Reimagined Care Case Study: West County Health Centers Building on Data Capacity & Community Health Collaboration
May 2017

Project Snapshot

Aim: Wanted to develop a new model for community stakeholders to interact with community health data, as part of a larger movement towards community-based care transformation.

Process: Used human-centered innovation (HCI) approach to engage community stakeholders while developing new data capabilities and tools for having collaborative conversations.

Contributors: West County Health Centers (West County), Russian River Area Resources and Advocates (RRARA), and seven individual community members.

Solution: Designed a new data platform to display and interact with community health data. Designed a new creative tool, called a Discovery Kit, to help individuals brainstorm, explore, and discuss community health, what collaboration looks like, and how data can inform collective efforts.

Outcomes: West County engaged RRARA in data exploration to test their new model for engaging community partners in data-informed population health improvement. The team also analyzed data from Discovery Kits to uncover the insight, "community collaboration equals community resilience."

Next steps: West County is partnering with RRARA to continue exploring their new data capabilities as part of prioritizing and planning community health improvement efforts. The Discovery Kit is being adapted as a tool for facilitating conversations and brainstorming activities for other HCI work.

The Reimagined Care Challenge

The Center for Care Innovations (CCI) implemented a one-year program for five grantees in the health care safety net to practice human-centered innovation (HCI) to develop innovative solutions to reimagine how care should be delivered under value-based payment. HCI is an iterative process that applies design principles and tools to addressing a problem or challenge. Grantees were expected to use a HCI approach to complete a project during the program, in which their teams would explore, design, and pilot an innovative solution to a strategic opportunity. Grantees received training and resources throughout the program to help complete their projects. Blue Shield of California Foundation funded the program, with some additional funding from Kaiser Permanente.

Reimagine Care consisted of:
- Grantee funding
- Coaching calls with CCI staff
- 3 Swap Meet webinars
- 2 in-person convenings
- Online resources & tools for HCI
- Tailored coaching support from an innovation & design expert

West County's project vision

West County Health Centers

West County Health Centers is a Federally Qualified Health Center located in Sonoma County, California. It was established over 40 years ago and, as of early 2017, has seven health centers that provide a range of services, including primary, dental, and behavioral health care. West County has a history of strong relationships with community partners and being a trusted entity in the county. For example, they are actively engaged in the Russian River Area Resources and Advocates (RRARA), a local community coalition working to coordinate cross-sector collaboration to promote health and prosperity.

West County had experience participating in clinical support and capacity building programs prior to this project, including participating in CCI's Innovation Catalyst Program. They had staff members who were familiar with and experienced in HCI. There was also a culture of innovation at the organization, including strong leadership support for innovation activities and an "Innovation Hub," an open space separate from the health center that gives staff space and resources (e.g., technology) to create and innovate.

> **Innovation opportunity**: Looking to transform their use of data, West County focused on a new approach to community collaboration for population health improvement and transformation toward value-base care:
>
> 1. By designing an interactive platform that compiles and integrates data from a variety of sources for use with community partners to understand and address the health needs of the population.
> 2. By taking the data resource into a community setting— "outside the four walls of the health center"— to uncover what data are most important to community stakeholders, can best inform collaboration, and inform future work in the community.

The Innovation Journey: Collaboration & Community Health Data Exploration

West County project team

West County established a core team of staff with varied and multi-faceted experience to tackle their innovation project, some of whom had completed or were currently engaged in CCI's Catalyst Program. Team participation included leadership from the Medical Director, the Director of Innovation, the Innovation Project Coordinator, the Associate Director of Quality and Management, and the Reports Systems Manager, for technical expertise in building out the data system. Later in the project, the coordinator from RRARA also joined West County staff as part of the core project team.

West County's innovation team

Data for exploration: Developing the interactive data platform

West County had an ambitious vision for a new interactive data platform, which was a strategic priority for the organization beyond their participation in Reimagined Care. West County was seeking to design a resource that it could take into a community setting and use as a planning tool with partners to inform exploratory conversations about community health improvement. Funding from Reimagined Care allowed the team to build some of the technical components of the new data platform.

At the beginning of the program, there was an effort to compile a variety of data sources, including West County's internal data and secondary data from other sources. Examples included:

- West County operational and demographic data
- Social determinants of health data
- Claims data
- Healthcare for the Homeless data
- Public data from Sonoma County
- Contextual data from Measure of America

"It's really about the social determinants of health and addressing those out in the community and being the trusted entity that can lead some of this work. Taking the data to stimulate ideas…and then going to the community to figure out what we should be doing."

The team mapped data from their electronic health records and used several software solutions in building their platform—Hadoop to normalize the data, Tableau to visualize data, and Unifi to map it. The result was a robust platform that included a variety of de-identified data from several sources that were presented in a format that was easily accessible and user friendly for community partners.

Figuring out the technical elements of the data platform were some of the most challenging and time consuming pieces of West County's project—it was a real stretch for project team members. Contracting with external partners and navigating processes to organize the data within the new platform took longer than anticipated. However, in spite of the challenges and complexity of the task, the platform was a powerful tool by the end of the project. According to one team member, the innovation around the new technical infrastructure "might have the most fruit in terms of systems changes" and transforming the way West County works with data and shares data with the community.

Collaboration for health: Taking data to the community using HCI

West County leveraged their partnership with RRARA to engage community partners in health improvement and data discussions using the new data platform. The team first tested the technology at a RRARA meeting in June 2016. They used this community setting to host a co-design session—a facilitated discussion that involves creative activities to generate feedback and spark new ideas. West County team members presented tobacco use by census tract, which spurred discussion among partners about how to address the problem. The team sought input from community partners about what other types
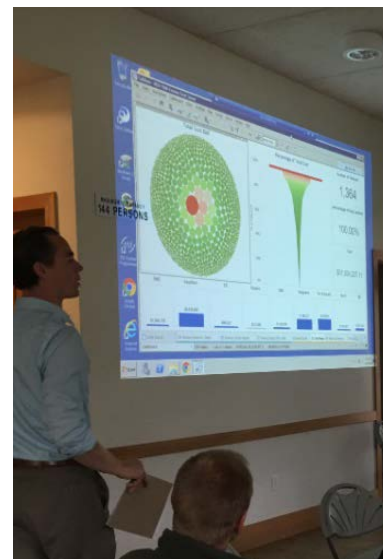
Data exploration with RRARA

of data they would like to have to inform future conversations about population health. West County reported that, in addition to identifying data of interest to partners, the meeting helped them learn how to better facilitate an ideation phase discussion by helping partners generate ideas and dialogue instead of jumping to determining a solution right away.

Discovery Kits: A process for community collaboration

After reflecting on this first community meeting, the team decided to step back to better understand the community health topics and data that were important to their partners. To gather information about their partners' interests, West County developed a Discovery Kit, a process informed by HCI that included several creative activities to engage community members in generating ideas. Through the Discovery Kit, seven community members brainstormed what type of people their organization serves, what community collaboration looks like from their organizational and individual perspectives, which stakeholders they are hoping to influence, and what datasets they are most interested in.

The Discovery Kit process included several steps:

1. **Discovery Kit development and mail out:** Kits consisted of creative tools (e.g., journal, map). West County mailed Discovery Kits to seven community members, most of whom were RRARA members. Participants provided a variety of local perspectives, including a public health leader, a community organizer, and a high school student.

2. **Interviews:** West County conducted interviews with each community member to discuss their completed Discovery Kits. Interviews were video recorded and typically occurred in the community, wherever the participant felt most comfortable.

3. **Qualitative analysis & generating insights:** Interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed to explore the data and inform the next phases of West County's work. The team synthesized what they learned into an overall insight that "*community collaboration = community resilience,*" with several supporting themes about collaboration and resilience. The team learned that "*by expanding community engagement and leadership, community members become agents of collective action that ultimately enable the community to create its own well-being.*"

Discovery Kit community collaboration process

In addition to producing valuable insights for West County, the Discovery Kits were well-received by participants. One participant said:

> *"I call it the fun kit! It allowed for processing and thinking deeper. I was able to be creative and through this exploration I was able to reconsider projects. It really triggered my passions!"*

The process also strengthened West County's partnership with RRARA and their commitment to continue collaboratively exploring these themes and bringing in the community voice. As a result of the project, a key RRARA collaborator joined some of West County team members in CCI's Catalyst Program to obtain additional training in HCI and take the community health improvement process further.

Telling the West County innovation story

West County made significant progress on designing their solution, which is a new model for engaging with the community and collaborating with stakeholders outside of the health center to establish data-informed partnerships for population health improvement. In addition, West County's work has received attention from the broader HCI field and the team was invited to present their project for IDEO's Medical Team at several conferences, including the Industrial Design Society of America's Medical Annual Conference.

> "It's exciting how insightful it has been, going into the community, using HCI to create with the community. It's allowed us to professionally grow and be more connected with the community and the underlying needs."

Lessons learned

This data and collaboration project provided West County the opportunity to build on their experiences with innovation, add to their HCI tools and capabilities, and use their skills and expertise to tackle more complex and challenging HCI work. Lessons for other organizations to learn from included:

Start small, focus on the learning: West County leveraged previous experience with HCI as well as their organization's history and culture of innovating to engage with the community and transform how they use HCI and data. However, if they had started the project with no previous experience using HCI, the team thinks they would have been overwhelmed taking on their ambitious goal. West County suggested other organizations start with small innovation projects to hone HCI skills and approaches, find practical and tangible opportunities to practice using HCI, and get used to taking risks and stretching beyond their comfort zone. Programs like CCI's Reimagined Care and Catalyst are also helpful for providing opportunities to practice, exposure to new tools and approaches, and creating accountability to move things forward.

> *"You go quickly out there and do cool, fun things. Whether it's fully baked or not. Fake it until you make it to a certain point. We got out there, and then people got excited and wanted to play with us. It can be risky to do that."*

Ensure meaningful leadership buy-in and engagement: West County reported that leadership support was essential, not only for this project, but for building their HCI capacity in general and making

innovation part of their organizational culture. West County leadership has invested resources in training staff, creating space for innovation (both physical space and time), and prioritized the learning process versus the outcome or deliverable.

Prioritize community partnerships: West County believes that to really improve the health of their patients, their work must extend beyond the walls of the health center. Innovation and population health work benefit from relationships with other community-based organizations and advocates, government agencies, and community members themselves. Although West County had relationships and partnerships in place, they intentionally focused on better understanding their partners' perspectives and what really matters to them during this project. Through the Discovery Kit, the team increased mutual understanding of partners' priorities and perspectives, strengthened relationships and trust, and fostered buy-in for the overall effort.

> *"[The Discovery Kit] allows us to understand what truly matters to community leaders and community organizations. It allows us to creatively uncover a narrative that can be combined with our data platform and used to inform and generate buy-in from community organization leaders."*

Next steps

West County has two powerful new resources they will continue to refine with both internal and external partners —a new data resource and a HCI-informed collaboration process. The innovation team has found the Discovery Kit process to be versatile and has already adapted it for other work with staff.

As discussed above, West County is moving forward with partnering with RRARA to continue exploring their new data capabilities as part of prioritizing and planning community health improvement efforts. The team believes "ideal community collaboration is informed by community voices, driven by community members, and supported by community organizations," and reported they will be looking for opportunities to bring in more community voices (versus only organizational leaders) and foster community member engagement. In addition, the innovation team is exploring the possibility of generating revenue from their data capacity and HCI expertise by providing HCI services to help organizational partners in the community engage with data in a strategic way.

"The Innovation Team wanted to have a better understanding… prior to a department retreat and this technique proved yet again to be a great method to creatively uncover insights about patients, staff roles, and create buy in to move forward with the project at hand."