

## EFFECTIVE PREVENTION COALITIONS: Building Stronger Youth, Families, & Communities

### Prevention Coalition Advisory Council of PA (PCAC)

PCAC is an advisory council, consisting of key coalition leaders from around the state, which focuses on the advancement, growth, and sustainability of prevention-focused coalitions. These coalitions are grounded-in and promote the use of evidence-based/informed practices through education, advocacy, and collaboration in order to prevent the likelihood of onset problem behaviors.

The goals of PCAC include:

- **Educating** stakeholders about the value, importance, and key components of primary prevention-focused coalitions
- **Advocating** for increased sustainability and expansion of primary prevention-focused coalition efforts
- **Collaborating** across all proven-effective coalition models and human service systems to promote high quality implementation of evidence-based programs, policies, and practices

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

### What does it take to be an Effective Prevention Coalition?

Research has shown 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 the extensive experience of PCAC members.

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
- implements and tracks impact of proven-effective programs, policies, and practices

### Call to Action

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

Establish a **long-range investment plan** for 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, and practices
- Administration of the PA Youth Survey (PAYS) to learn more about the risk and protective factors and anti-social behaviors experienced by our youth

*Prevention coalition efforts in Pennsylvania would not be possible without the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Through more than two decades of dedicated funding, training, technical assistance and programming support, PCCD has ensured the quality and sustained success of prevention in the Commonwealth."*

*-- Kathy Collier, Chair  
Prevention Coalition Advisory  
Council of PA*

### Why is this paper important?

To inform decision-makers 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.

## PA Primary-Prevention Coalition Model Spotlight

In the most simple of terms, the most effective coalition models are grounded in these five foundations:

1. **Mobilize** community and leadership
2. **Analyze** data & set priorities
3. **Develop** strategic action plan
4. **Implement** strategic action plan
5. **Measure** progress

While PCAC recognizes and celebrates the many types of prevention coalitions operating throughout PA, the focus of this paper is to provide brief overviews for the most prevalently used, science-based, primary prevention coalition models utilized throughout the Commonwealth.

### Drug-Free Communities Support Program (DFC):

DFC is a federal program that funds coalitions to reduce local substance use and abuse problems through the use of environmental strategies utilizing the Strategic Prevention Framework planning model.

DFC communities utilize a 12-sector approach to addressing issues related to reducing substance use where communities have seen reductions in past 30-day prevalence of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drug misuse among middle- and high-school aged youth.

[www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/grants-programs/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/grants-programs/)

### Community Schools (CS):

CS is a school-based coalition model where educators, parents, community partners and others create a shared vision. This model includes tools to engage and expand such opportunities as: instructional opportunities, health and social supports and community engagement.

[www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)

### Communities That Care (CTC):

CTC is a coalition-based social planning strategy that supports the mobilization of communities to focus on the reduction of such adolescent problem behaviors as substance use, violence, delinquency, dropping out of school, and issues related to anxiety and depression.

The CTC coalition model has been proven effective in achieving community-wide outcomes through risk-focused, data-driven decision making.

CTC is grounded in the use of the public health model which focuses on the root causes of problem behaviors.

By addressing risk and protective factors in their communities, local CTC coalitions impact these factors that make youth susceptible to problem behaviors.

[www.communitiesthatcare.net](http://www.communitiesthatcare.net)

### Collective Impact (CI):

CI is a social change model that is grounded in the commitment of a group of participants from organizations forming cross-sector coalitions to make meaningful and sustainable progress on social issues.

The approach draws on collaborative leadership, focused on collective goals, strategic partnerships, collective and independent action aligned with those goals, shared accountability, and through the efforts of a backbone organization utilizing:

- Common agenda
- Impact measurement
- Mutually reinforcing activities
- Continuous communication

[www.collectiveimpactforum.org](http://www.collectiveimpactforum.org)

### PROmoting School-community Partnerships to Enhance Resilience (PROSPER):

PROSPER is a model for bringing the most effective, universal programs to schools and communities with the goal of promoting positive youth development and strong families that are led by community teams including staff from Penn State Extension offices, public school districts, community service agencies, parents and youth.

PROSPER focuses on a program delivery system that is grounded in the same risk/protection model as CTC but operates directly with school districts to implement programs such as Strengthening Families (10-14) and Life Skills Training.

PROSPER has strong evidence of success! Research has shown that students from schools that implemented both of these programs and followed the PROSPER model with fidelity had much lower rates of heroin use into their 20s.

[www.helpingkidsprosper.org](http://www.helpingkidsprosper.org)



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To download this whitepaper and to learn more about the science of effective coalitions, please visit:

[www.commonwealthpreventionalliance.org](http://www.commonwealthpreventionalliance.org)