This section includes the why, the how, and the what to help business and public health professional partnerships consider when to engage with the other in future work.

**Why should business and public health connect?**

The de Beaumont Foundation and Bipartisan Policy Center report, *Good Health is Good Business* outlines the value proposition of partnerships between public health and businesses. Both sectors have a shared interest in healthy people, healthy economies, and healthy communities. Improving vital conditions that affect these shared interests is not possible for either business nor public health to do on their own. Partnering with each other is mutually beneficial.

Businesses engage in partnerships with public health for a myriad of reasons, including:

- To participate in solutions to public health issues that impact their workforce and clients,
- To address a shared priority, and
- To access public health expertise.

Public health organizations engage in partnerships with businesses for reasons including:

- To reach new audiences to increase the impact and reach of programs,
- To participate in solutions to public health issues that impact communities (i.e., business workforce and the general public), and
- To impact community-level indicators that may fall outside the traditional lane of “health” but have impact on health, including injury and violence.

**How do businesses and public health organizations connect?**

*Think about networking differently*

Thinking about where different sectors gather and network is one way to increase cross-sector collaboration. Public health organizations can reach out to local chambers of commerce, rotary clubs, or large anchor businesses within the community. Furthermore, many public health departments have plans around injury and violence (e.g., state suicide prevention plans) that would be good connection points for business and industry leaders. Businesses can inquire about local boards of health and other non-profit organizations focused on an issue of interest. Business leaders who engage in health promotion efforts are great champions to help get other businesses on-board.
Develop mechanisms for increasing cross-sector collaboration in your community
Small business owners are more likely to participate when peer and networking opportunities are present. Learning communities for businesses can lead to increased engagement. Community events that create and showcase health can secure broad community support.

Reach out to gatekeepers
Our environmental scan found that employee wellness coordinators within human resource departments of businesses are often the first point of contact for public health organizations. Local chambers of commerce and/or business improvement districts also serve as gatekeepers to the business community.

Within government-based public health, city and state health departments often serve as connectors for communities. Many state health departments have injury and violence professionals on staff. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to also reach out to local boards of health.

Build trust within partnerships and communities
Partnerships benefit from regular follow-through and having a “trusted source of information” in each other. Businesses (small businesses in particular) and public health organizations are respected entities within their communities. This can lead to greater combined insights about community strengths and assets upon which to build.

Where do businesses and public health connect?
Identify shared priority areas
Public health organizations have a variety of tools with which to identify strategic areas of focus for communities including community health needs assessments, burden of injury reports, and other health metrics. Partners can use these tools to identify natural bridges between community needs and business interests.

Businesses also have a variety of tools that can highlight areas of focus including employee health insurance data and costs, employee surveys, and data collected from employee health and wellness programs. Examining how employee health data aligns or does not align with the greater community is an important step in identifying areas which may be of interest for partnering.

Case Study: Ardmore. Clayton Lodes, President of First National Bank of Ardmore, OK was on the board of a local hospital. He met the public health director, Mendy Spohn, at one of the board meetings, and a mutual interest in adverse childhood experiences led to a partnership bringing mental health resources and support to bank employees as a way to address trauma. Over time, Clayton has used his experience to speak to other business leaders in the community.
Examples of shared interests between public health and business include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Health Interest</th>
<th>Business Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health conditions with high prevalence in communities</td>
<td>Health conditions which impact health insurance costs, absenteeism, and productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety metrics of communities</td>
<td>Attracting and retaining future employees and consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkability and green spaces</td>
<td>Attracting and retaining future employees and consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational health data</td>
<td>Safety and productivity of employees on the job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Case Study:** The Downtown Greenway of Greensboro, NC began as an infrastructure development initiative to connect downtown Greensboro to nearby walking trails and improve the accessibility of the downtown area. Twenty years later, it has become a safer, vibrant community meeting place and home to many outdoor activities for all ages. For every $1 invested in the project, the community has seen a $20 return on investment, while local community members enjoy increased opportunities for physical activity and community connectedness.

**Case Study:** In 2016, the Centers for Disease Control released a report which named construction as the occupation with the highest number of deaths by suicides. This data report, paired with early formative work that several leaders within the construction industry were creating to develop mental health and suicide prevention within that industry. This includes The Action Alliance document, “A Construction Industry Blueprint: Suicide Prevention in the Workplace” and an article in Construction Financial Management Association Building Profits on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in the Construction Industry by Cal Beyer and Sally Spencer-Thomas, led to the formation of the Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention (CIASP).

**Recognize and plan for common challenges to partnership**

Being cognizant of common challenges helps partners have realistic goals and expectations for working together. Challenges experienced within the initiatives profiled in the environmental scan are categorized below with examples. The following table presents a series of questions to prompt thinking on how to identify and begin to address categories of common challenges within public health and business partnerships.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>The Challenge(s)</th>
<th>Questions to Prompt Thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Engagement</td>
<td>Businesses are accustomed to moving quickly once a decision has been made. Public health organizations are often working in resource-constrained conditions and work may fluctuate with different leadership priorities. This has been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic.</td>
<td>What small task can public health/business be charged with at this time? How can spaces be created to share ideas within and across sectors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public health organizations are often challenged to get businesses more meaningfully involved beyond one-time events.</td>
<td>What is the value of ongoing engagement? Why is it in the business’ interest to sustain involvement in this area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There may be nuance to business involvement in health – what business does in one area may counter what they are doing in another.</td>
<td>What are the benefits and drawbacks to engaging on this issue from different angles? What is happening in the current environment that could be an obstacle or affect my partners’ ability to move forward?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>The language or terms used by different sectors is a challenging issue to overcome.</td>
<td>How can we agree upon common phrases that resonate with both the business and public health sectors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Different sectors may have different priorities for what topics should be addressed, and even within a given topic (e.g., violence) “Violence” is not necessarily something that businesses typically address for fear of bringing attention to the topic and/or seeing it as a “personal issue.” Furthermore, business owners may not think violence is problematic enough to be prioritized.</td>
<td>How are priorities connected across sectors? What shared risk and protective factors can be focused on that impact the outcome of interest? (See more: Plan the Work.) How can we frame topics that may be perceived negatively to show the value for the community and businesses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive nature</td>
<td>Businesses tend to initially be reactive to emerging health issues (e.g., suicide). It can be challenging to engage them to invest resources in prevention.</td>
<td>What are some “easy wins” - short term indicators that would be of interest to business and public health to work towards prevention? What is an appropriate 15% solution?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legal Concerns

Liability is often a concern with businesses taking on work within the health sphere, including IVP issues (e.g., violence, suicide).

What is the duty of care (i.e., reasonable measures necessary to prevent activities) that could result in harm to individuals?

Time

It is time consuming to develop relationships to get work off the ground.

Often evidence-based programs promoted by public health are too cumbersome for businesses to take on in their entirety.

Different sectors may have different timelines.

How can we co-create a timeline of activities that works with our sectors?

What limitations or bureaucratic processes does each sector need to be responsible to?

How can we break the timeline up into very small steps over a longer period of time?

Miscommunication

Miscommunication can occur among partners, between partners, and between partners and stakeholders.

What processes do we have in place to ensure communication flows between partners and between stakeholders?

How will decisions about the work be communicated?

Resources

- **Good Health is Good Business: The Value Proposition of Partnerships Between Businesses and Governmental Public Health Agencies to Improve Community Health** provides detailed rationale for the benefits of partnerships between business and governmental public health sectors as well as tools on language, evaluation and metrics.
- **Marketing Meets Mission: Learning from brands that have taken on global health challenges** provides additional rationale and a framework for businesses to increase social impact.
- The **PHRASES toolkit** helps public health professionals with language and story frames to engage business.
- The **Prevention Institute Collaboration Multiplier** is an interactive framework and tool for analyzing collaborative efforts across fields.

What existing frameworks and models could apply?

This Roadmap offers ways to build upon existing frameworks and models within the public health and business sectors. Other resources incorporated frameworks and methodologies with which businesses were already familiar such as quality assurance / quality improvement, LEAN, consumer safety, risk management, Active Design Guidelines, International Well Building Institute, and using the safety culture of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the Total Worker Health® Program of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).
The Corporate Culture of Health framework developed by Quelch and Boudreau outlines four areas in which business can act to influence health. These include:

1. Employee: Health and well-being of the business employees.
2. Consumer: Health and well-being of the people who consume a business’ goods/services.
3. Community: Business engagement with communities in which they operate.
4. Environment: Business contributing to environmental preservation and sustainability.

The Corporate Culture of Health Framework also is useful to demonstrate the potential roles that businesses can have in advancing health and well-being beyond the employee wellness program.

**Equity Examination**

“Advancing equity requires attention to power (as a determinant) and empowerment, or building power (as a process).” When public health and businesses are making connections, it is important to recognize the ways in which power is at play with relationships. By understanding the ways in which people do and do not have power within partnerships and communities, shared decision-making principles can be discussed and created for the partnership. Shared decision-making is a key driver of successful cross-sector partnerships. Furthermore, understanding power dynamics within communities can call attention to necessary shifts to address health outcomes.

The following questions from *Collaboration: What Makes it Work* can assist in understanding the power dynamics at play in your collaboration:

1. Who defines what success will look like?
2. Who defines what constitutes a valuable partner?
3. Who changes for whom - who is adapting their behavior more?
4. Who decides which process will be used to run meetings?
5. Who determines where meetings will be held?
6. Who determines who leads and sets the meeting agenda?
7. Who represents the collaborative in the community? With the media? With funders?

**Funder Considerations**

Literature surrounding partnerships points to the fact that establishing the trust and strong relationships needed to co-create a project can take several years. Funding opportunities that recognize the value and steps necessary to create strong partnerships are critical to catalyzing this work. Broader discretion and unique ways of funding the development of cross-sector partnerships are needed. Jargon within funding announcements may be a barrier. For example, funding opportunities geared toward public health organizations and using typical public health language may not immediately resonate with businesses or other non-health sectors.

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5 Kyle MA, Seegars L, Benson JM, Blendon RJ, Huckman RS, Singer SJ. Toward a Corporate Culture of Health: Results of a National Survey. Milbank Quarterly 97(4):954-977.