
Turning Ships, Shaping Cultures:

Incremental Organizational Changes to Meet Evolving Public Health Challenges

Srija Srinivasan, Director of Health Policy and Planning
Scott Morrow, MD, MPH, Health Officer

San Mateo County Health Department

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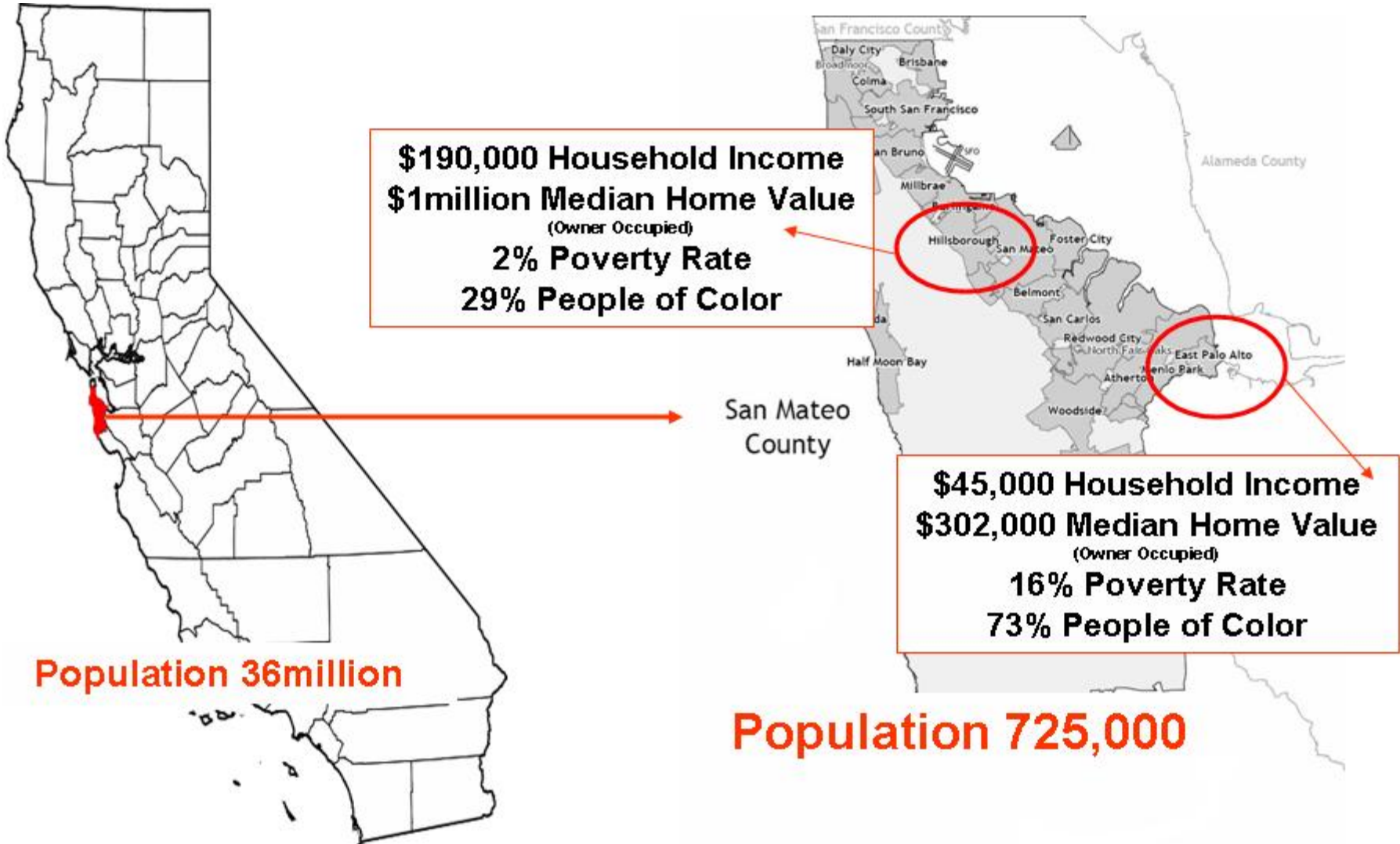
Past, Present and Future: Change as a Health Department



- Background and Context
- Key Milestones to Date
- Organizational Learnings
- Challenges Ahead

Our Community:

Diversity, Opportunity, and Disparities

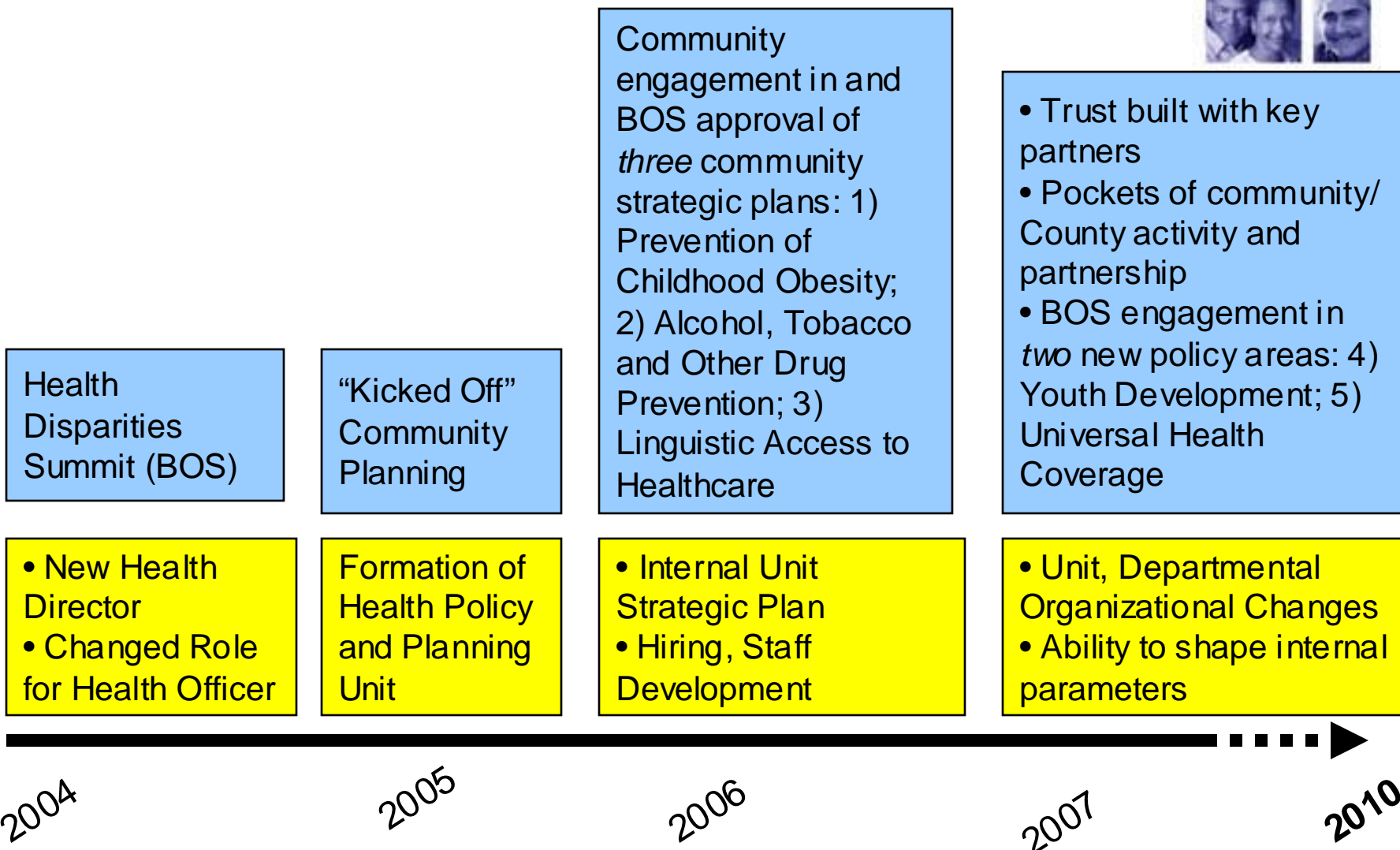


Factors Enabling Organizational Change



- County government is “big fish” in relatively calm ocean
- Organizational change returns focus to public health (*rather than public health AND healthcare delivery*)
- Engaged Board of Supervisors
- Vision and leadership

Key Events and Milestones



Organizational Decisions:

Balanced Between Strategy and Opportunity



- Creation of separate Policy and Planning unit
- Reporting structure (to Health Director, dotted line to Health Officer)
- Staffing and funding represent “collective” investment and redirection
- Focus on community/ County priorities in the context of Board of Supervisors’ policy windows

Organizational Learnings:

Charting a “Marathon, Not a Sprint”



- Small victories internal while more visible progress external
- Doing vs. catalyzing while building trust
- Understanding organizational currency and tipping points
- Sustaining staff in doing this work

Ongoing Challenges:

Building, Measuring, People and Structures



- When to build, when and how to influence
 - Leadership
 - Communication
 - Patience
- What we measure and when
 - Internal vs. external
 - Incremental milestones
 - Bang for the buck
- People and structures
 - Who leads, who is hired
 - Pace and sustainability
 - Pushing and listening

Reflections and Advice (1 of 2)



Structural Considerations

- “Insulation” from some internal factors can facilitate innovation in unchartered areas
- Important to identify areas of concrete action on course toward long-term change

HR Considerations

- Critical to tend to, nurture and support the *internal* in order to maintain external trust and credibility
- Hiring and staff development are critical areas of focus

Leadership Considerations

- Balance between policy, planning and implementation is not easy
- Alignment with key leadership opens opportunities and sustains success
- Communication and relationship-building often trump research and rationality
- Aptitude and patience for “steering” is necessary at all levels

Reflections and Advice (2 of 2)



- Public Health challenges bring organizational challenges
 - Structures and culture that promote diversity at all levels
 - Structures and culture for communication
 - Structures and culture for learning
 - Structures and culture for partnership and engagement
- Learning every day... www.smhealth.org/hpp