Local implementation of federal strategic plans: The role of the Health Care for the Homeless program in Opening Doors

Author: Nagel, Katherine Fox

Abstract: Background: Care for the homeless coordinated in communities across multiple sectors and services is essential given the complex nature of their problems and environments. Opening Doors is the first comprehensive national strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness at the community level. It is a joint action plan for federal agencies and local and state partners. This study explores factors that drive successful implementation of a federal plan at the local level, specifically focusing on the feasibility of local implementation of Opening Doors and the role of the federal Health Care for the Homeless program.

Methods: This study addressed the overarching research question: How best can local communities support implementation of federal public health strategic plans? A systematic literature review was conducted to determine characteristics of successful local community health improvement partnerships. Key informant interviews were also conducted with selected leaders of Health Care for the Homeless organizations and local government homeless services directors. These provided insights into perceptions, programmatic strategies and barriers to community-based collaboration, coordination of homeless services and implementation of Opening Doors.

Results: Findings provided a Framework for Successful Community Partnerships--a checklist of 'must-haves' for local health-related partnerships working together on community health improvement. Data suggest that local communities will not support federal plans without required resources or incentives, appropriate alignment and recognition of local priorities and efforts, and/or expected compliance or enforcement.

Conclusions: The success of Opening Doors will depend on successful recognition of the reality of local priorities and alignment of funding to support its goals.

Links: Linking Service

Subject: Public health; Public policy;

Classification: 0573: Public health; 0630: Public policy

Identifier / keyword: Social sciences, Health and environmental sciences, Community partnerships, Federal policy, Homeless, Local implementation, Urban health

Number of pages: 135

Publication year: 2014

Degree date: 2014

School code: 0153

Source: DAI-B 75/10(E), Apr 2015

Place of publication: Ann Arbor

Country of publication: United States

ISBN: 9781303941658

Advisor: Ricketts, Thomas C.

Committee member: Afram-Gyening, Francis, Hobbs, Suzanne H., Jenkins, Darlene M., Weiner, Bryan