



Putting People First: Working with Hospitals to Improve Community Health

Shining a Light on the Barriers to Health*

Note: Bulleted issues need to be written on flipchart paper and taped up on a wall.

Each of us, to varying degrees, has already traveled a health journey. It may have been our own health journey or that of a loved one. Some days of the journey and some places we visit can be more difficult than others. Sometimes we might feel like it is really becoming difficult to reach our destination. This training is about outlining these barriers to being healthy and partnering with our local hospital and other decision-makers to address those things in our community. First, though, we need to shine a light on some of the barriers we and our loved ones or neighbors face in being healthy.

Here are your instructions for this activity. I am going to give each of you a flashlight. I will then read some statements that describe a real life barrier – or problem – in the health care system or in being healthy. If you, a loved one, or a neighbor in this community has experienced that problem, turn on your flashlight and aim it on the ceiling after I read the statement. I will use the words “I” or “we,” but you should shine your flashlight if that statement pertains to you personally or to a loved one or neighbor you have helped.

Before getting started, let’s test those flashlights and make sure they work!
Are there any questions before we start?

Okay, let’s get started. Be sure that your flashlights are turned off right now.

[Turn the lights off, or down, in the room. Co-facilitator records how many people flash their light for each problem on a flipchart.]

[READ OUT LOUD]

Along my health care journey, I, a loved one or neighbor has...

- Had doctors or nurses that don’t speak my native language.
- Found it hard to find transportation to get to the doctor’s.
- Found it difficult to access healthy food (cost, availability, etc).
- Been unemployed recently.
- Had mental health issues that have not been treated.
- Not been able to afford all the health care needed.
- Had substance use/abuse issues, including alcohol or drug abuse.

- Had to walk in the streets because the sidewalks are incomplete.
- Had mold in the home that affects breathing.
- Not felt safe walking around our neighborhood.
- Had to work more than one job because the apartment/house is so expensive.
- Not been able to graduate from high school.
- Felt confused about how to navigate the health care system, including insurance.
- Not felt safe on public transit.
- Not felt connected to the community because of not having friends or family to support me/them.

Let's turn on the lights and see how we did.

[Review each statement and give the number of people who shined their lights indicating they had experienced that problem.]

It looks like many people in this room have experienced some very real issues along their health care journey or to staying healthy. Are there other problems you think we should add to our list?