

---

---

# Evidence-Based Health Policy Project

Research | Analysis | Education | Dialogue

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

---

---

**Briefing Summary: September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

## **Community Health Expertise in the Fox Valley: How are Local Groups Sharing What They Know?**

Presentation slides, event video and other briefing materials available at:

<https://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu/programs/health-policy/ebhpp/events/index.htm>

---

### **Speaker Information**

#### **Sara Wright**

Program Manager

*Weight of the Fox Valley*

[sarah.wright@unitedwayfoxcities.org](mailto:sarah.wright@unitedwayfoxcities.org)

#### **Paula Morgen**

Community Health Director

*ThedaCare*

[Paula.morgen@thedacare.org](mailto:Paula.morgen@thedacare.org)

#### **Dr. Bonnie Schmidt**

Director of Evaluation and Projects, Assistant Dean

*UW Oshkosh College of Nursing*

[schmidt@uwosh.edu](mailto:schmidt@uwosh.edu)

#### **Maren Peterson**

Executive Director

*National Alliance on Mental Illness—Fox Valley*

[maren@namifoxvalley.org](mailto:maren@namifoxvalley.org)

#### **Lynn Ann Clausing Rusch**

Program Coordinator

*Fox Valley Memory Project*

[Lynnann.clausing@lsswis.org](mailto:Lynnann.clausing@lsswis.org)

#### **Melissa Kraemer Badtke**

Safe Routes to School Coordinator

*East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning*

*Commission*

[mbadtke@ecwrpc.org](mailto:mbadtke@ecwrpc.org)

---

### **Sarah Wright: [Weight of the Fox Valley](#)**

Sarah Wright began her presentation on Weight of the Fox Valley (WOTFV) with an overview of data on obesity in the Fox Valley. As of 2015, more than 60% of all Fox Valley residents are overweight or obese. WOTFV's collective impact model includes a common agenda of "a healthy weight at every age," relying upon local action teams to reinforce activities, providing continuous communication through newsletters, meetings, and social media, and maintaining a "strong backbone" of organization and support by the United Ways of the Fox Cities and Oshkosh.

The current major focus areas of WOFTV action teams include: active communities, early care and education, worksite, and food systems. To achieve progress in these areas, WOFTV works with organizations of all sizes, collaborates with Wellness City programs, utilizes wayfinding information, and promotes programing like the Community Worksite Wellness Challenge, and Eat Well for Less. The WOFTV's 2018 scorecard on assessing local progress in these areas will include measures such as number of mile defined as complete streets, number of people biking and walking in the target area, and number of organizations with workplace wellness programs. Ms. Wright stated that WOFTV strives to share expertise by learning from data, learning from individuals, connecting with the community, and finding balance.

---

### **Paula Morgen: [ThedaCare's "The Plunge": Creating Shared Knowledge, Understanding, and Action.](#)**

Paula Morgen provided an overview of how ThedaCare addresses the question "what are we doing to improve community health?" Ms. Morgen pointed out that according to many public health advocates, only 20% of our health is influenced by healthcare. Socioeconomic factors, lifestyle and behaviors, and environment play major

---

---

# Evidence-Based Health Policy Project

Research | Analysis | Education | Dialogue

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

---

---

roles in influencing individual and community health.

ThedaCare operates local Community Health Action Teams (CHATs), which aim to educate, promote connectedness, discourage stereotyping, and create community-based initiatives. CHATs "plunges" are day-long events in which community leaders meet with people in their community connected to a particular health issue, such as health concerns of persons of color, the local LGBTQ community, homeless persons, and individuals dealing with addiction. After plunge events, the group debriefs and begins discussing possible solutions. In follow up discussions in later weeks and months, solutions and ideas are continuously discussed. The ultimate goal of each plunge is for a community to select one or more collaborative, community-owned projects.

Ms. Morgen cited the keys to success to ThedaCare fulfilling its mission to improve community health as being able to utilize financial resources, having paid staff to assess and support the outcomes of plunges, and the common understanding that plunges create between community members.

## **Dr. Bonnie Schmidt** [Teaching Evidence-Based practice in Nursing Academia](#)

---

Bonnie Schmidt discussed the history, mission, and vision of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh's College of Nursing. Graduates of this accredited program go on to care for Wisconsin individuals, families, and communities. The curriculum currently includes a foundational evidence-based practice course, service learning projects, and collaborative research with community partners. A board of visitors, clinical partners, staff nurses, preceptors, alumni evaluations, and employer evaluations are all utilized to evaluate students, staff, curriculum, and resources of the program. According to Dr. Schmidt, the UW-Oshkosh College of Nursing strives for strong connections with clinical partners, responsiveness to community needs, and students involved in applying evidence to practice.

## **Maren Peterson:** [NAMI Fox Valley](#)

---

Maren Peterson provided an overview of NAMI Fox Valley's approach to local collaboration and some of the organizations recent resulting successes. "Collaboration is exciting and collaboration is what makes the Fox Valley and the Fox Valley nonprofit community tick," she said in her opening remarks, "If we sit in silos we're not going to accomplish anything." Ms. Peterson highlighted NAMI-Fox Valley's work with the Iris Place Peer Run Respite, a five-bedroom house which provides a temporary, home-like environment for adults struggling with severe mental health issues as an alternative to emergency and hospital admissions. Since 2014, Iris Place has served over 300 guests. Ms. Peterson emphasized that Iris Place could not have been a reality without collaboration between NAMI-Fox Valley and other local stakeholders.

Additional recent and successful collaborations of NAMI Fox Valley were also discussed. One is a collaboration in which partners are working to create a culture of health and mental wellness throughout the Hortonville school district. Another success story that grew out of collaboration by NAMI Fox Valley and partners, is the effort to create a Spanish language center for Latino mental health in the Fox Valley to meet the needs of the local Latino population.

## **Lynn Ann Clausing Rusch:** [Fox Valley Memory Project](#)

---

Lynn Ann Clausing Rusch described the many programs currently being implemented by the Fox Valley Memory Project. One such program is the Project's memory cafes, which offer socializing opportunities for persons with memory loss as well as their care partners. The Memory Project offers Purple Angel Business Education, which trains local businesses to be "dementia friendly." To date, 130 Fox Valley area businesses have received this training. The project operates a Memory Loss Resource Center, which provides support and resources to persons with dementia, families, friends, care partners, and professionals through in-person meetings, support

---

---

# Evidence-Based Health Policy Project

Research | Analysis | Education | Dialogue

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

---

---

groups, phone calls, and email. The project also works with a local health partners, to screen, evaluate, and diagnose dementia, and to provide REACH (Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health) programming, an evidence-based caregiver intervention program that focuses on supporting care partners on issues such as emotional well-being, stress management, and problem solving.

Fox Valley Memory Project learns about its successes and where to improve by listening to multiple sources. They utilize participant feedback, internal assessments, community surveys, evaluating objectives and outcome measurements, collaborative efforts, building relationships in the local community, sharing resources, and continuing education for staff and volunteers. The project in turn shares best practices, holding community education events, maintaining a strong social media presence, and continuing to be involved in community conversations with dementia service providers.

## **Melissa Kraemer Badtke:** [East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's Community Health and Planning Programs](#)

---

Melissa Kraemer Badtke described how the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC) is enacting initiatives to fulfill its mission of "Building relationships and cooperative, visionary growth strategies that keep our region beautiful, healthy, and prosperous." The ECWRPC is the planning agency for 10 counties within the region, and includes three Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The Commission's Programs include Safe Routes to School Planning, Environmental Management, and Open Space and Recreation. Ms. Kramer Badtke pointed to recent research that suggests that city and transportation design can influence health issues like obesity and hypertension.

The Commission works with multiple community partners in its planning decision making, including local school districts and police, the Wisconsin Public Health Association, county governance, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, public health departments, and Weight of the Fox Valley. The Commission's collaborative efforts with community stakeholders include holding one-on-one meetings, performing beta test projects, forming committees and coalitions, and sharing best practices. The Commission also holds public information meetings and workshops to identify gaps, barriers, and needs regarding community transportation and health concerns. Some of the ways ECWRPC has incorporated evidence-based practices in transportation decisions to improve health include expanding bike paths, implementing walking school buses for students, and ensuring safe and accessible pedestrian networks throughout and between urbanized areas.