

Use of a Theoretical Framework for Coalition Building and Evaluation Among Five Healthcare Disciplines in Massachusetts

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Institute for Community Health

A collaboration of the Cambridge Health Alliance, Mount Auburn Hospital, and Partners Healthcare

**BOSTON
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Challenges of Effective Emergency Response

One of the most common and challenging issues is effective and timely communications

- Particularly true across health and public health disciplines
- Towns work independently
- Regions work independently
- Health care disciplines work in silos
- There are few cross cutting regional partnerships.

Partnership for Effective Emergency Response (PEER)

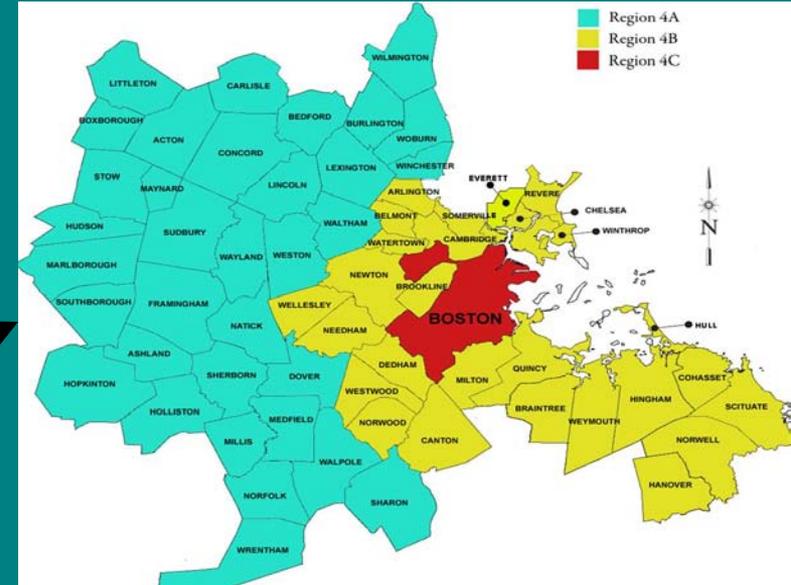
Purpose: To enhance the communication capacity in the Greater Boston metropolitan area during response to health emergencies and disasters.

- Improve notification and provide situational awareness during health emergencies among 5 health and public health disciplines

Partners

- ❖ 69 Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- ❖ 28 Hospitals
- ❖ 37 Community Health Centers (CHCs)
- ❖ 230 Long-term care facilities (LTCFs)
- ❖ 62 local public health agencies (LPHAs)
- ❖ Mass Dept of Public Health (MA DPH)

PEER Communities



- 2.2 million people
- 62 cities and towns
- Preparedness Regions 4A, 4B, and 4C.

Goals of PEER

1. Strengthen collaborations among 5 health disciplines and expand existing relationships to form inter-regional emergency response network;
2. Develop policies and protocols to ensure timely, consistent, and reliable communication of critical information within and across regions and disciplines;
3. Improve communication and enhance situational awareness through the addition of technologies to facilitate information sharing;
4. Develop a curriculum and provide training in communication protocols and technology for project partners;
5. Conduct a cross-disciplinary, inter-regional exercise to test protocols and enhanced technology.
6. Conduct comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of the PEER program activities.

Challenges Facing PEER

- Not all disciplines had worked together
- Differences in experience with emergency preparedness planning
- Differences in stages of preparedness planning
- Differences in terminology across disciplines
- Lack of specified protocols and procedures for communication during emergencies
- Differences in resources across regions

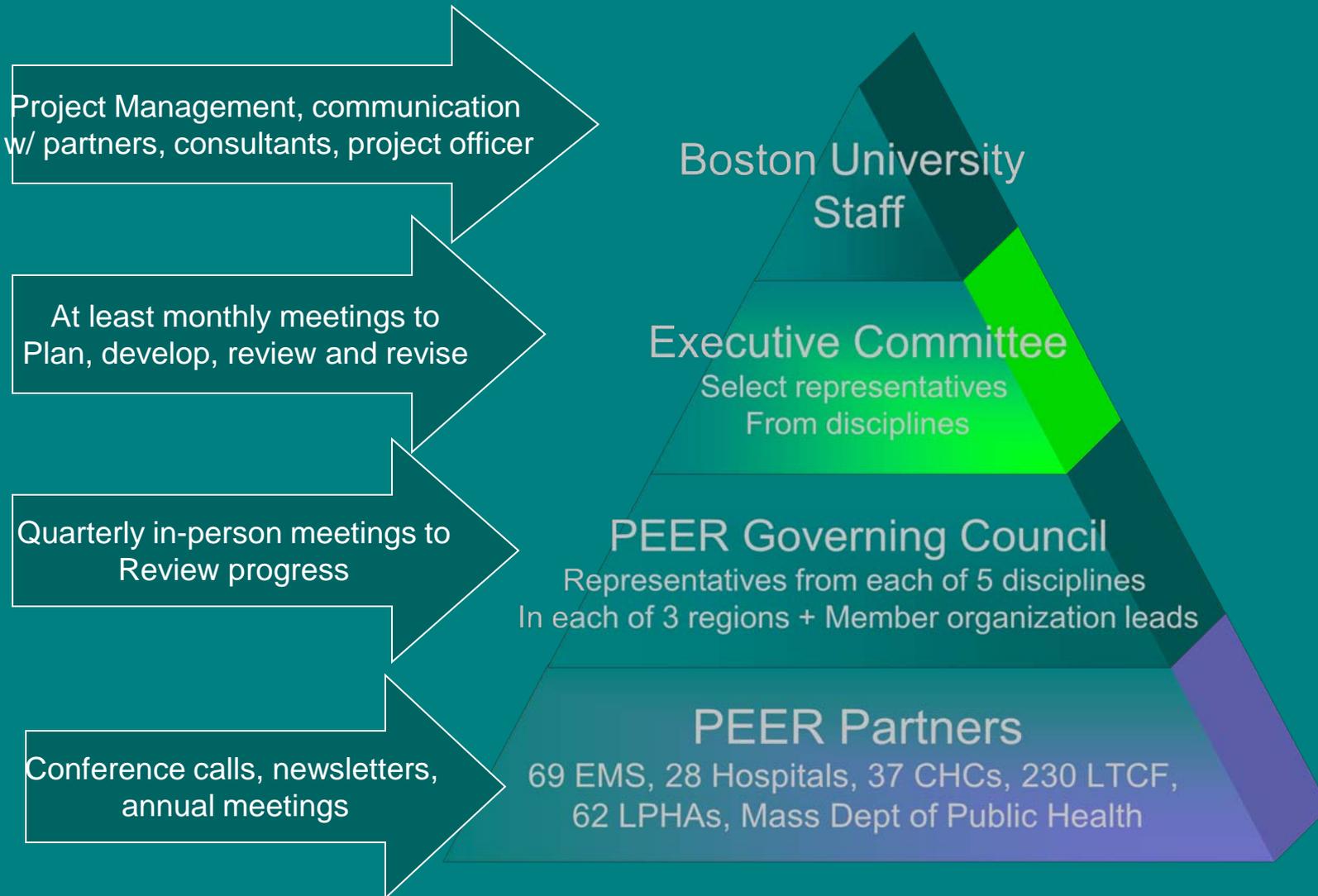
Key Focus

Strengthen regional partnerships through:

- Collaborative development of communication protocols and systems
- Expansion of mutual aid agreements
- Training to increase response capacity for an emergency.

Identified need for Coalition Building!

Initial PEER Approach

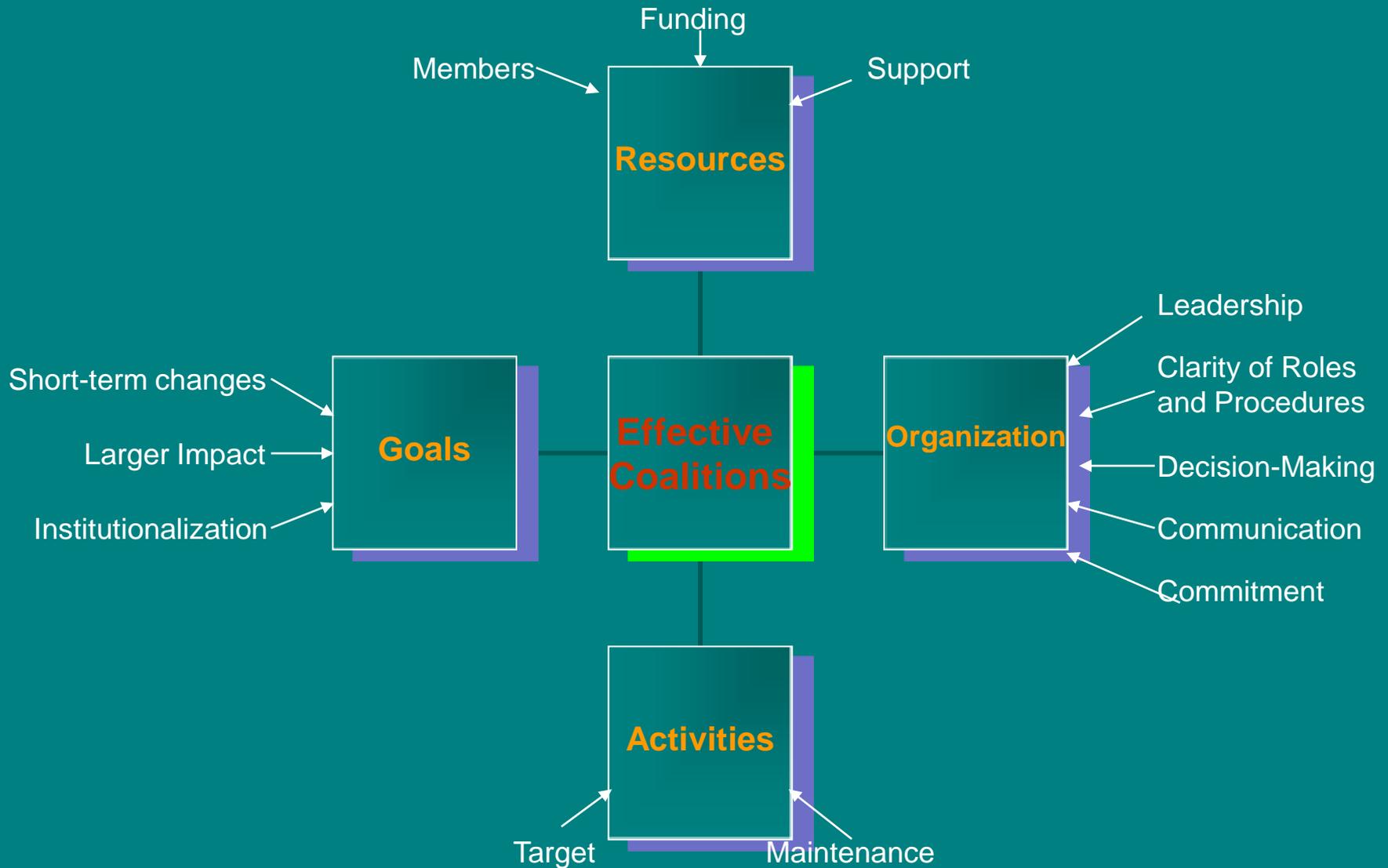


Coalitions: Definitions & Frameworks

“An organization of individuals representing diverse organizations, factions or constituencies who agree to work together in order to achieve a common goal.” ~ Feighert and Rogers, 1984: 1

“Open-Systems Framework” as a Model of Coalition Viability (Prestby and Wandersman, 1985)

Key Components of Effective Coalitions



How we used the Coalition Framework for Evaluation

- Framework for mid-project assessment
- Guided development of qualitative questions
- Baseline and follow-up survey questions
- Structured observations of meetings

Mid-Point Assessment

Focus group with Peer staff

- Used components of coalition framework to identify strengths and gaps
- Distilled key issues
 - Developed “corrective action plan” with new strategy/plan, associated tasks, and persons responsible
- Shared findings with Executive Committee

Mid-Point Assessment

Examples of issues included:

- Unequal representation of all disciplines in decision-making bodies
- Role clarification of staff and consultants needed
- Communication on project activities not getting to “people on the ground”
- Need to communicate goals and accomplishments

Qualitative questions

Qualitative interviews conducted with a sample of participants in pilot exercise

Example of questions include:

- Changes in communication and collaboration within your discipline
- Changes in collaboration and collaboration across the five disciplines
- Degree to which participants felt part of a collaborative effort to improve communication among health disciplines?
- Recommendations for maintaining the collaboration among 5 disciplines & keeping everyone working together

Baseline and follow-up survey questions

Semi-structured surveys sent via email to all PEER partners at beginning of project and follow-ups to those who completed baseline

- Identification of member resources
- Perceptions of leadership for PEER
- Clarity on understanding of PEER, roles and responsibilities
- Assessment of goals and objectives
- Strategies for coalition-building

Structured observations of meetings

Notes taken of all PEER meetings

- Partners present (diversity in disciplines and regions)
- Active participation in meetings
- Decision-making processes
- Strategies for resolving conflict
- Strategies for communicating decisions
- Plan for sustainability

Benefits of Using a Framework for Evaluating Coalition Building

Evaluation of coalition-building efforts are critical to overall evaluation of a project

- The “Open Systems” framework provided structure and theory to our evaluation
- Framework can be useful across methods
- Helped generate constructive feedback on sensitive issues
- Useful for obtaining information for on-going quality improvement

For More Information...

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