



Cross-county Collaboration

PHIG Spotlight | August 5, 2025

With local and tribal public health departments regularly asked to do more work with limited resources, there is value in highlighting examples of successful cross-county collaboration — particularly initiatives that demonstrate how shared processes or pooled resources can benefit communities across county borders.

The August Spotlight highlighted initiatives where two county health departments worked together — whether by scaling an idea or sharing resources — to create a broader impact in Wisconsin public health.

Presenters

- **Kristie Egge**
Wood County Health Department
- **Gary Garske**
Portage County Division of Public Health

Guiding principles & strategies for resource sharing

Start with Shared Goals

- Align on a common vision for community health outcomes.
- Identify overlapping priorities (e.g., maternal health, chronic disease, emergency preparedness) to focus efforts.

Build Trust and Transparency

- Establish clear communication channels and decision-making processes.
- Be open about constraints, capacities, and expectations from the start.
- Contact UWPHI for additional resources on 1:1s, self interest, and building a charter.

Leverage Complementary Strengths

- Map out each department's unique assets — staff expertise, data systems, community relationships, fiscal capabilities etc.
- Share what each department does best to avoid duplication and maximize efficiency.

Center Equity

- Ensure that shared resources are used to reduce disparities, not reinforce them.
- Involve community voices in planning and evaluation to ensure relevance and accountability.

Create Flexible, Scalable Models

- Pilot shared initiatives (e.g., joint grant writing, shared epidemiologists, mobile clinics) that can grow over time.
- Use data and evaluation to adapt and scale what works.

Formalize Agreements

- Develop MOUs or shared service agreements to clarify roles, responsibilities, and resource contributions. Include mechanisms for conflict resolution and regular review.

Invest in Relationships

- Collaboration is sustained by people, not plans.
- Schedule regular check-ins and shared learning opportunities to strengthen the partnership.

