



## Grantees Named in New Pilot Project to Improve Local Public Health Services

**Health departments in 14 states will explore how “cross-jurisdictional sharing” can lead to greater efficiency and impact**

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The Center for Sharing Public Health Services today announced grants for a total of \$1,927,968 to 16 teams of health departments to explore how “cross-jurisdictional sharing” might better equip them to fulfill their mission of protecting and promoting the health of the communities they serve. This two-year learning collaborative will help the teams – which include more than 75 public health departments and 26 local and state governments – explore ways to share resources with the goal of providing more efficient and effective public health services.

Communities across the country rely increasingly on public health departments for services ranging from immunizations and health education to disaster preparedness and response. In recent years, funding for public health has dropped significantly even as the mission of public health departments has continued to expand.

Cross-jurisdictional sharing enables health departments to share programs, services, and resources across the jurisdictions they serve. The projects being funded are aimed at helping health departments and policy makers test the potential of cross-jurisdictional sharing to expand the quality and availability of services while also improving efficiency. These arrangements can range from addressing technical needs to broader objectives such as merging of multiple health departments into a single agency.

The Center for Sharing Public Health Services is a national initiative managed by the Kansas Health Institute (KHI) with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The new project will bring together health officials, policy makers and other key stakeholders in 14 states to identify and share best practices from their experiences in using different types of these sharing arrangements as a strategy to provide more effective and efficient public health services to their communities.

“When it comes to the health of our communities, we rely on strong public health systems,” said Patrick Libbey, Center Co-director. “In recent years, cross-jurisdictional sharing has shown promise as a strategy that can help health departments carry out their mission, and maximize the impact and reach of limited resources.”

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As an example, two New York counties – Genesee and Orleans – will develop an implementation plan for sharing leadership including a director and other key positions to serve both county health departments concurrently.

In Nevada, Carson City Health and Human Services and Douglas County and the State Health Division will use their grant to develop a sharing model and implementation plan to provide environmental health services across their jurisdictions. The goal is to improve the level of services provided while also improving efficiency and allowing more local control.

The Kansas Health Institute was selected to coordinate the grants as Center for Sharing Public Health Services in large part because of its experience guiding similar work among local health departments in Kansas. That work was led by Dr. Gianfranco Pezzino, a Senior Fellow at KHI, who now serves with Libbey as Co-Director of the Center.

“Exploring how sharing scarce resources can improve the quality and efficiency of public health services is very important in rural states like Kansas,” Pezzino said. “But it could be just as valuable to public health departments and policy makers in any area. That is one of the ideas being explored by the projects being undertaken by the diverse group of grantees we have chosen.”