Session Title: Practical Approach to Academic and Community Partnerships

Co-Presenters: Anthony Shields, Executive Director, United Neighborhood Centers of Milwaukee
Staci Young, Assistant Professor of Family & Community Medicine, Center for Health Communities, Medical College of Wisconsin

Welcome and introductions of speakers by Clarene Mitchell

First Speaker: Tony Shields

Tony commented that partnerships and practicality is the focus of this session. He asked how many participants were part of a partnership and a majority of the audience raised their hands.

Tony explained how UNCOM is part of several partnerships and that UNCOM takes an approach which is practical. He emphasized the importance of relationships. Tony Shields showed a PowerPoint slide of images which illustrated partnership along with a group working collaboratively around the table for success.

The objectives and agenda of UNCOM were stated in addition to the mission. Overall Tony relayed the important components of UNCOM’s mission were to leverage assets and formulate partnerships. Tony Shields identified agencies affiliated with UNCOM and their geographic locations. In addition Tony mentioned the following programs in brief: MCOPP (obesity project), VPI, Project Respect, and Neighborhood News.

Second Speaker: Staci Young

Staci began by introducing the Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI). She explained how it began in 2008 as a special initiative funded by the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program (HWPP). The initiative has an emphasis on community-based with two primary goals. The initiative has a particular focus but is meant to increase community capacity around violence prevention.

Staci mentioned the two partnership teams; the Holton Youth and Family Collaborative and UNCOM and highlighted a difference of the geographic areas each team served. Staci mentioned that each team, for selection, had to document how they are working together and provide a memorandum of understanding at application time.

Last, Staci discussed HWPP’s Community-Academic partnership model. In brief, she mentioned overall the model encompasses all partners having a commitment to the principles and values in the process, creating an understanding environment for partnerships, and continually developing the partnership. She highlighted it is important to build relationships with all partners because good outcomes are important but a solid foundation sets the partnership up for success.

Group Activity: Audience was asked to share at their tables what the best practice or common lesson learned in partnership work is for them. The following is a compilation of the answers from the report out that followed.

- Flexibility
- Active interest in learning about partner
- Clear understanding of outcome and keeping that in front of work
Commitment to goal
- Internal buy-in prior to partnership
- Being comfortable in silence
- Collective goal with equality and buy-in
- Two different world views coming together
- Good listeners
- No assumptions

An audience member asked the following question: what are some of the outcome goals for the VPI?

Staci and Tony mentioned the following: In the initial stages, both teams are looking at outcomes. The overall goals of the VPI are to decrease violence and increase community capacity. Both teams continue to keep these goals at the forefront of their workplans as they are developed. UNCOM specifically is utilizing evidence-based programs and empowerment strategies.

Tony, Staci and Clarene thanked everyone for attending.