

DISCOVERING COLLABORATORS FOR A COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

After a simple intranet search, the CHA team at **Freeman Health System** in Joplin, Mo., discovered their organization wasn't the only one in the region publishing a CHA.

This realization prompted an idea and, ultimately, a collaboration that is improving health in more than 30 communities in three Midwestern states.



Freeman joined the region's three other major health organizations to create the Ozarks Health Commission.

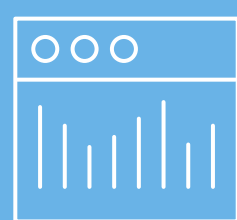
Several public health departments and a certified community behavioral health center joined as well.



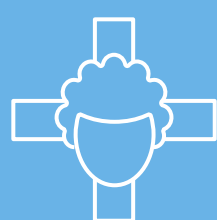
The OHC initially covered 30 counties in:



Their combined data would include:



Public health data



Hospital EHR data



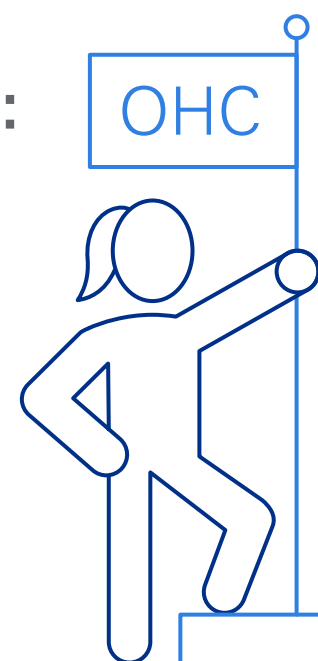
Focus groups with community leaders



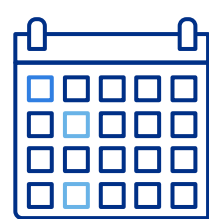
Community surveys in English and Spanish

The collaboration has delivered many benefits:

- Technical knowledge from a variety of experts
- A larger, centralized pool of information
- Deeper data extraction at the county level
- Improved efficiency in both time and cost for each organization



The OHC has become more efficient with time.



Year-round weekly meetings were initially needed to conduct and complete the CHA. Now in its third CHA cycle, the OHC meets biweekly and monthly.

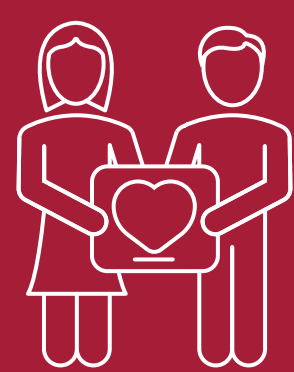
The partnership is growing in size and approach.



Another hospital has joined the effort, expanding the OHC's reach to 32 counties.



A centralized network of information keeps the community and its providers aligned and is publicly available at ozarkshealthcommission.org.



Recognizing that community health priorities are a timelier leading indicator of needs versus hospital and public health data, the OHC plans to take a new approach in the next CHA process cycle.



From

Examining the county's public health data, which varies greatly from location to location.

To

→ Starting with a survey of community leaders.

Analyzing hospital data, specifically from emergency rooms.

→ Gathering feedback from health care consumers.

Gathering input from health care consumers.

→ Comparing findings with the latest hospital and public health data.

"There were so many different assessments being done. Every hospital was doing their own. Every health department was doing their own. Other agencies were doing their own. There was just, quite frankly, a lot of money and a lot of redundancy of effort going into this, and others were waking up to that same concept."



Lisa Nelson
CHA Manager
Freeman Health System