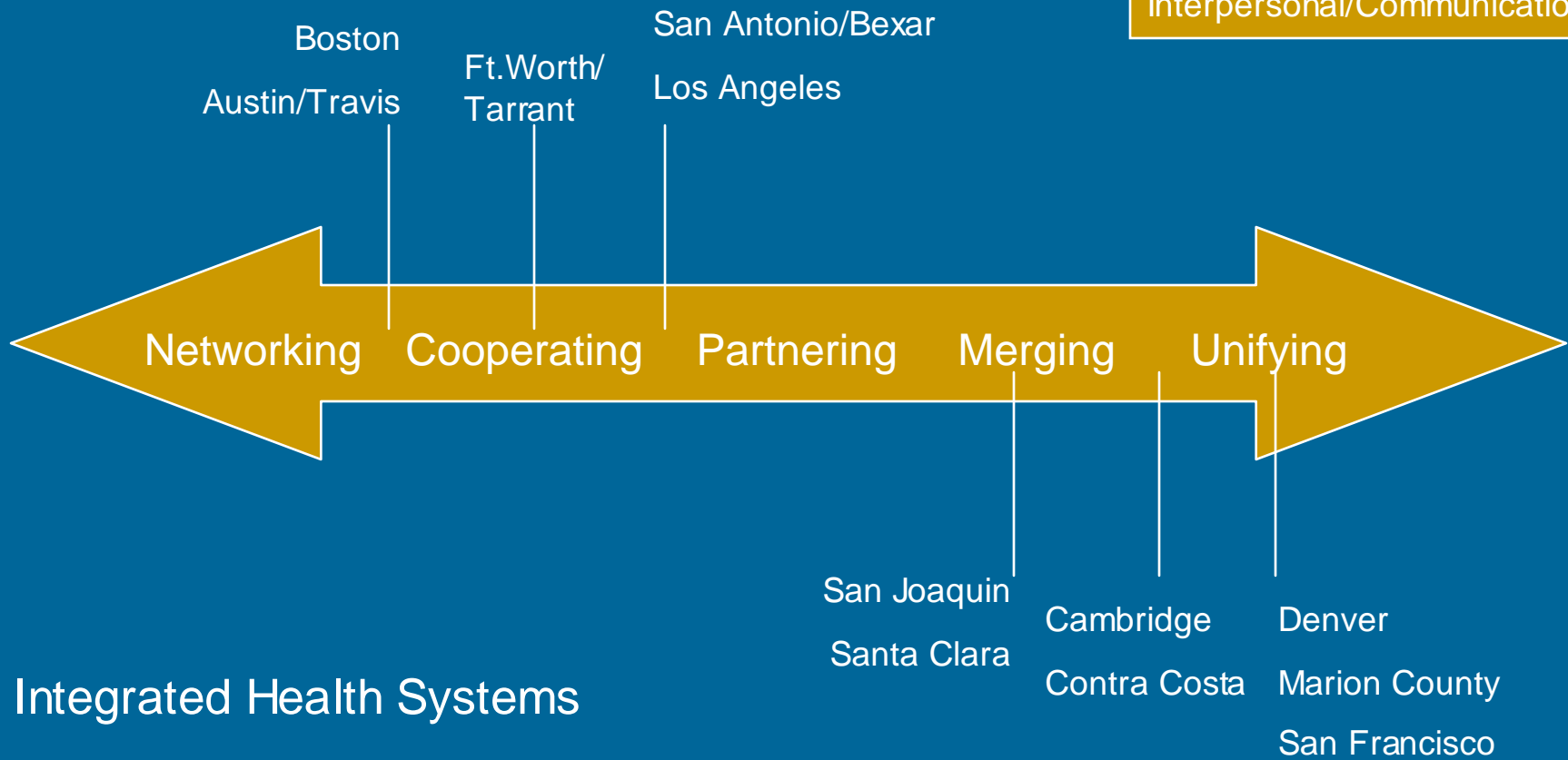
Health Systems Reviewed

Austin/Travis County	Independent
Boston	Formerly Integrated ('96)
Cambridge	Integrated ('96)
Contra Costa County	Integrated ('78)
Denver County	Integrated ('49)
Fort Worth/Tarrant County	Independent
Los Angeles County	Formerly Integrated ('06)
Marion County	Integrated ('52)
San Francisco City/County	Integrated
San Joaquin County	Integrated('97)
Santa Clara County	Integrated ('93)

Findings: SAFAR Level of Integration†

Independent Health Systems

- Purpose
- Strategies/Tasks
- Leadership/Decision Making
- Interpersonal/Communication



Integrated Health Systems

† Based on assessment 2/07

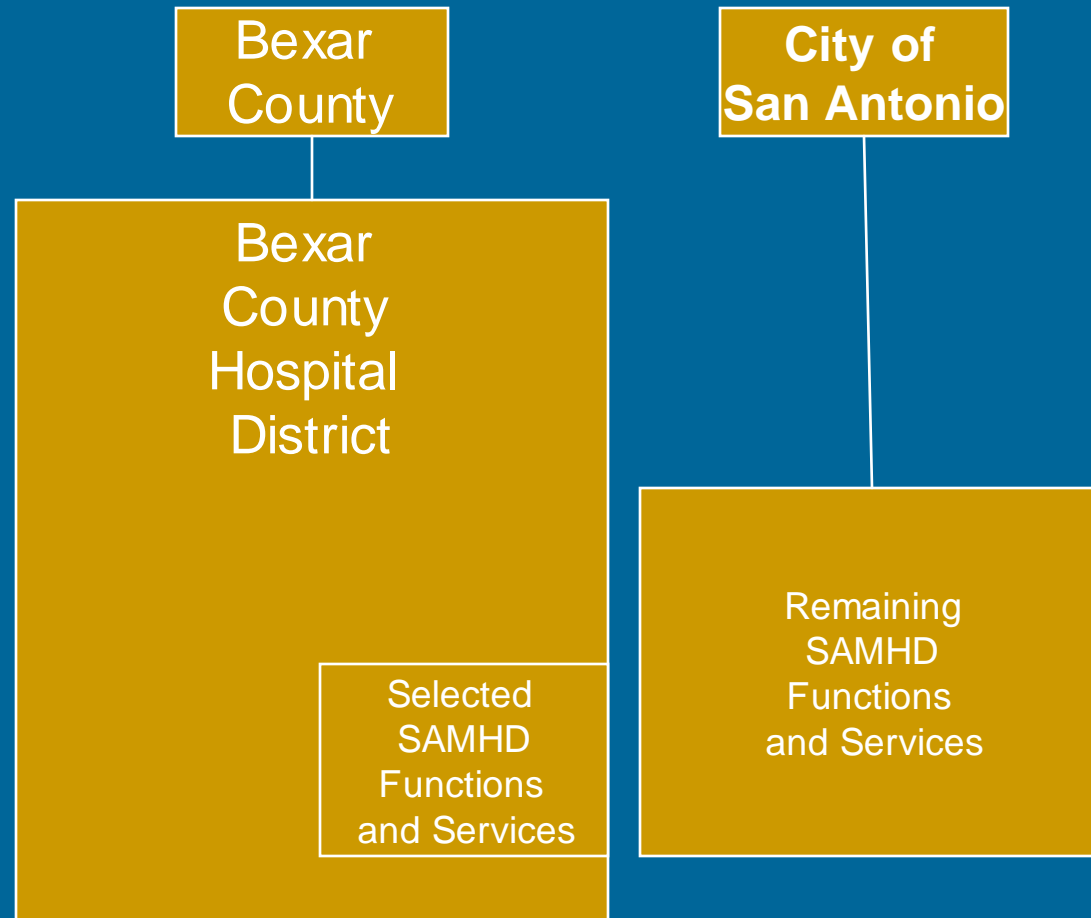
Findings: Characteristics of Successful Systems

1. Communication to support integrated solutions to common problems
2. Strong political and organizational support for achieving the mission of the health system
3. Active development of a common culture
4. Balance of public health and health care functions and strategies within the system
5. Appropriate specialization of roles with clear expectations and performance standards for each sector in the health system

Findings: Generalized Models

- Continuum of Collaborative to Integrative Options Considered
 - Programmatic Collaboration
 - “Functional Integration” – co-location, joint grant seeking, joint service delivery programs and pooling of some staff
 - Partial Organizational Integration
 - Complete Organizational Integration

Option 3: Merge Selected SAMHD Functions into Hospital District



Lessons Learned

- Sharing responsibility between governmental entities is challenging and highly political.
- Fostering open communication among participants and promoting a willingness to adapt are essential to being able to address roadblocks to the process as they are encountered.
- Developing consensus, a shared vision, and a common culture while time consuming, cannot be undervalued.
- Building a system that values both health system sectors requires a clear understanding of the complementary roles of public health and health care.

Final Thoughts

- What should the relationship be between public health and health care?
 - How does the local context shape this relationship?
 - How does health system structure shape this relationship?
- How can public health be an equal partner with the health care sector in driving health system changes given disparities in funding and public awareness?

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Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System
Tarrant County Public Health
Travis County Health District

JPOC Members

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Questions

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