How to "Be the Bridge"

A playbook for creating powerful partnerships
Message from the CMO

The annual ACHI National Conference (this was its 15th year!) has always convened the most innovative and compassionate people working in population health. It is a place where the best work in the field is on display and amazing relationships are forged.

This year we did something a little different: Our plenary sessions featured hands-on design exercises that allowed attendees to explore best practices for building powerful partnerships. We wanted to facilitate sharing and invention. We wanted to hear from the experts about the best ways we can all “Be the Bridge”

The energy and insights generated over the three days were astounding. We sincerely hope you will use this book to help guide your strategic planning around increasing well-being in our communities. Thank you—and hope to see you next year!

What Is in This Book?

In an effort to explore four types of partnerships for improving health outcomes, we had the pleasure of partnering with ACHI to create a visual “design canvas” that was placed at the center of each table.

Teams received instructions on how to apply their experience, creativity, and expertise toward filling out the canvas. This book illustrates each component of the canvas and the data that was mined from the completed versions. Following the picture of each canvas, you will see the data and insights that were derived from the 82 teams’ work.

As you think about how to strengthen relationships between clinicians and administrators, get buy-in from leadership, and partner with other organizations, let this book point out areas of focus, compelling value propositions, and success factors to consider when partnering. With insights sourced from the brightest folks in the field, we hope this will be a strategic guide.

Numbers at a glance

- 4 Exercises
- 3 Days
- More than 2,800 Post-It notes
- 82 Design Teams
- 647 Attendees
- 1 Surgeon General
- 8 People in each team
- 47 States represented
The Clinician Perspective
Empathetically “walk in the shoes” of clinicians. What do they see, say, think, hear, and feel? Before moving to solutions, we need to understand stakeholder perspectives.

Shared Values Between the Two
Think about where we find common ground and shared values. What are the top three things that unite these two personas and inspire both of them? What are the foundations of a healthy partnership?

Connecting Actions Between the Two
What actions can clinicians and administrators take to leverage their shared values and grow? What must each do in order to come closer together?

The Administrator Perspective
Empathetically “walk in the shoes” of the administrators. What do they see, say think, hear, and feel? The limited amount of space lets the teams write only what is truly important.
What is the foundation of a healthy partnership between clinicians and administrators? Here are the top areas that teams selected:

You can build greater engagement and partnership by leveraging these shared values:

- **Patient well-being & satisfaction**: 41%
- **Quality of care**: 31%
- **Improved health outcomes**: 22%

When building your strategic plan, consider investing resources in the following areas:

- **Improved communication**: 36%
- **Enabling collaboration**: 28%
- **Engagement & knowledge sharing**: 25%

Here are some specific business model and programming ideas that teams recommended:

- **Care redesign**: social determinants of health
- **Community health liaisons**
- **Better care coordination**
- **Clinically integrated networks**
- **Conversation connectors**
- **Care coordination team approach**
- **Weekly forums**: discuss needs
- **Programs on relevant issues**
- **Stories + Data**
- **Patient and family advisory councils**

Nothing creates engagement like working on a challenge together. Knowing this, clinicians and administrators should actively seek opportunities to work side by side.
Senior Leadership Partners

Call to Action
What is our “ask”? What is required of senior leaders in order to reach the compelling outcomes? How must they help?

Who is the Leader?
This slot was preassigned before the teams started the exercise.
There were three options: CEO, CFO, and Board of Directors.

Compelling Outcomes of the Partnership
What are the outcomes this leader would hope to see if they invest in well-being... improved health for patients, change in the community, impact on the business, new innovations, prestige for the organization, personal benefits, etc.
What should be “the ask” of leadership when seeking improved outcomes around well-being? These are the four recommendations:

- **Invest money & resources**: Percentage of teams that identified this as an “ask” of leadership is 50%.
- **Strong leadership & strategy**: Percentage of teams that identified this as an “ask” of leadership is 30%.
- **Invest in population health initiatives**: Percentage of teams that identified this as an “ask” of leadership is 28%.
- **Innovation & new ways of working**: Percentage of teams that identified this as an “ask” of leadership is 28%.

What is the ask?

- “Commit resources, money and people.”
- “Be an advocate for action and change.”
- “Widen your perspective; commit to invest in community benefit.”
- “Invest in preventive care, social responsibility and nontraditional ROI.”
- “Listen to us when we talk about innovation.”

If we hope to get greater buy-in and investment from leadership, a compelling case for “why” is necessary. These are the top outcomes that can be part of a pitch:

- **Reduce disparities; increase equity**
- **Improve health outcomes**
- **Recognition and achievement**
- **Reduce readmission rates**
- **Financial stability**
- **Reducing ER visits**
- **Engaged workforce and community**
- **Improved access to care**
- **Better patient satisfaction scores**
- **Achieve organizational mission**

An effective pitch to a senior leader will include an outline of the main problems to solve, how the community is impacted, recommended next steps, what is “in it” for the audience, and—crucially—your “ask” of them.
Community-Based Partners

Partnership Expectations
If the partnership is going to succeed, what expectations must mutually be met? Consider time commitment, investment, participation of key people, values that must be shared and maintained, etc. What are the criteria for success?

The Name of an Organization
Who is "on the bus"? Select a REAL community-based organization (within the community of someone at your table) that a hospital could partner with to improve the well-being of people.

Obstacles that Could Slow this Partnership
What potential obstacles and risks need to be imagined and mitigated? How could this go wrong or end up a big waste of time and resources?
What community organizations might partner with hospitals to improve the well-being of people?

In the very beginning, when kicking off a partnership, teams suggested the following be clearly defined and agreed on:

- Aligned goals & shared vision
- Trust & transparency
- Roles & expectations
- Business goals & outcomes
- Leadership buy-in

Some potential areas where you might seek community based partners:

- Aging
- Faith-based
- Children’s health
- Mental health
- Schools
- Transportation
- Housing
- Government
- Athletics

These are the top obstacles the teams identified as threats to a successful partnership:

- Funding & resources
- Politics & process
- Technology constraints
- Communication issues
- Bias & stigma

Write it out on a whiteboard, on paper, or do it remotely if necessary—but it is critical that you find shared inspiration, anticipate challenges, and have a frank discussion before starting to work.
Who We Need
Who are your “unusual suspects”? You can nominate either people (specific – insert person’s name; general – insert persona or job title) or organizations to join you on the bridge of this vessel.

Key Contribution to Advance Well-Being

Compelling Reason that Will Recruit Them
How do we recruit them to join us? What is a persuasive argument for them to become a leader in this work?
Teams nominated the following as new partnerships to explore. They identified how these partnerships could advance well-being and what might make partnering appealing to them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WHO</strong></th>
<th><strong>WHAT</strong></th>
<th><strong>HOW</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possible future partner</td>
<td>Key contribution</td>
<td>Getting them on board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICE DEPT.</td>
<td>outreach, crisis intervention</td>
<td>preventing root causes of crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URBAN PLANNER</td>
<td>connection to new development</td>
<td>catalyst for healthy change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VETERANS GROUP</td>
<td>knowledge of veteran community</td>
<td>peer-to-peer counseling opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELEBRITY</td>
<td>money, influence, access</td>
<td>impact on community and fan base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAYOR</td>
<td>political insight, broad network</td>
<td>help negotiate buy-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAITH-BASED LEADER</td>
<td>insight, trust, passion</td>
<td>safe haven for community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC LIBRARY</td>
<td>resource expert, access to data</td>
<td>maintain relevance in a mobile age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSINESS LEADER</td>
<td>access to target market</td>
<td>benefits of a healthy workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARMERS CO-OP</td>
<td>healthy food, supply chain</td>
<td>sell directly to community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROCERY OWNER</td>
<td>physical store</td>
<td>boost sales, partner for health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY BANK</td>
<td>community funding</td>
<td>local business partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REALTY GROUP</td>
<td>knowledge of housing market</td>
<td>connection to potential clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUTH GROUP</td>
<td>voices, stories, ideas</td>
<td>safety and empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLITICIAN</td>
<td>access to government, legislature</td>
<td>relationships with voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR ATHLETE</td>
<td>role model for fitness</td>
<td>opportunity to leave a legacy</td>
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</tbody>
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Ask yourself: Who could radically advance community health if only we knew to partner with them? Consider who can bring new capabilities and challenge your “business as usual.”
Thank You!

This book contains the amazing thinking of our conference attendees. Thank you.

If you would like to use the visual tool for your own events, please get in touch.

Hope to see you next year and keep up the great work,

The ACHI team
Questions?

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