

A HISTORY OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:

THE ROLE OF BEAUFORT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL IN THE HUMAN SERVICES ALLIANCE OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

CONTACT

Rick Toomey PhD, CEO Beaufort Memorial Hospital. RToomey@bmhsc.org

Fred Leyda, Facilitator, Human Services Alliance of Beaufort County. Respect@uscb.edu



Community Engagement

The Human Services Alliance of Beaufort County is one of the oldest coalitions for health improvement in the state. Beaufort Memorial Hospital (BMH) has been a key partner in the development of initiatives to address issues prioritized by the Alliance and its members; most recently, in the community indicators project, Together for Beaufort County.

Motivators

- Beaufort County has a long standing tradition of inter-agency cooperation that can be described quite accurately through the Collective Impact framework.
- The Together for Beaufort County (T4BC) Campaign launched in 2004 built on historic collaboration to provide a common agenda for health improvement in the county that was not linked to any individual organization, but to the collective action of all.

Strengthening the Connection

- BMH board, executive leadership, and operations leadership is engaged with and provide support to the Human Services Alliance which is the backbone of the T4BC initiative.
- Hospital takes the lead on addressing several of the issues identified by the community in T4BC.

Results

- BMH 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment Process connects seamlessly with the T4BC campaign and is designed to leverage its efforts.
- Stakeholders in the county are addressing disparities through diverse community coalitions working at different levels.
- Racial disparities in preventable hospitalizations and preventable ED visits have been decreasing steadily since 2010.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY IN DETERMINING WHAT MATTERS TO THEM

The Human Services Alliance of Beaufort County is the result of a 40 year evolving inter-agency collaborative effort in one of the counties with fastest growing population in the state.

In 2004, they decided to do a large scale community needs assessment through a series of focus groups and community forums.

The result is the Together for Beaufort (T4BC) campaign which highlights the issues that county inhabitants prioritized.

The T4BC campaign is just one of many successful initiatives developed to better the quality of life of Beaufort County residents; but it provided the framework for the current scope of operations of the Human Services Alliance. The T4BC initiative:

- Focuses on 16 community indicators divided among four issues (economy, education, poverty, and health)
- Monitors progress as community issues are addressed
- May be used to inform resource allocation and development decisions for members of the Alliance and others.

T4BC initiatives are related to health equity because when asking the community for what is important to them, the solutions are usually general health improvement solutions from a community perspective, but disparity reduction solutions from a county perspective.

The collaborative capacity among community organizations, at all levels, was critical in addressing the needs of the county. To most effectively leverage support, the Alliance has tiers of leadership that connect it with organizations at different levels of leadership.

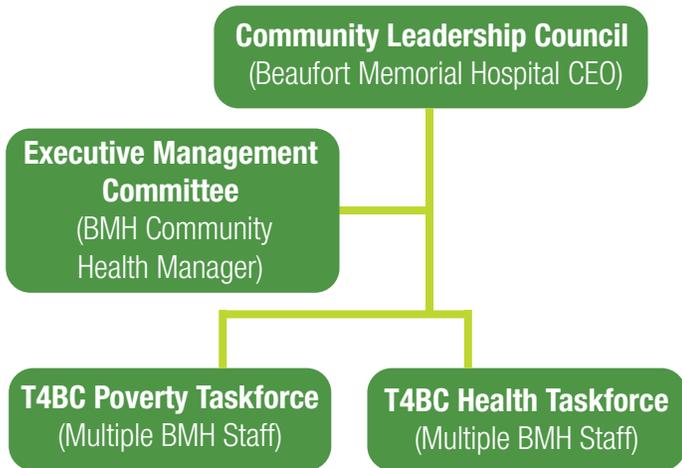
- Community Leadership Council –Senior organizational leaders
- Executive Management Team – Organization managers
- Together for Beaufort County (T4BC) Taskforces – Community members and staff from members of the Human Services Alliance
- Human Services Alliance Staff – Beaufort County employees housed at the University of South Carolina Beaufort under a cooperative agreement.

As result of the organizational investment in the coalition and the T4BC initiative, community partners, including BMH, took the lead in co-leading and supporting initiatives to address needs elevated by

the community.

BEAUFORT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL ROLE AT LEVERAGING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

BMH has historically made it a priority to have deep connections with the community and has used its influence to positively impact the community wellbeing in the county. BMH and the Human Services Alliance are connected at different levels of their organizational structure.



As one of the largest organizations in the county, and in fulfillment of their mission as a community hospital, BMH has provided human and technical resources to the Alliance over the years. In fact, some of the T4BC coalitions are championed by BMH:

- Adequacy of Prenatal Care Coalition: To improve the timing in access and quality of prenatal care.

Conclusion

The community and leadership engagement displayed by BMH as part of the Human Services Alliance has helped improve health outcomes for the community and further aids in reducing health disparities.

The history of inter-agency and community collaboration in the county started more than 40 years ago, which is why further research is needed to quantify its influence in outstanding health outcomes of Beaufort County such as:

- Ranked 1st in County Health Rankings
- African American infant mortality in 2012 was below the state's 2020 target for Caucasian populations, and Medicaid Low-birth weight was below the state's 2020 target.

- Eat Smart Move More Lowcountry: To make the healthy choice the easy choice.
- Access Health Lowcountry: To provide navigation and health access services to the low income uninsured.

When the IRS Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) became a requirement, Beaufort Memorial Hospital used the Together for Beaufort findings and developed strategies to address those needs.

The commitment of BMH with the Human Services Alliance allows Beaufort Memorial staff to continuously update their knowledge about community needs and assets. This helps the hospital ensure that the services they provide are responsive to the needs elevated by the community.

One of the results of the collective action of the hospital in partnership with the other stakeholders of the T4BC is a sustained decrease in the racial disparities in preventable hospitalizations and emergency department visits in the county since 2010.

THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN HOSPITAL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: BOARD LEADERSHIP

The effectiveness of hospital-community partnerships starts at the board level. Key characteristics of BMH board are:

- Their strong commitment with the health and well-being of the Beaufort County residents; which gives latitude to management to determine the best ways to effectively partner with the community.
- Diversity of the board in terms of professional background and influence on stakeholder groups inclusive of grassroots and vulnerable communities.
- Strongly connected with long standing collaborative efforts in the County. The CEO of the organization is part of the Community Leadership Council and one of the current board members is also a founder of the Human Services Alliance of Beaufort County.