

SORH Promising Practice Presentation Form

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Project Type: Strategic Planning
Cost: \$ 10,000 SORH grant funds

Project Time Frame: February 2005- May 2005
and on-going
State: Connecticut

Description of Project:

- This strategic planning process provided a vision and structure for the office and helped identify the best use of the office's resources
- The strategic plan expanded over a two-year time period and lead to an in-depth assessment of Connecticut's rural health status and how it compares to the state at large and the urban areas in particular.
- The Office sought input from its Advisory Committee and additional individuals and organizations familiar with the office's role in the State. Planning discussions and analysis were facilitated by an independent consultant familiar with State Offices of Rural Health (SORH) and with Federal Office of Rural Health (ORHP) programs and grants.

Results

- The office with the consultants assistance developed and published a fluid strategic plan for the office. This document allows the office staff to evaluate each proposed initiative as to whether it fits with the mission of the office and has helped in setting priorities for staff workload.
- Approximately a year after the strategic planning process was completed and through an RFP process, a consultant was hired to research, analyze and document key healthcare issues in rural Connecticut from both consumer and provider perspectives
- The consultant designed an on-going database and web-based site for the state office to manage and deliver state rural health information. This information can be found on the home page of CT Office of Rural Health's website under announcements: CT Rural Health Report www.ruralhealthct.org
- The findings of the research and analysis were compiled into a written and electronic report, "**Rural Community Health in Connecticut: Challenges and Opportunities**"
- The report provided the rural health office with a means to better define and describe the story of rural health to communities, providers, and legislators. Along with the strategic plan, this report also assists the office in setting parameters for its work initiatives.
- CT-ORH is now in a better position to be the "go-to" office when rural issues arise and defines the office as the expert to be brought to the table as new programs and initiatives are undertaken on a statewide, regional and local level. These two documents have served as a tool to the Department of Public Health in identifying initiatives that the rural health office should be an active participant.

Outcome Measurement:

Annual office evaluation at time of annual federal grant application

Assessment of the frequency of the web-based data and website, both monthly and annually shows that availability of this information has increased its usage. Increased requests for the state office to participate in statewide health care initiatives have increased.

Have any Economic Impact or Return-On-Investment assessments been done for this initiative? If so, please summarize the findings.

No

Suggestions for SORH who may try to adapt this project?

One of the most important aspects of strategic planning, is the willingness for the office director and staff to be committed to use it on an on-going basis. This tool allows offices to evaluate themselves and where they have been focusing their time and energies and if these continue to best serve the state and its rural areas.