

Wisconsin Public Health Research Network Organizational Structure, Activities, and Management

The purpose of this document is to describe the organizational and decision making structure, activities and management of the Wisconsin Public Health Research Network.

Background

The Wisconsin Public Health Practice Based Research Network (WPHPBRN) was initiated in 2009. The WPHPBRN was structured with a Steering Committee made up of representatives of key organizations concerned with public health practice and public health services and systems research. Co-Directors Susan Zahner, UW-Madison and Patricia Guhleman, Wisconsin Division of Public Health, were designated as Co-Directors for the network. In addition to the Steering Committee and Co-Directors, membership in the network included Local Health Department (LHD) Partners who volunteered to participate in the network and researchers in Wisconsin identified through an inventory process to have conducted research falling under generally accepted categories of public health services and systems research (PHSSR).

In 2013, the WPHPBRN engaged in a strategic planning process which included a survey, a facilitated strategic planning retreat with a representative planning team, and a follow up survey. This process resulted in new vision and mission statements, new strategic goals and an action plan to accomplish them, a simplified name (Wisconsin Public Health Research Network), and a revised organizational structure, approved by the Steering Committee, November 23, 2013.

Vision

The network initiates and actively supports collaboration between public health practitioners and researchers to plan, conduct, and disseminate findings from public health practice-relevant research.

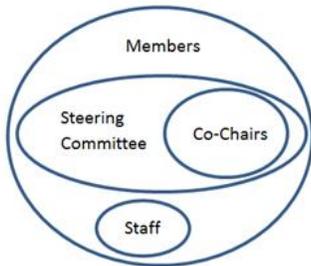
Mission

The WPHRN links public health practitioners and researchers to answer questions and disseminate discoveries that can be applied to improve practice and population health.

Goals

- Grow number and quality of partnerships
- Increase dissemination of research findings and assess spread of findings
- Increase the amount of research conducted, and
- Grow funding to sustain the network

Network Structure



Network Composition

Steering Committee: 10 members, five from public health settings and five from academic research organizations.

Co-Chairpersons: Two Co-Chairpersons, one from a practice setting and one from an academic research organization.

Members: Individuals interested in public health practice or research in Wisconsin.

Staff: Supports network activities; may include students.

1. The **Steering Committee** is composed of 10 members, five from public health practice settings (at least one of which is from the state level and at least one of which is from the local level) and five from academic research organizations, who volunteer to serve renewable 2 year terms.

Steering Committee members:

- Participate in quarterly 1-2 hour telephone conferences,
- Review proposals for research to be conducted in coordination with the network,
- Respond in a timely way to requests for information sent out by the Steering Committee, Co-Chairs, or network staff,
- Facilitate the dissemination of research conducted through the network,
- Facilitate communication with other public health practitioners and researchers in their organizations,
- Champion public health services and systems research within their organizations and professional associations, and
- Provide ongoing strategic planning for network sustainability.

2. The **Steering Committee** includes two **Co-Chairpersons**, one from a practice setting and one from an academic research organization. Co-Chairpersons are nominated from among the Steering Committee and are elected by the membership to serve two-year terms. The Steering Committee approves nomination and election procedures.

Co-chairpersons:

- Provide coordination of network activities in collaboration with staff and the Steering Committee.
- Plan Steering Committee agendas,
- Facilitate Steering Committee meetings,
- Oversee staff in documentation of WPHRN and Steering Committee activities, and
- Champion public health services and systems research as visible leaders for the WPHRN and PHSSR at national, state, and local levels.

3. **Members** include anyone interested in public health practice or public health research in Wisconsin who expresses a desire to become a member.

Members:

- Engage in network activities such as short term work groups, reviews or projects, and
- Promote PHSSR within their practice settings and organizations.

4. **Staff** (when funding allows) support communications, website, and other network activities. Staff may include students.

Network Activities and Management

1. **Research activities** – The network facilitates public health practice-relevant research through activities such as:
 - Supporting communication with members about potential funding sources,
 - Developing and disseminating information about public health practice knowledge gaps that could be addressed through research,
 - Identifying research priorities,
 - Linking public health practitioners and researchers to collaboratively develop proposals,
 - Providing advisory groups for research projects,
 - Participating in recruitment activities, collecting or providing access to public health data, and analysis and interpretation of results as relevant to and supported by the specific project,
 - Assisting in disseminating results of public health practice-relevant research projects,
 - Collaborating on developing research proposals to funding sources accessible only by public health practice-based research networks, and
 - Conducting collaborative research projects.
2. **Research project management** – Research projects are typically supported through grants or contracts to individual members and their institutions. Grants typically include some funding for network support activities as is relevant for the specific project. Research proposals may be endorsed or promoted by the network after a process of review by the Steering Committee (or designated sub-committee) against criteria approved by the members. Principal investigators on network-endorsed projects are expected to be active network members, to provide regular updates on the progress of the study to the Steering Committee and members, to include practice partners as collaborators in conducting the research, and to use the network as part of the dissemination plan for study results.
3. **Financial management** – Financial and staffing support for network activities may come from a variety of sources (grants, contracts, donations, in-kind support) and through a variety of organizations. Organizations providing significant funding or staff supervision for the network activities will typically be represented by members serving on the Steering Committee. The UW-Madison School of Nursing and the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research at the UW-Madison is committed to providing primary staffing support for the network until July 2015 and will be represented on the Steering Committee at least until that time.