A CASE STUDY OF PREVENTION STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS SHARED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Building Community Support for Ordinances, Regulations, Requirements for Establishing, Selling Liquor, MJ or Promoting PDU

Kaitlynn Jones, MPH
Teresa Mescher, BS, MPH
Kit Jones, MSW
Sophie Dila, MA

colorado school of **public health**

COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environmen
CDPHE

Introduction

In recent years, Colorado community coalitions leveraging the Communities That Care (CTC) model implemented evidence-based upstream prevention strategies to address shared risk and protective factors that impact health and behavior outcomes. In partnership with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), researchers on the Technical Assistance and Evaluation team at the University of Colorado Anschutz's Colorado School of Public Health (the CU team) directly supported communities implementing CTC and prevention strategies. As part of this support, the CU team collected data from communities who implemented a prevention strategy addressing Building Community Support for Ordinances, Regulations, Requirements for Establishing, Selling Liquor, MJ or Promoting PDU (local policy).

The goal of this data collection effort was to highlight best practices and challenges faced by communities implementing this prevention strategy. This case study report was produced to help any community organizing for prevention to gain a deeper understanding of how the prevention strategy works in practice. This report provides valuable information based on community lived experience by noting strategy successes and challenges.

Communities organizing for prevention can use the best practices featured in this report in the planning and implementation of prevention strategies locally. In addition, awareness of common issues and pitfalls can help set up other communities for success and streamline progress.

In January 2021, the CU team began collecting data from pre-recorded affinity group (prevention strategy) meetings and focus group interviews. Data analysis began in April 2021, and final reports were written in August 2021. Of note is that prevention strategy implementation largely occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is important context surrounding the challenges experienced by communities. Analysis of focus group interviews and prevention strategy meetings revealed best practices that encouraged the success of the strategy.

Following is a summary of the results, and major themes are discussed in more detail in this report.

Bringing awareness and understanding community perceptions on policies; Leveraging existing and new partnerships; Building local Capacity; Examining policies through an equity lens; cultivating community support; and knowing when to the community lead these efforts were all things that led to the success of the strategy. However, COVID-19; Thinking deeper about Community Voice; Perceptions of community members; and limitations from agency and local government were challenges encountered by the communities implementing this work.

Methods

This project aimed to collect data from prevention strategy meetings and focus group interviews about evidence-based upstream prevention strategy implementation to focus on the experiences of Colorado community coalitions and highlight best practices and challenges. The results featured in this case study report can assist communities organizing for prevention in current or future implementation efforts.

Focus group interviews were conducted with community members involved in the Local Policy prevention strategy that had been implemented locally for more than six months.

Audio recordings of interviews and prevention strategy meetings were transcribed with transcription software and reviewed for accuracy.

Transcripts were examined for meaningful statements and phrases, which were noted using a defined code. All statements that embodied each code were analyzed for overarching ideas and themes.

Major themes were separated into two distinct categories highlighting the prevention strategy's

1. Best Practices
2. Challenges experienced during implementation

In addition, communities offered recommendations for success for other communities planning to implement this strategy in the future.

Acknowledgements

Strategy Results: Local Policy

Recommendations For Changing Local Policy

- Building local capacity and knowledge through trainings, meetings, and partnerships is essential.

- Incorporate community members and youth throughout the process increases support and allows coalitions to learn from the people who are most affected by these policies.

- Ensure everyone is on the same page and address conflict sooner rather than later.

- Know when to let the community lead the efforts in order to continue to move the work forward.

Best Practices

Build awareness and understand community perceptions on the different policy issues

Ensuring that the community is aware of what policies and ordinances are being passed will help create engagement in the strategy work. Understanding how community members feel about the issues at hand will help in developing the message and goals surrounding the local policy work. Learning from the community through direct conversation, surveys, and other methods helped communities gain this insight. Incorporating youth and their voices throughout the process was highlighted as one of the best partnerships for this work.

Examine policies through an equity lens

When looking at policies in your community it's important to think through how they affect different members of the community such as people of color, LGBTQ+, and those with lower socioeconomic status. Incorporating community members with lived experience in the planning process is essential when changing policies – this helps identify which policies need to change, give more context to the impacts of the policy, and allows for a more community-driven approach.

Leverage existing and create new relationships in the community

Prevention strategy work does not happen in a silo. There are other groups in the community who already may be working in policy change, and these partners are important to engage with in this work. Understanding how and when to utilize these partnerships can greatly influence the strategy's success.

Build capacity in your community on how to advocate for policy changes

Building and expanding knowledge and skills of community members on policy change is essential. This could be creating shared language, understanding the policy, and different methods to advocate for changes. It's also important to make connections within the community, so as needs arise members will know who they can turn to for continued capacity building.

Cultivating community support from all sectors

Communities have noted that collaboration across sectors and the relationships that are developed is one of the more beautiful things about this process. Embedding the coalition in the community can increase visibility and create opportunities for outreach. Supporting local businesses and participating in community events are just a couple of ways to create this mutually beneficial relationship.

Know when the community is ready to push policy advocacy further

There may come a time where the coalition is unable to continue with policy change work due to limitations from different agencies involved. Making sure that you're engaging community leaders, building local capacity for advocacy, and ensuring that you're working towards a common goal are essential to the success in advocating for changes in community policies.

Challenges

COVID-19 impacts

Coalitions could not predict the COVID-19 pandemic, and it impacted strategies in many ways. Due to social restrictions faced during the pandemic there were fewer opportunities for gathering community input and support.

Recognizing that one voice isn't the voice of the entire community

While coalitions have a community board and work with community-based organizations, this does not necessarily mean that they represent the entire community's voice. Communities should ask themselves questions like: Who is missing from the table? How can we create a system that values community groups that may be harder to reach? When asking for community members to pioneer the efforts, make sure that you present all perspectives and opposing views as well. This will ensure the policy change is equitable and meets the need of those most impacted.

Community member perception of youth

Not all members of the community may understand why youth voice is so essential when addressing policies in the community. Communities have gotten some push back on youth involvement, which has created some conflict among members. Having open and honest discussions, addressing how personal biases about youth may affect the process, building shared knowledge on Positive Youth Development, and addressing conflict sooner rather than later are keys to success.

Limitations based on role and local government may exist

Some members of CTC community board members may be limited in how much they can advocate for policy changes based on the roles that they hold in their communities. Similarly local government's public positions on policy issues may place some boundaries on how the strategy is framed. Involving people with diverse lived experiences and skill sets helps advance local policy change and work around role-based limitations.