



Minnesota Partners in Public Health Conference

Transforming our system together for a healthy Minnesota

Conference Breakout Sessions

Click on the breakout session title or scroll down to read session descriptions.

[Breakout sessions 1: Nov. 14, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.](#)

- [1A: Master Your Calm: How to Keep Your Head When Everyone Around You is Losing Theirs](#)
- [1B: Making Sure Your Message is Heard and Understood](#)
- [1C: Unleashing the MIDOG: Co-Creating a Deep Level Activities Inventory for Infectious Disease](#)
- [1D: Detecting and Responding to Overdose Spikes: A Framework for State and Local Collaboration](#)
- [1E: Tools for Health Equity in Emergency Preparedness and Response](#)

[Breakout sessions 2: Nov. 14, 1:30 to 2:45 p.m.](#)

- [2A: The Gens](#)
- [2B: Mapping Communications Capacity in Greater Minnesota: Lessons and Discussion](#)
- [2C: Building Up Local Public Health through an Innovative Partnership with a Local University](#)
- [2D: Equity in Action: Engaging Youth to Co-create Solutions for Improved Mental Well-being](#)
- [2E: Preparing the Workforce to Advance Racial and Health Equity](#)
- [2F: PFAS, Nitrate, and What's Next? Managing Risks from Environmental Exposures](#)

[Breakout sessions 3: Nov. 14, 3:15 to 4:30 p.m.](#)

- [3A: Am I Bored, Overwhelmed, Overworked, or Depressed? Using a Growth Mindset to Understand and Address Burnout in a Time of System Transformation](#)
- [3B: Telling Our Public Health Stories: A Workshop](#)
- [3C: Strengthening Community Partnerships and Collective Impact Through Collaboration](#)
- [3D: Amplifying Youth Voices: Strengthening Partnerships to Combat Youth Vaping and Tobacco Use – A Panel Discussion](#)
- [3E: Partnering for Prenatal Care Equity: Community-led Research and Recommendations](#)

[Breakout sessions 4: Nov. 15, 10:30 to 11:45 a.m.](#)

- [4A: What Happens When You Think Outside the Box: Partnerships for Learning](#)
- [4B: Getting Your Message to the Right Audiences: Communications Strategies that Deliver](#)
- [4C: The 5 Immutable Laws of Systems Change](#)
- [4D: Power of Food Club Program](#)
- [4E: Together We Can Go Further: The Trusted Messenger Initiative](#)
- [4F: Implementing an Info-savvy Assessment Program for Local Public Health](#)

Breakout sessions 1, Nov. 14, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.

1A: Master Your Calm: How to Keep Your Head When Everyone Around You is Losing Theirs - Sarah Ciavarri, President, Level Up Leadership, LLC

As a leader in public health, you know those situations that require you to be the voice of reason, the calm head, the one who can channel thoughtful questions . . . the one others look to for solutions and a stable path forward. Some might say you are superheroes. Even superheroes get tired and need new strategies. This session will provide practical techniques to befriend your brain for effective decision-making and resilient leadership. By mastering your calm, you'll not only enhance your personal well-being but also inspire your team to 'move forward together in transforming our systems.'

1B: Making Sure Your Message is Heard and Understood - Allison Thrash, Hennepin County Public Health communications manager; Amy Olson, Hennepin County Public Health communications supervisor

Communications is now recognized as a foundational capability of public health. All public health professionals "do communications" even if it's not in their title! With limited resources, making the most of communications is crucial. It starts with making sure your message is heard and understood. In this session, members of the Hennepin County Public Health communications team will demonstrate tools they use – in each stage of the communications lifecycle - to ensure messages are heard, understood and impactful. The team will share examples of how to: create practical communications plans, engage community in message development, ensure accessibility, and measure impact.

1C: Unleashing the MIDOG: Co-creating a Deep Level Activities Inventory for Infectious Disease - Ellen Hill, Northeastern Region District Epidemiologist, MDH IDEPC; Linda Kopecky, System Transformation Planner, MDH CHD; Jenny Barta, Public Health Nurse Specialist, Carlton County Public Health and Human Services

Members of the Infectious Disease Continuous Improvement Board (ID CIB), including of seven representatives of community health boards, worked in partnership to draft the Minnesota Infectious Disease Operations Guide (MIDOG). Each step required addressing and embedding equity into all activities. Content development served to unpack the Communicable Disease Area and multiple Capabilities of the Foundational Public Health Responsibilities (FPHR). The MIDOG serves as an actionable guide for public health professionals, including clarity on roles and responsibilities for different levels of the public health system. This project can be replicated for other FPHR Areas or Capabilities.

1D: Detecting and Responding to Overdose Spikes: A Framework for State and Local Collaboration - Deepa McGriff, Substance Use Epidemiologist Supervisor, Minnesota

Department of Health; Hayley Hillstrom, Public Health Analyst, CDC Foundation supporting the Minnesota Department of Health

This breakout session will provide an overview of the Minnesota Overdose Alert, Local Engagement, Response, and Tracking System (MN-OD-ALERTS) and the Minnesota Overdose Spike Community Response Guide. Participants will learn how the system aims to combat the drug overdose epidemic by enabling the State to conduct timely investigations of potential drug overdose anomalies and how this information will be communicated to local partners. Participants will also learn how they can use the Community Response Guide to create an overdose spike response plan tailored to their community's needs and resources and will have the opportunity to provide feedback and workshop ideas.

1E: Tools for Health Equity in Emergency Preparedness and Response - *Amy Smith, Public Health Preparedness Consultant Supervisor, Erin McLachlan, Health Care Preparedness Program Manager, Ariana Beattie, Epidemiologist Senior, Hannah Tice, CDC Preparedness Field Assignee, Rachel Garaghty, Health Equity Strategist*

Operationalizing whole community approaches at the local level can be challenging without the right tools and strategies. This presentation focuses on three tools created to help jurisdictions meet the needs of those most impacted during emergencies. These tools are designed to 1) equip emergency planners with regional data on most impacted communities 2) improve access to clinical care for the whole community, 3) embed health equity injects into local exercises. Attendees of the session will gain strategies for whole community approaches in their jurisdictions using these tools (and receive access to the tools).

Breakout sessions 2, Nov. 14, 1:30 – 2:45 p.m.

2A: The Gens - *Michelle Nelson*

Today's workplaces often have as many as five different generations represented in their teams. That generational diversity should be a major advantage but without intentional effort to build bridges between them, teams rarely achieve their best potential. Each generation differs in their defining values, work styles, communication skills, and priorities. Without intentional efforts to bridge those differences and leverage similarities, organizations are missing opportunities to increase engagement, satisfaction, productivity, and improve program outcomes.

2B: Mapping Communications Capacity in Greater Minnesota: Lessons and Discussion - *Cory Couillard, MDH Rural Communications Specialist; Stephanie Devitt, Principal Consultant SDK*

The session will share preliminary findings on communications channels, messengers and messages to improve public health efforts, based on a landscape assessment of public health

communications underway by SDK (consultancy) and MDH's Office of Communications. The session will provide local public health, MDH and rural public health partners with a snapshot of how media changes are impacting rural Minnesota communities, and invite conversation with local public health, MDH and partners on ways to support future communication.

Session would include:

- Explore research about the current communications landscape impacting Greater Minnesota
- Share experiences with public health communications in rural communities
- Identify new ways local public health, MDH, and partners can support rural public health communications in the future

2C: Building Up Local Public Health through an Innovative Partnership with a Local University - Liz Radel Freeman, Evaluation Consultant; Chera Sevcik, Executive Director/CHS Administrator Faribault and Martin Counties; Vlada Gladis, Collaborative Manager

This presentation will highlight a partnership between HHS of Faribault & Martin Counties and Minnesota State University, Mankato Department of Applied Health Science to utilize student and faculty to support implementation foundational public health capabilities (data, communications, equity) in a rural public health department. The session will highlight work done between 2021 and now, and how the partnership evolved into an innovation grant to expand the project across multiple CHBs in the South Central and Southwest regions.

2D: Equity in Action: Engaging Youth to Co-create Solutions for Improved Mental Well-being - Amy Reineke, Horizon Public Health, Community Health Strategist; Angie Hasbrouck, Horizon Public Health, Community Health Strategist; Kari Kreft, Grant County Collaborative Coordinator

Discover how Horizon Public Health and West Central Area Schools worked together to engage youth to identify the root-causes of mental health struggles and co-created innovative solutions, transforming ideas into tangible community improvements. By disaggregating data to identify disparities, we prioritized strategies and used the Results-Based Accountability Framework to create a youth-centered action plan.

Key steps included:

- Leveraging data to identify and engage youth, capturing their insights on mental well-being.
- Empowering youth leadership, shifting power dynamics to include youth voices in decision-making.
- Strengthening adult-youth partnerships to advance youth-led solutions.

Join us to explore how these efforts are driving meaningful change and fostering an equitable approach to community health.

2E: Preparing the Workforce to Advance Racial and Health Equity - *Leo Moreno, Strategic Initiatives Project Manager, Hennepin County Public Health; Veronica Schulz, Area Manager, Hennepin County Public Health*

Hennepin County Public Health (HCPH) strives to advance racial and health equity through all aspects of the department's operations. This presentation describes HCPH's approach to preparing the workforce to integrate racial and health equity daily through multiple strategies and tools. The presentation features department-wide and program-level activities to advance racial and health equity. Participants will learn more about the approaches taken by HCPH over the past several years and have an opportunity to try some of the tools and brainstorm integration of these tools and strategies into their work.

2F: PFAS, Nitrate, and What's Next? Managing Risks from Environmental Exposures - *Tannie Eshenaur, Manager, Water Policy Center, Minnesota Department of Health; Sam Hageman, Strategic Initiatives and Communications Coordinator, Site Assessment and Consultation Unit, Minnesota Department of Health; Frieda von Qualen, Planning Director, Water Policy Center, Minnesota Department of Health; Sophia Walsh, Environmental Consultant, Water Policy Center, Minnesota Department of Health*

Health begins where we live, learn, work, and play and is affected by the products we use and the water we drink. This panel discussion will discuss a few of the many areas of environmental health: PFAS in consumer products, nitrate in groundwater, and how we can ensure safe drinking water in Minnesota. You may hear more about these topics in 2025 with new laws and initiatives going into effect. The panel will walk through different exposure pathways and distinct interventions to disrupt exposure pathways to protect public health and address health inequities.

Breakout sessions 3, Nov. 14, 3:15 – 4:30 p.m.

3A: Am I Bored, Overwhelmed, Overworked, or Depressed? Using a Growth Mindset to Understand and Address Burnout in a Time of System Transformation - *Heather Britt, Executive Director, Wilder Research; Melissa Adolfson, Research Scientist, Wilder Research; Miamoua Vang, Research Associate, Wilder Research; Sheri Holm, Senior Communications Specialist, Wilder Research*

Curious about whether you or your team are experiencing burnout? Seeking to understand tested approaches to reducing burnout personally and professionally? Yearning to apply a growth mindset to your journey around resiliency? Join this interactive session supporting you in self-reflection, small group sharing, and action planning for your personal or organizational needs. The session will offer lessons from literature, practical experience in health systems, special education settings, applied evaluation of workplaces seeking to address burnout, and

futurist thinking. Discussion around mental health in the workplace, as well as a focus on prevention activities within public health, will be integrated.

3B: Telling Our Public Health Stories: A Workshop - *Linda Kopecky, Systems Transformation Planner, Minnesota Department of Health; Jenna Olson, Public Health Communications Coordinator, Carlton-Cook-Lake-St. Louis Community Health Board*

This workshop will help anyone working in or with public health communicate effectively and efficiently about what public health is, what it does, and why we need a more seamless, responsive, and publicly-supported governmental public health system. Using this promising new toolkit commissioned by Minnesota's Joint Leadership Team and developed by Hattaway Communications, participants will build their skills in developing messages that will resonate with community members, elected officials, and other partners. This flexible toolkit is designed to be used in a wide variety of situations rather than as a strict script to follow. Participants will leave with a draft of a 1-minute message, grounded in equitable practices, about public health issues relevant in their communities.

3C: Strengthening Community Partnerships and Collective Impact Through Collaboration - *Kelly Ball, Regional Family Home Visiting Program Manager, First Steps Central MN; Leah Krotzer, Regional FHV Data & Analytics Manager, First Steps Central MN*

First Steps Central MN is a 4-county family home visiting collaboration of Benton, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright counties regionalizing our evidenced-based model, centralizing our branding, marketing, referral outreach, and intake system focused on client-centric continuity of care across counties, continuous quality improvement and standardization, all guided through a Joint Powers structure, leadership partnership from Directors, Supervisors, Workgroups and two regional manager positions.

1. Partnerships driven by customer focus and continuity of care
2. Capacity building for regional impact through a systems approach
3. Enhanced partnerships through centralized processes and program delivery

3D: Amplifying Youth Voices: Strengthening Partnerships to Combat Youth Vaping and Tobacco Use – A Panel Discussion - *Lia Burg, Senior Community Health Specialist at Washington County Public Health & Environment; Chelsey Skogen, Specialist, Advocacy & Policy, American Lung Association; Liz Johnson, Manager in Public Policy and Advocacy, American Lung Association; Pat McKone, Senior Director –Public Policy and Advocacy - American Lung Association,*

Join us for an interactive workshop exploring programs that empower youth in the fight against Big Tobacco. Learn about Youth-Led Tobacco Store Audits with Washington County Public Health & Environment and the American Lung Association, where youth leaders audited over 100 retail stores and collected data at the point of sale. Discover the Youth Voices Speaking Truth to Big Tobacco initiative, which raises awareness of the teen vaping crisis with decision-

makers. Participate in small group discussions to share ideas, brainstorm, and collaborate on impactful projects. Your experience and passion are key—let's create change together!

3E: Partnering for Prenatal Care Equity: Community-led Research and Recommendations - *Sadie Swenson, Public Health Nurse Manager, Olmsted County Public Health Services; Sarah Stevens, Public Health Nurse Manager, Olmsted County Public Health Services; Winnie Godi, Network Facilitator, Cradle to Career; Julie Ruzek, Executive Director, Cradle to Career; Beth Martinez, Parent Advocate, Cradle to Career*

Cradle 2 Career and Olmsted County Public Health launched an initiative to understand and reduce barriers to prenatal care. Many Olmsted County residents don't receive adequate prenatal care. Data show that larger gaps exist for pregnant people who are African American, 15-19-years-old, or who have less than a high school education. To partner effectively, we used Community Co-design, a human-centered process that partners with affected community members to gather their perspectives and those of others in their networks to collectively understand a problem. We will share our process and findings, including community members' recommendations for improving prenatal care.

Breakout sessions 4, Nov. 15, 10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

4A: What Happens When You Think Outside the Box: Partnerships for Learning - *Bonnie Brueshoff, Public Health Consultant, Ampact, MN Public Health Corps; Renee Frauendienst, Public Health Consultant, Ampact, MN Public Health Corps; Stephany Medina, Program Manager & Public Health Planner, Carlton-Cook-Lake-St. Louis Community Health Board*

This presentation will showcase the state-of-the-art modules that were developed in partnership with the University of MN and Ampact for the MN Public Health Corps program. These asynchronous modules have also recently been used for training staff in Local Public Health. All seven modules incorporate health equity and provide information in an innovative learning format, so users gain an understanding of the MN Local Public Health responsibilities and functions. Bring your agency onboarding documents to this interactive session that will help build staff knowledge and create a better learning environment in your agency!

4B: Getting Your Message to the Right Audiences: Communications Strategies that Deliver - *Susan Thurston-Hamerski, OSHII Communications Coordinator, MDH; Parker Smith, Communications, Commercial Tobacco Prevention and Control, MDH; Michale Sheldon, Commercial Tobacco Cessation Communications Coordinator, MDH*

In this workshop, learn how communications team members from the Minnesota Department of Health engaged key audiences around their public health messages. They will reveal processes and strategies that delivered award-winning and compelling public health content to

the public. You'll hear about setting goals and desired outcomes, establishing budget and staff roles, audience identification, desired deliverables and distribution, and audience response. Examples from MDH Commercial Tobacco Campaigns and the SHIP Story Map will also include a continuous improvement approach to marketing and communications.

4C: The 5 Immutable Laws of Systems Change - *Ian C. Williams, CEO of Still Point Insight*

This session is for public health leaders, facilitators, and frontline practitioners who desire change. Systems change and transformation is simple, but not easy. True success requires an understanding of system-centered design. During this session you will learn the 5 immutable laws, identify systemic barriers, and strategize for success. Hands on system mapping will help you chart a path to change that matters. Interactive reflection will enable you to find the leverage points. Q&A will help us all learn from one another. Come with questions, leave with tools for transformation informed by experts in the field.

4D: Power of Food Club Program - *Luke Ewald, Preventative Health/SHIP coordinator, Cottonwood/Jackson/Nobles Counties*

My presentation will focus on the Power of Food Club, a healthy food access program developed in 2023 in collaboration with the Jackson Riverside Farmers and Makers Market in Jackson, MN. The presentation will cover the: history of the farmers market and Power of Food Club program; Collaborative partners (the Jackson Center for the Arts, the farmers market vendors, community organizations, etc.); Implemented Policy, Systems, and Environmental Changes; Evaluation resources used to demonstrate the impact of the Power of Food Club on healthy behavior changes using outcome and process questions and patron stories; and developing an action plan to financially sustain the Power of Food Club program into the future.

4E: Together We Can Go Further: The Trusted Messenger Initiative - *Amanda Vanyo, RD, Planning Specialist II, Coordinator: Trusted Messenger Initiative – Moderator, Lisa Theis, Executive Director, Greater Eastside, District 2 Community Council - Panel Member 1; Dr. Ola Tolulope Monisola, PhD, MPH, Restoration For All - Panel Member 2; NgoziChukwu (Ngozi) Akubuike, Director; Haven International-Panel Member 3*

The Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health Department (SPRCPH) partners with community organizations – Trusted Messengers (TM) – to increase health equity in the County's racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse communities. TMs collaborate with SPRCPH to address community needs across public health priority areas, such as "Healthy Communities" among many others. They engage residents through culturally-appropriate and language-specific outreach strategies. SPRCPH supports the work of TMs by offering health expertise and technical assistance, in addition to grant funding. A panel of TM will share conversation about their experience with this initiative and how LPH departments support their work and what is left to accomplish together.

4F: Implementing an Info-savvy Assessment Program for Local Public Health - *Michael Van Skiba, Data Navigator, Minnesota Department of Health; Abigail Stamm, Senior Health Informatician, Minnesota Department of Health; Hannah Woods, Data Technical Assistance Unit Supervisor*

This presentation will introduce the concept of an informatics-savvy health department and the Office of Data Strategy and Interoperability's efforts to roll out an informatics-savvy health department assessment program in Minnesota. We will cover the history of our involvement with the assessment, what the assessment includes, and some ways health departments can benefit from it. We will include a participatory demonstration of how part of an info-savvy assessment works. Last, we will review our plans to provide info-savvy assessments to local and tribal public health statewide.