

EFFECTIVE PREVENTION COALITIONS: Building Stronger Youth, Families, and Communities

PA Prevention Coalition Advisory Workgroup (PPCAW)

The PPCAW is a collaborative group of prevention professionals that recognizes the importance of using effective prevention practices and enhancing coalition development.

PPCAW understands that widespread variability amongst coalitions with varying missions and visions can lead to much confusion for state, county, and local decision makers.

Why is this paper important?

To inform decision makers at all levels about effective prevention coalition practices so that resource allocations can be thoughtfully and continually used to support effective prevention coalition activities and proven-effective programs, practices, and policies.

“The work of prevention is greatly advanced when it is coordinated by a locally developed coalition. By bringing together stakeholders from all sectors to analyze local data to determine the strengths and the needs of their community, fertile ground for prevention efforts is created, allowing for the successful implementation of evidence-based programs that can address the risks faced by children and their families.”

-- Linda Rosenberg, Executive
Director of the PA Commission on
Crime and Delinquency



What does it take to be an Effective Prevention Coalition?

Research suggests that effective prevention coalitions impact community-wide changes in targeted health behaviors.

There are specific criteria for effectiveness that have been identified as crucial to achieving these community-level impacts.

The following list of effective coalition practices is grounded in research and informed by field experience of PPCAW.

An effective coalition:

- Has paid, designated staff
- Accesses targeted training and technical assistance
- Uses prevention science as the basis of all work
- Adopts the public health approach
- Has long-range, strategic focus on population-level change
- Coordinates data collection and analysis
- Uses data to determine priorities
- Selects proven-effective programs, policies, & practices
- Sets goals and tracks outcomes over time

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“In my many years of working to help prevent drug and alcohol abuse, one of the most important things I've learned is that coalitions and collaboration are essential. The collective experience and proven results that a broad range of stakeholders brings together are invaluable. Together, we can achieve so much more than we can individually.”

-- Secretary Gary Tennis,
PA Department of Drug and
Alcohol Programs



Call to Action

Be a **Champion** for prevention coalitions that are proactive solutions to achieving positive community outcomes.

Establish a **long-range plan** for investing in effective community coalition practices that includes funding and other resource allocations for:

- Experienced, skilled personnel
- Expert technical assistance, training, and research
- Evidence-based programming, policies, & practices
- Administration of the PA Youth Survey (PAYS) to learn more about the risk and protective factors & anti-social behaviors experienced by our youth



PA Coalition Models

PPCAW recognizes and celebrates the many types of prevention coalitions operating throughout PA.

The most prevalent, local coalition models are:

- **Communities That Care (CTC):** A coalition-based social planning strategy that supports the mobilization of communities towards the prevention of adolescent problem behaviors.
- **Criminal Justice Advisory Boards (CJAB):** A group of top-level, county and community officials whose aims are local planning and problem solving on a broad range of criminal justice strategies.
- **Drug Free Communities Support Program (DFC):** A federal program that funds coalitions to reduce local substance use and abuse problems through the use of environmental strategies.
- **State Health Improvement Process (SHIP):** A local health improvement coalition, with diverse stakeholder involvement, that works to identify and prioritize community health needs.

A conservative cost-benefit analysis revealed for every \$1 invested in CTC implementation, there was a \$5.30 cost savings

(Kuklinski, Hawkins, Briney, & Catalano, 2011)

Communities That Care

For the purpose of this paper, we will provide a more extensive overview of CTC as it is a nationally-recognized, proven-effective model.

CTC has demonstrated long-term successes in its ability to impact community-wide outcomes *(Shapiro, Oesterle, Abbott, Arthur, & Hawkins, 2013)*.

After three years of CTC implementation, students who had not initiated the respective behavior by the fifth grade, were on average:

33% less likely to have tried smokeless tobacco, cigarettes, and alcohol

36% less likely to have used alcohol, used smokeless tobacco, or engaged in binge drinking in the past month

25% less likely to have ever engaged in criminal or deviant behavior

31% less likely to have recently been engaged in a variety of delinquent acts

(Shapiro, et al., 2013)

How does CTC work?

This prevention coalition model seeks to achieve community-wide outcomes by bringing together a collaborative group of key stakeholders to implement the public health model.

By addressing risk and protective factors in their communities, coalitions impact these factors that make youth susceptible to problem behaviors. *(Shapiro, et al., 2013)*.

This collaborative approach of community-based coalitions allows multi-sector stakeholders to strategically address common goals *(Wells, Ward, Feinberg, & Alexander, 2008)*.

Diverse representation from government, non-profit organizations, health care, business, schools, law enforcement, and private citizens is one of the primary assets of the CTC model *(Wandersman, Florin, Friedmann, and Meier, 1987)*.

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