

EPA's Role in the Collaboration to Support Community-Based Environmental Health Initiatives

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Presentation Outline

- Describe EPA's new CARE program
- Explain EPA's perspective on the new federal collaboration to support community-based work
- Give an example of how this collaboration is working in practice
- Outline next steps for this collaboration
- Ask for your advice and support for effort to promote community-based approach in environmental health

EPA's CARE Program

- Major new Agency program to support community-based environmental health initiatives
- Integrates Agency programs to meet adopt community perspective
- Provides funding and technical support to support to help communities understand and improve their environments
- 48 communities now members of CARE family

Why EPA Started CARE

- Unmet community needs
- Recognition that traditional regulatory approach not able to address complex local concerns
- Never have enough resources to solve concerns of all communities
- Community-based approach mobilizes local resources and knowledge to find solutions
- Community-based approach key to the Agency's future and to the nation's ability to meet our environmental goals

How CARE led us to this collaboration

- Realize that no single federal agency has the resources or authority to address complex community concerns
- Complementary CDC/EPA skills better able to meet community needs
- More practically, staff began to bump into each other in communities
- Quickly learned that we needed to work together to really improve our support for communities

Acknowledging the Origins of CARE and the Collaboration

- Public health practitioners are the pioneers of the community-based approach
- CARE and this collaboration are our attempts to learn from your experience and follow your lead
- Begin bringing environmental programs and resources back together with environmental health
- Reuniting environment and health will be key to improving support for communities

Boston Safe Shops: the Collaboration in Practice

- The Need: Find a way to address risks to workers and the communities from the numerous small auto shops located in neighborhoods
- Past enforcement efforts not able to create lasting change
- CDC grant to Boston Health Commission begins an effort to find new approach
- CARE Level II grant provides follow-up funding to consolidate work and expand outreach
- Result: Successful effort reaches 600 shops resulting in measurable results

Boston Safe Shops: How it Works

- Health commission reaches out to shops with support and health services
- Health van provides on site health care to shop employees
- Shop owners engaged to provide leadership
- Local community development organization engaged to provide business development support
- New approach engages shops and creates sustained behavior change

Boston Safe Shops: Role of the Collaboration

- Resources of health commission combined with technical resources from CDC and EPA's Air, Design for Environment, and Pollution Prevention programs
- Best shop practices, information on alternatives, training, and information on risks from CDC and EPA used to inform outreach efforts
- New Air Rule for auto body shops will help to consolidate gains
- EPA's Office of Research and Development working to measure results to demonstrate value of work to other communities

Boston Safe Shops: Next Steps

- Find way to sustain long term effort needed for real change
- Relying on local community and business resources will be key to sustaining effort
- Multiple communities across the nation now sharing ideas for working with small shops
 - *Example: CARE project in Tucson using “promotora” model for shop outreach*
- Bottom line: Broad collaboration and community-based approach allowing us to put together the pieces needed for a real solution to this complex issue

Our Vision for this Collaboration

- Create a model that will attract broad support so this approach can be replicated without direct federal support
- Develop tools and information to make it easier for communities to understand and address concerns
- Our goal: hundreds of communities across the nation with the capacity and organization to create and maintain healthy and sustainable communities
- Local initiatives provide the means to meet our national goals to create healthy communities and eliminate health disparities

Next Steps for Us

- Continue to work in our pilots with communities to find ways that this collaboration can improve support for communities
- Expand collaboration to other federal agencies and states
- Find a way to provide the training that local leaders need for successful community environmental health initiatives
- Provide easier access on the web to all federal resources to support community initiatives

How You Can Help

- Help us find the best focus for this collaboration
- Engage public health professionals to support community-based local environmental health initiatives
- Join local partnerships and provide your expertise to help communities solve local environmental concerns
- Help us engage a broad range of partners to support community-based initiatives
- Help us develop and provide the training, tools, and guidance that communities will need to succeed