

Turning Point believes that public health partnerships can create solutions to difficult public health problems. Solutions that are elusive to individual organizations working alone suddenly are in reach when organizations recognize common goals and pool their financial and technical resources.

New York Turning Point Local Solutions Used Nationally

Back in 1998, two now retired local public health officials from different New York counties were frustrated with the lack of appropriate training opportunities for their staff. Dyan Campbell and Jack Andrus called a meeting with New York State Association of County Health Officials director, Jo Ann Bennison, and the dean and the director of Continuing Education at the State University at Albany's School of Public Health.

Dyan and Jack shared the problems they encountered providing continuing education for their staffs — cost, staff time taken away from work, and the difficulty of traveling to far-away trainings. While recognizing that resources system-wide were slim, they still hoped for a solution.

Faced with a concrete request for help, Jo Ann Bennison and her team brought in other partners, among them, the State Department of Health and the Turning Point Initiative. After considering different options, they settled upon creating a monthly satellite broadcast because they knew every county had access to satellite equipment, even if only through sister agencies. Before long the ThirdThursday Breakfast Broadcast Series (T2B2) was born—a free, continuing education opportunity, requiring only one hour a month and virtually no travel time or trouble for public health workers.

Since its start in May 1999, T2B2 has delivered upwards of 60 broadcasts on such topics as “Emergency Preparedness: What is Your Competency?,” “West Nile Virus: What

Have We Learned Since 1999?” and the runaway hit “A Bug’s Life: Basic Epidemiology.” Reaching anywhere from 300 to 800 public health professionals at each live broadcast, the show’s interview format leaves time for the guest expert to field questions submitted by participants by fax, e-mail, or phone. T2B2 has taken on a life of its own as people from outside New York have learned of it through listservs

and from organizations such as the Public Health Foundation.

Begun with a great deal of creativity, seed money from Turning Point, and a tenuous shoestring budget, T2B2 has now found its stride. With stable funding and continued program direction from the partners, T2B2 conscientiously responds to the changing needs of New York public health professionals. Recently

they were able to begin awarding CEU credits to participating professionals.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of T2B2 is summed up in the words of Jan Chytilo, director of Health Education in Broome County, NY, and site coordinator of T2B2 in her county. “Before T2B2 we had virtually nothing. Now, I sit at my desk and look across at the bookshelf of taped episodes of T2B2. We lend them to our partners and watch episodes during our ‘Learning Lunches.’ Public health can be so silo-driven, T2B2 helps us gain both technical skills and also a broader picture of what is being done in public health.” Though viewers might not know the origins of T2B2, they have Dyan and Jack to thank, as well as a partnership that was, indeed, greater than the sum of its parts.



At a Glance: New York



Aim of New York Turning Point

New York Turning Point has focused their efforts on building public health capacity through sustained training opportunities for a strong public health workforce.

New York's Public Health Challenges

New York State faces capacity challenges in the areas of recruitment, retention, and training of the public health workforce. In addition, the state has challenging workforce demographics, as well as ethnic, economic, cultural, and geographic diversity in the general population of the state which they serve. A recent survey found:

- NYSDOH has approximately 5,350 employees; New York LHDs have approximately 7,270 full-time equivalent public health workers.
- Difficulties recruiting qualified candidates for public health nurse, sanitarian, and health educator positions (especially in rural areas).
- Good retention but future losses due to aging workforce retirement.
- Substantial need for continuing education.
- Emerging public health issues is an area of great need.
- Access to training constrained by limited resources, inaccessible times and locations, competing priorities, and poorly designed training.

New York Turning Point's Contribution to Improving Public Health

Through development of a partnership between health departments, academic institutions, professional organizations, and others, New York Turning Point has developed and delivered coordinated training to state and local public health workers across the state. In addition, it has been successful in identifying and addressing long-term system changes necessary to strengthen the public health system. Initiatives include:

- Third Thursday Breakfast Broadcasts (T2B2)
 - Established in 1999, this innovative monthly broadcast airs to local public health and community coalitions as well as across the nation by satellite.
 - Broadcasts are also available by Web-archived streaming video and through a video lending library.
- Public Health skills development courses and curriculum
 - Public Health 101 course
 - Basic Environmental Health course (8 modules over 14 days, mandated by Sanitary Code)
 - Annual New Local Public Health Director/Commissioner Orientation
 - Public Health Nursing Continuing Education (online course, 4 modules, CEUs)
 - Confidentiality Training (2-hour course)
 - Online Cross-Cultural Communication Training (in development)
 - SARS for Hospitals (3 Modules)
- Establishment of statewide public health training task force

For More Information

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