

March 12, 2024

Community Members Will Have Decision-Making Power on Public Health Interventions, LA County Pilot Project Launches



In the summer of 2023, 10 communities were selected for an innovative Public Health pilot project called Community Public Health Teams (CPHT). CPHT brings together community-based organizations (CBOs), health care partners, and Public Health staff to implement a reimagined public health model over the next five years. These teams work at the household level, conducting home visits to gather health needs and connect people to care. These teams also work at the community level, inviting people to jointly identify community health priorities and develop community action plans to address them.

On September 25, 2023, Rising Communities, a CBO selected to provide administrative and fiscal oversight, and Public Health held a launch event for all 10 CPHTs to meet in-person for the first time.

“One collective” On a Learning Journey with Communities

Rising Communities CEO, Michelle Burton, PhD welcomed teams and emphasized the opportunity to make public health history, “This is an historical moment... in a phenomenal pilot and you all represent a curated group.” Barbara Ferrer, PhD, MPH, MEd, Director of Public Health acknowledged the hard work ahead, “This work in LA County is unprecedented...it is no easy task, but together we are on a learning journey with the people we are serving.” She urged teams to work cohesively, “We may look like different organizations... and we’re going to do our work in 10 different communities, but really, we are one collective moving together.”



At the launch event, teams expressed excitement about embarking on this pilot together. One person shared “it is a unique opportunity to address the issues that impact health outcomes beyond the four walls of an exam room.” Teams were also grappling with how to define success for a project that leaves space for community members to co-develop the interventions for their community. Dr. Ferrer reassured teams that one reason CPHT is a five-year pilot project is to give teams time to “fail and pivot” without missing the chance for innovation and deep community engagement. Michelle challenged teams to consider “magical thinking.” She explained that questions like, “What if we could? What if we tried?” can help teams find new paths to success. By building relationships with households and communities over the next five years, CPHTs have an opportunity to earn community trust in public health infrastructure and to demonstrate that this new way of engagement can support healthier communities and better health outcomes.

A Growing Solution

At the end of the meeting, Rising Communities offered each person a potted succulent—a living reminder of the pilot that is being planted together. Like a succulent, Public Health hopes that as this pilot grows, it reveals what is possible with community-based care and eventually propagate to benefit additional communities.

