

This product was developed by the Richland County Community Diabetes Project at the Richland County Health Department in Sidney, MT. Support for this product was provided by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation® in Princeton, New Jersey.

# An Ecological Approach Provides a Comprehensive Model to Initiate and Sustain Diabetes Self-Management

*a.k.a.: Partners in Progress*

Richland County Community Diabetes Project

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# The Process of Partnership

- Richland Health Network

- Richland County Health Department
- Sidney Health Center
- Richland County Commission on Aging

- Partners since 1999

- Mission: Building healthy communities through networking, health promotion, and volunteerism





# Richland County Community Diabetes Project

- Not *just* to avoid duplication of services
- Collaboratively we accomplish more we individually could
- Mission: ***Partnerships*** dedicated to *building a community environment that supports diabetes self-management*

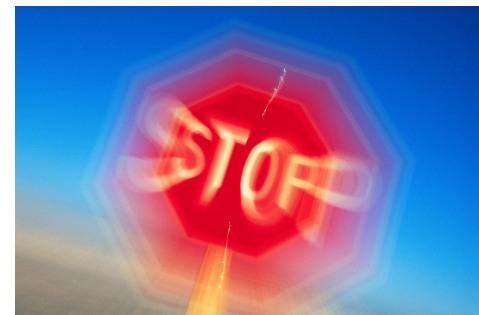
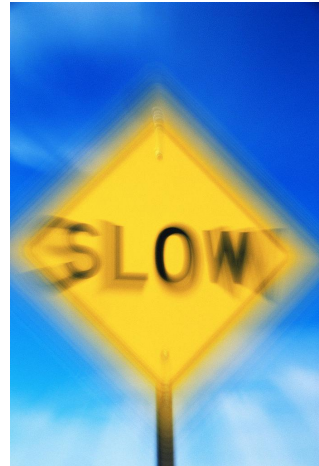
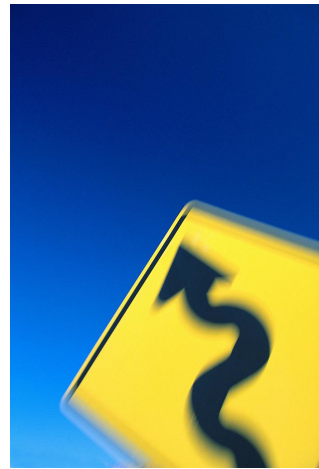


# Major Objectives

- Joining clinical and community care models to develop a *system* to coordinate the overlap
- Broaden the definition of continuum of care
- Develop community ownership of the project
- Change community norms
- Improve community health status

# A Journey has Obstacles

- Internal and external identity struggle
  - A collaborative network is both our greatest strength and our weakest point
- Finding our niche
- Resistance to change
- Collaboration means different things to different people



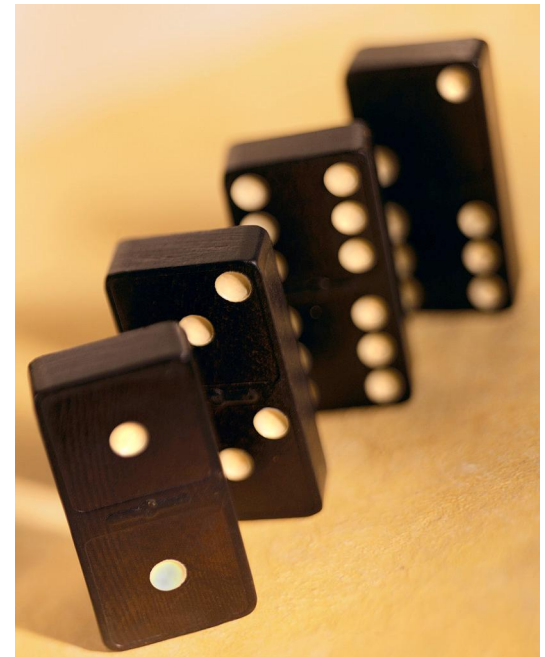
# Strengthening Our Links

- Sharing resources
- Try to move each partner forward
  - Fit partnership into each agency's mission and promises
- Sustainable clinical/community connections
  - Diabetes Education Center
  - Exercise Rx and free indoor walking options
- Increasing the network's collaboration with other community partners



# Domino Effect on Community Collaboration

- Communities in Action (VISTA project)
- Sidney Public Library
- Richland County Nutrition Coalition
- Local Restaurants
- Parish Nursing
- RSVP
- Literacy Volunteers of America
- LIONS Club
- American Diabetes Association – Montana
- McCone County Senior Center
- Montana Diabetes Project
- Eastern Montana Mental Health
- Local Health Care Providers
- Grocery Stores
- Schools
- Local Worksites
- Media
- And more...







# A Highlight of our Successes

- New partnerships develop; become active
  - Senior Coalition, Communities in Action
  - Health issues included in local growth policies
- Healthier lifestyles for project participants
  - 46% self-report weight loss
  - 58% self-report increased physical activity
- Decreased primary diagnosis diabetes admits
  - ER admits and hospitalizations each decreased 33%
- Increased number of A1c measurements
  - ER A1c measures increased 400%
  - Outpatient A1c measures increased 7.5%

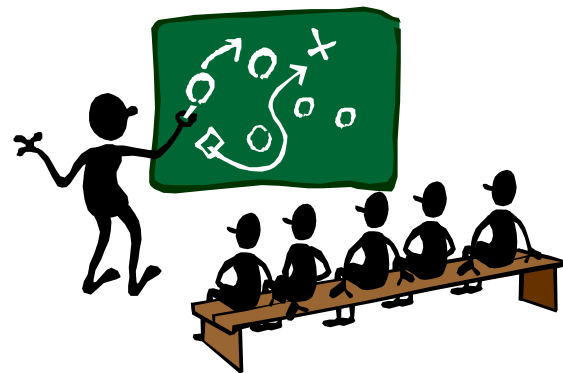
# Lessons Learned

- Partnership is hard work! (but worth it)
  - Give and take are both required
  - Building trust takes time
- Programs vs. Infrastructure
  - Programs make the partnership visible
  - Programs are an opportunity to build systems-based infrastructure
- Changing social norms is an immense challenge
  - Disease labeling is not necessary
  - Active work w/ additional partner agencies
    - Tasty Fork project changing nutrition norms



# Future Plans

- The importance of RHN is twofold:
  - Assist partners in meeting the expectations of their customers
  - Provides a comprehensive and efficient manner of addressing chronic disease in our service area by engaging these customers
- Continue to use the ecological model as a basis for addressing community health issues
- Commonalities for future collaboration:
  - Inform, Educate, and Empower
  - Mobilize Community Partners
  - Link People to Needed Services
  - Develop Policies and Plans



“Coming together  
is a beginning.  
Keeping together  
is progress.  
Working together  
is success.”  
-Henry Ford

