

Panhandle Prevention System Description

The Panhandle Partnership leads many of the efforts in prevention in the region. However, the prevention system also includes the following sectors, working cooperatively and singly:

- youth
- parents
- business
- media
- education
- youth-serving organization
- law enforcement agencies
- religious or fraternal organizations
- civic and volunteer groups
- healthcare professionals
- public health
- state, local and/or tribal governmental agencies
- other organizations involved in providing for basic needs

Youth

There are youth advisory groups among local coalitions in Garden County and with Project Extra Mile. In addition, individual youth and high school representatives serve on boards for youth projects throughout the region and in local communities. Youth members are actively involved in helping determine the scope of the problems and solutions in many of the programs listed in the accompanying documents.

Parents

Seldom does a parent come to/address a prevention issue wearing only that one hat. While many of the coalition members and agency representatives attend planning and implementation of programs, policies and procedures in an official capacity, they are also the everyday consumers of many of the programs included here. The parents are also part of the business, civic, educational and faith communities detailed below.

Business Community

Businesses and employers are considered part of the prevention system. Levels of government (counties and cities), health services, and education are the largest employers in the region. As such, they are not only engaged within the coalition as partners, but also as employers. More than 30 businesses are implementing an evidence-based process for work site wellness.

Recently, local liquor retailers have become increasingly involved with Responsible Beverage Server Training, offered in a partnership between the Panhandle Prevention Coalition and the Partnership's Training Academy.

Media

Local media, including small town and regional newspapers, work with the prevention system to create awareness of prevention issues through news articles, publishing news releases and offering advertising promotions at a greatly reduced rate. In addition,

some media staff people are members of their local prevention coalitions, working in their communities to help prevent underage drinking, binge drinking and impaired driving.

Schools

Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska has Head Start, Early Head Start and Migrant Seasonal Head Start in the seven southern Panhandle counties.

Northwest Community Action Partnership has Head Start and Early Head Start in the four northern Panhandle counties.

Panhandle Early Childhood Professional Development Partnership is a group of child care providers, preschools and other educators such as UNL Extension and the Panhandle Educational Service Unit that work together for professional development for those who work with our youngest children. The PECPDP includes 25-30 education professionals.

P-12 Education The 37 elementary, 23 middle/junior and 21 high schools listed in the education section above are included in the prevention system. The superintendents of these school districts meet as a group on a regular basis and are involved in prevention efforts directed at substance abuse, youth suicide and parent-child interaction.

After school programs exist in the Panhandle as follows:

- Scottsbluff Public Schools
- Chadron Public Schools
- Sidney Public Schools
- Chadron Boys & Girls Club
- Hemingford Youth Center
- Gordon/Crawford Public Schools through collaboration.
- Minatare Public Schools
- Garden County Public Schools

The University of Nebraska Extension program provides education throughout the region on topics such as nutrition, financial management, strong family relationships and parenting. A recent addition is a program for parents and caregivers of children birth to age three, providing educational opportunities through technology.

Post Secondary Education Chadron State College and Western Nebraska Community College (Scottsbluff, Sidney and Alliance campuses) are an essential component of the system in addressing binge drinking among 18-25 year olds. CSC and WNCC work directly with the Panhandle Prevention Coalition. CSC has also been a valuable source of data related to the lifestyles of 18-15 year old students attending college through their American College Health Association – National College Health Assessment. WNCC plans to begin implementation of the same survey this fall. In addition, WNCC is a key partner in developing the Training Academy detailed elsewhere in this proposal.

The ***Pine Ridge Job Corps***, a component the U.S. Forest Service, provides 16-24 year olds with a free education and training program that helps young people learn a career, earn a high school diploma or GED and find and keep a good job.

Youth Build is a community based organization that has many of the same goals as Job Corp with the exception that it is not a residential facility. Students receive a free education and training program that helps young people learn a career, earn a high school diploma or GED and find and keep a good job.

Youth-Serving Organizations

Region I Behavioral Health is a key element of the regional prevention system. Region I not only provides technical assistance and support to the prevention system, but also contracts for services to assure services are provided throughout the Panhandle.

Region 1 provides Local Crisis Response Team support for Scotts Bluff, Banner, and Morrill County. They also have Emergency Services Coordination, Emergency Community Support, Peer Support, Professional Partner, School-based Wraparound, and Children's Wraparound. Region 1 provides contracts for the following services:
Box Butte General Hospital: Local Crisis Response Team and Emergency Stabilization – 23:59

Cirrus House: Local Crisis Response Team, Emergency Community Support, and Outpatient Mental health.

Human Services Inc. (Alliance): Short-Term Residential, Outpatient Services, Community Support, Substance Abuse Detox, and Intensive Outpatient.

North East Panhandle Substance Abuse Center: Substance Abuse Detox, Short-Term Residential, Outpatient Services, and Community Support.

Regional West Medical Center: Emergency Protective Custody and inpatient Psychiatric Services.

Western Community Health Resources: Adult Community Support, Youth Transition Program, Peer Support, and Emergency Community Support.

1184 Teams Child abuse teams are typically comprised of prosecution, law enforcement, social services, medical, school and mental health representatives. These teams must be kept current on all aspects of child abuse, covering the spectrum from child sexual abuse, physical abuse, and drug endangerment. Child abuse teams in rural Nebraska are organized on a county basis, require the same ongoing training requirements as teams from urban centers, but face the special challenges associated with their rural and frontier locations. These counties typically have very limited travel

funds and no redundancy in staffing to assure continuous delivery of services during off-site training.

Law Enforcement Agencies

The **Nebraska State Patrol** is often called for the investigation of child abuse or neglect cases. They are a key partner in teaching retailers and volunteer groups Responsible Beverage Server Training. In addition, the state patrol partners with local law enforcement in providing compliance checks with local liquor licensees. They also do routine safety traffic stops to check for impaired drivers, etc.

County sheriff's offices and local police departments are often called for the investigation of child abuse or neglect cases. Members of the local sheriff's and police departments are active in local coalition activities, while several serve on the regional prevention coalition, as well. The local law enforcement officers cooperate on a Party Patrol program, assisting one another in breaking up large underage drinking parties. They also work with the state patrol in completing compliance checks with local liquor retailers.

Religious or Fraternal Organizations

Faith community leaders are part of the prevention system as direct providers (counselors) and as community leaders. As many of the faith leaders come from outside of the region, they can often assist in reflecting on the circumstances of community norms. There have been some circumstances when faith leaders have been unable to perform this function without risk of being asked to leave their churches.

Faith leaders are engaged in the prevention system regarding underage drinking and suicide prevention, usually at the local level. However, some have been able to attend the regional meetings. Working collaboratively at the regional level may provide the support needed for others who are interested, but may encounter community resistance.

Healthcare Professionals

The **Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network and the Regional Trauma Network** are comprised of nine hospitals and their associated rural health clinics. Eight of these hospitals are in the Panhandle, plus Perkins County Health Services bordering the Panhandle.

RNHN has a long history in development of collaborative endeavors to enhance a quality health system for the area. Current work includes a five-year planning and training process toward the implementation of the sharing of health information, which includes additional partners of Region I and the Federally Qualified Health Clinic, managed by CAP-WN. All members of RNHN are also included in the Regional Trauma System.

RNHN also focuses on and works collaboratively in the health role in prevention. This work includes developing and sustaining for 10 years the Children's Outreach Home

Visitation Program . In the past year, as the economy has dropped, the commitment to this program has decreased or ended by more than one hospital. Medicaid reimbursements were insufficient to cover costs. The Children's Outreach Program touches the lives of every child born at a hospital in the Panhandle, after they are home with their families. This early visit is important for medical, social and emotional reasons.

RNHN also partners on fall prevention, emergency preparedness, marketing and community information campaigns. Area hospitals are also part of the Region 4 Trauma Network.

In addition, two hospitals -- Regional West Medical Center and Chadron Community Hospital -- use alcohol screening and brief intervention within the healthcare setting in the emergency room.

Individual health care providers are an essential component of the prevention system. Because the region has a shortage of healthcare providers, engaging these professionals occurs at the point of implementation in each of the strategies.

Western Community Health Resources provides health care services, including family reproductive health services in the four northern Panhandle communities. Other services include sexually transmitted disease screening, HIV testing and counseling, immunizations, Women, Infant and Children, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and Cardiovascular Disease screening.

Region I leads the Panhandle in providing substance abuse and mental health services

CAP-WN manages a federally qualified health care clinic in Gering with a satellite dental clinic in Chadron.

State, local and/or tribal government agencies

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services In recent months most of the local DHHS offices have been reduced as the system trends more towards computer or phone access and outsourcing out-of-home youth services. DHHS provides for basic needs such as Medicaid coverage, Aid to Dependent Children, food stamps and other services. They also investigate and manage child abuse and neglect cases.

Other organizations involved in providing for basic needs

Community Action Partnerships

Northwest Community Action (Partnership) and the Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska offer assistance in many areas of basic needs, including food, shelter and health care and education (see above).

Public Health

Panhandle Public Health District serves 10 of 11 Panhandle counties. They often partner with **Scotts Bluff County Health Department** on prevention projects in the region. Both departments/districts take a broad view of the role of public health in

prevention. Both organizations have a limited number of staff and provide few, if any, direct public health services. Instead, they rely on the development and enhancement of the regional prevention system. This process promotes the sustainability of locally accessible resources in this large geographic area and, where ever possible, supports existing agencies who make up the local public health system.

The local public health districts/departments use the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's evidence-based models for implementation of programs, policies and practices through the development of local public health systems and partnerships. This process includes the use of Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) process of assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation and sustainability, similar to the strategic prevention framework used in the prevention of underage drinking, binge drinking and impaired driving in the Strategic Prevention Framework-State Incentive Grants processes and youth suicide prevention projects.

As with the coalition, Panhandle Public Health District uses community training for skill development to sustain prevention practices and outcomes.

PPHD and SBCHD are currently implementing Worksite Wellness programs in all 11 counties. The process is evidence-based and includes a confidential employee survey on broad health issues including alcohol, tobacco and drug use.

The boards of both public health departments include county commissioners, providing an effective link to government in each county for key prevention activities.

PPHD currently has collaborative work groups and activities in the following areas:

- Emergency Response
- Special Populations
- Fall Prevention
- Women's Health
- Cardiovascular Health

PPHD braids or provides financial support to the following prevention programs:

- Panhandle Prevention Coalition
- Suicide Prevention task force
- Children's Outreach Program
- Minority Health
- Chadron Dental Clinic
- Scrub Club (healthy habits prevent illness)
- Brush 'n Up and Dental Day (dental decay prevention)
- Pool Cool (sunburn prevention)
- H1N1 flu vaccination clinics
- Worksite Wellness
- Tai Chi fall prevention

- *Just Move It!* obesity prevention
- SmokeFree Nebraska
- West Nile Virus prevention
- (Bio)Preparedness
- Public Health Nursing
(disease prevention)
- Colon Cancer Coalition
- Free Radon Test Kits (radon poisoning prevention)