

VOL. 1 ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 2020

# HEALTHIER KITTITAS

Newsletter of the Kittitas County Health Network

## OVERVIEW

This year has been filled with accomplishments and reaching milestones that in many communities would be considered unheard of. What began as a “call to action” among providers and social service agencies when Royal Vista Care center closed, has turned into a fully-operable 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization.

We started off the year by hiring Robin Read as Executive Director. Her experience over the past 12 years as Administrator of Kittitas County Public Health Department was a welcomed fit to our team. She has made considerable contributions to the growth of this organization as we identify priorities and nail down policies and procedures. Later in March, KCHN hired Marie Betts to fill the role of Network Coordinator. As a recent Master of Public Health graduate, she brought new and innovative research, concepts, and vitality to what many might call a pipe dream and has helped lay the foundation for 2020. In October, Teresa Bicchieri was hired to fill the role of Network Assistant. A Communications graduate, Teresa is working to build KCHN's presence and increase community engagement. Together, they work closely with the Board of Director's, Leadership Council, and the many Work Groups.

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# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2019 has brought with it plenty of movement and exciting opportunities for the Kittitas County Health Network

## Global to Local

A non-profit from Western Washington contracted with KCHN to hold community and provider meetings to identify barriers to health in Kittitas County. They developed a report that laid the ground for addressing these barriers by applying global practice to rural communities. In total, four community meetings were held in Cle Elum and Kittitas with over 30 participants.

## Community Meetings

KCHN called on community partners on multiple occasions for input and collaboration on different grant opportunities. The SDoH grant addressed food accessibility and care coordination for those with limited mobility. The BJA grant would bring law enforcement to the team with health care as they continue to tackle Opioid Use Disorder and Substance Use Disorder. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant focused on substance use disorder prevention and services for youth. Finally, the Rural Health Network Development grant focused on a community health worker program and expanding access to care coordination services.

## Annual Meeting

On May 30th KCHN held its first annual meeting, graciously hosted by Central Washington University. Robin Read and Susan Grindle co-facilitated the meeting and held discussions to include a break out session where members worked on a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis (SWOT). The information gathered at this meeting helped create future priorities and change for KCHN.

“G2L sought to identify general global health strategies, as well as specific programs or approaches, that could be adopted or adapted to address barriers to health identified within the participating communities.”

- Global 2 Local  
BRIDGES Executive  
Summary



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## **Region 10 Opioid Summit**

(Vancouver, WA) In early August members of the community attended the Region 10 Opioid Summit conference where they learned from and worked with individuals from Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington (Marie Betts-KCHN, Becky Starnes-CHCW, and Christopher Butler-Comprehensive Healthcare).

## **Medication Assisted Treatment**

Two community awareness events and two staff education events occurred in effort to better inform healthcare providers and the general community about MAT, a treatment for those with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). Dr. John Asriel gave the presentations and KCHN collected survey results with hopes to gauge attitudes, perception, and knowledge around Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and reduce stigma, one of the largest barriers in addressing the opioid epidemic.

## **Communication and Outreach**

The Network's website was renovated. In addition to a new 'look' the website displays updated information and contact information for current KCHN employees.

Members of KCHN have also given presentations on our organizations, and various social media pages have been developed to connect with the community, and members of KCHN. This platform will serve as an opportunity to educate and connect about the many social determinants of health and the action being taken to address these barriers in Kittitas County.

Work to promote communication and outreach picked up the second half of the year as KCHN hired its first staff members. In addition, three presentations about KCHN (two community meetings and one KittFam presentation) took place over the course of the year. Considerable efforts have also been made in ensuring Press Releases have been distributed to share in larger milestones and notable awards throughout the year—all of which benefit community improvement.

## MEET THE STAFF

The Network has been able to hire three new staff members to facilitate, promote, and act on the daily functions of the Network.



**Robin Read**  
**Executive Director**

Robin was hired as the Executive Director in January 2019 after over 12 years in leadership and as the director of the Kittitas County Public Health Department. She holds her Master of Public Health and specialized in Community Oriented Public Health Practice.



**Marie Betts**  
**Network Coordinator**

Marie graduated in 2016 with her Bachelor of Science in Public Health and then continued on to receive her Master of Public Health at Saint Louis University (St. Louis, Missouri) in 2018. She holds a joint concentration in Biosecurity, Disaster Preparedness, and Epidemiology. Marie is also Certified in Public Health (CPH). She was hired in March, 2019.



**Teresa Bicchieri**  
**Network Assistant**

Teresa received her Bachelor of Arts in Communications from the University of Portland and has spent the last few years focusing her knowledge and talents towards the field of healthcare. As KCHN's most recent hire, she will provide administrative support and tackle communications and community engagement projects.

## CONTACT US

[info@healthierkittitas.org](mailto:info@healthierkittitas.org)  
[www.healthierkittitas.org](http://www.healthierkittitas.org)

# WORK GROUPS AND TASK FORCES

## **Opioid Response**

The Opioid Response Work Group has been in full swing not only completing RCORP-Planning deliverables, but addressing new deliverables for the RCORP-Implementation Grant. The group completed a strategic plan, workforce plan, and sustainability plan for opioid response in Kittitas County.

## **Behavioral Health**

This work group has been dedicated to action planning and identifying priorities for the future. Specifically, the 1/10th of 1% behavioral health sales tax initiative has been at the forefront of discussion. A subcommittee was formed to address this initiative and work has been underway to conduct research and formalize a proposal. Each group meets monthly, and the subcommittee reports back on their progress to the larger work group.

## **Care Coordination**

Care Coordination has joined forces with the A-Team to tackle the Health Commons project. This work group is in the process of developing a platform for connecting individuals to various services through referrals.

## **Assessment**

The Assessment Work Group has also made considerable progress this past year, which was due mostly to our growth in membership. We are proud to work with professional from various backgrounds all with a shared interest in data analysis. Work has been done towards creating a charter, and with it, a group work plan. This Work Group has also contributed data to many grant applications and given feedback metrics for various strategic plans related to the Network.

## **Resilience and ACEs**

The Resiliency and ACEs task force, an independently facilitated group by the Kittitas County Public Health Department, held a few annual events. These events included NEAR Science Train the Trainer workshops, ongoing community presentations and trainings on NEAR, and an annual free community film series on NEAR, trauma-informed approaches, and related topics. The Department of Health recognized the ACEs leadership team at the state level by selecting them to participate in a new leadership development workshop.

# GRANTS AND FUNDING

With the help of Mitchell Rhodes, Kittitas Valley Healthcare Grant Writer, KCHN has had the opportunity to manage and apply to multiple grants aligned with the strategic plan derived from the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). While not all awarded (and many pending or ongoing), the ones received have been instrumental in continuing the work of KCHN.

- HRSA RCORP-Planning Grant
  - After applying for a no-cost extension, KCHN submitted all required deliverables for the HRSA RCORP-Planning grant near the end of September. The work completed during this planning period will inform and support future work on opioid response.
- HRSA RCORP-Implementation Grant
  - KCHN received notice of award for this grant in August and the work began in September. The Implementation grant is the next phase of the Planning grant and provides \$1,000,000 over three years to continue work on opioid response.
- HRSA Rural Health Network Development Grant
  - Community partners joined together to create a proposal for this grant. The application was completed and submitted in mid-November. The project proposes using Community Health Workers to identify high-needs patients, enroll these patients in a care coordination platform, increase access to services through referrals through this platform, and reduce usage of emergency services from high-utilizers.

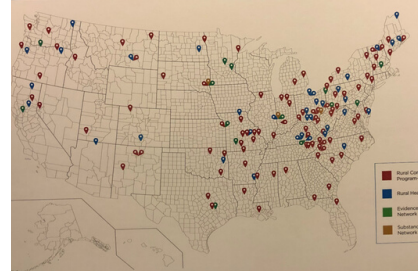
**Check out our Trello Board for more information on the grants we are working on!**  
<https://trello.com/b/EshCXfIC/kchn-funding>

“This [RCORP-implementation grant] funding is essential to keeping this Network of local health system partners connected and continuing to build a coordinated system of whole person care in Kittitas County.”

- Dr. Kevin Martin  
Chief Medical Officer  
Kittitas Valley Healthcare

Responding to the Rural Substance Use Crisis  
Promoting Community Action and Tele-Behavioral Health

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy



June 18-20, 2019

## 2020 AND BEYOND

The Annual Meeting, graciously hosted by Central Washington University, was a momentous time for KCHN and planning for our future. Many priorities were identified for 2019, 2020, and beyond.

### 2019 Priorities Identified

- Develop processes/procedures/criteria for funding and grants
- Start a conversation with payers on funding Health Commons and care coordination
- Develop succinct elevator speech for KCHN
- Create on-boarding and orientation/training for new members
- Establish process for recruitment—identify sectors to be represented
- Look for opportunities to fund Work Place Wellness/ Childcare priorities

### 2020 Priorities Identified

- Expand care coordination services among new agencies (enroll them in Health Commons)
- Evaluation and improvement of KCHN and services
- Update the CHIP (end of year)
- Pursue the 1/10th of 1% sales tax for behavioral health
- Increase capacity of KCHN through CWU student opportunities (internships, etc.)

### Beyond 2020 Priorities Identified

- Become a leader for integrating services
- Grow services along with population changes
- Become a trauma informed organization and build community resilience

Improving  
population  
health  
through  
cross-sector  
collaboration  
and  
systems  
integration

