Accountable Communities of Health Evaluation

ACH Participant Survey 2015

Center for Community Health and Evaluation December 2015



Purpose

As part of the ACH evaluation, the Center for Community Health and Evaluation (CCHE) conducted an online survey of regional stakeholders engaged in the Accountable Communities of Health (ACHs) during 2015. The survey data provide a snapshot of individual ACH participants' opinions and perspectives about how each of the nine ACHs are developing and functioning, including their areas of strength and opportunities for growth. Survey data are also being used to validate findings from other data sources, including interviews, meeting observations, site visits, and document review.

The ACH participant survey will be conducted annually to monitor progress over time and changes in participants' perceptions of ACH functioning. (See appendix A for methods.) Survey data will also be shared with each ACH as a resource.

Key Findings / Highlights

Responses were received from 391 of 824 ACH participants surveyed; a 47% response rate. Findings show ACH participants, overall, believe ACHs are developing well as coalitions for regional health improvement.

- Respondents reported high levels of satisfaction; two-thirds are very satisfied (16%) or satisfied (49%) with overall ACH development.
- More engaged participants rated ACH development more highly.

ACH participants rated 23 items of ACH functioning in five domains: ACH membership; operations and governance; mission, goals, and objectives; backbone organization; and, community engagement.

- Areas of strength across the ACHs included: backbone organization activities, leaders promoting
 collaboration, and clear and effective communication among ACH participants. These results align
 with ACHs' areas of focus as new entities ensuring participants are aligned around a common
 mission and building adequate operational infrastructure.
- Opportunities for growth included: implementing a sustainability strategy and strengthening community engagement, especially with individuals/consumers and diverse communities.

Nearly all survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed ACHs are making a positive contribution to health improvement and are a worthwhile use of their organization's time and resources. Feedback from ACH participants suggests they were energized to finalize their governance structures and regional health improvement plans so ACHs can implement projects. They were also interested in greater clarity about the work they are doing in Healthier Washington. Respondents were eager to transition from forming ACHs to making tangible progress on regional collaboration and health improvement projects.

"[I hope we] will move beyond initial discussions about governance, needs of the community, and current health status of the population to actively find ways to forge joint action towards measureable results."

Characteristics of ACH participants are varied

Length of participation

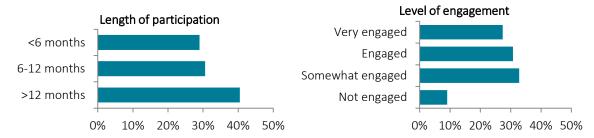
Among all ACH participants statewide, 40% have participated in ACH activities for one year or longer, 31% for six to 12 months, and 29% for less than six months (see Figure 1). For four ACHs, more than one-third of survey respondents reported less than six months of participation.

Level of engagement

There was a relatively even split in reported level of engagement for three of the categories, with 27-33% in each: very engaged, engaged, and somewhat engaged. The remaining 9% of respondents said they were not engaged (see Figure 1).

More engaged ACH participants rated their ACHs higher; respondents who reported being very engaged rated their ACH's functioning 13% higher overall, on average, compared to somewhat engaged respondents.

Figure 1. Respondent participation and engagement



ACH participants are satisfied

Overall, respondents were satisfied with the performance of their ACH, with nearly two-thirds saying they were very satisfied (16%) or satisfied (49%) with the way their ACH is operating.

There were similarly high levels of satisfaction for key goal areas related to regional ACH benefits; over 80% of respondents across the state agreed or strongly agreed ACHs are having positive effect on:

- Increasing collaboration across the region
- Helping align resources and activities across organizations and sectors
- Addressing the broader issues that affect regional health needs
- Effectively promoting health equity across the region

Nearly all survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the ACHs are making a positive contribution to health improvement and are a worthwhile use of their organization's time and resources.

Although highly rated, many of these goal areas had a high proportion (>20%) of don't know responses:

- Helping reduce duplication of efforts by forming linkages between organizations
- Helping to align resources and activities across organization and sectors
- Making a positive contribution to health improvement
- Effectively promoting health equity across the region

This result aligns with the current stage of development for ACHs, where collaboration and relationship building are in process, and not enough time has passed for ACHs to make progress on regional health improvement.

ACH participants see areas of strength, opportunities for improvement

ACH participants were asked to rate 23 items about how their coalition functioned on a scale where outstanding=4, good=3, adequate=2, needs improvement=1, and don't know=N/A. These items fell into five domains: ACH membership; mission, goals, and objectives; governance and operations; backbone organization; and, community engagement. (See appendix D for data tables.)

Respondents rated ACHs highest in the backbone organization domain, with a statewide average rating of 2.9, which corresponds to a score of *good* on the survey rating scale. The second most highly rated was

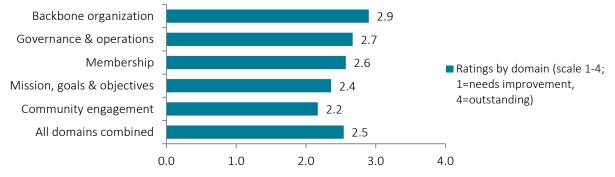
the governance and operations domain, with an average rating of 2.7 (see Figure 2). These results align with ACHs' areas of focus as new entities in the first year of Healthier Washington – building adequate operational and governance infrastructure.

There were three individual survey items related to partnering and effective operational infrastructure that received the highest ratings, with an *outstanding* from 30-31% of ACH participants statewide:

"I believe [our backbone] is doing a stellar job. I think we, as members, need to do more to make sure that we involve all key stakeholder groups to ensure that all sectors are represented and engaged."

- The backbone provides the administrative support needed for the ACH
- The ACH has leaders who promote and support effective collaboration
- The ACH communicates information clearly among members

Figure 2. Statewide average ratings of ACH functioning $\,$



Respondents rated ACHs lowest in the community engagement domain, with a statewide average rating of 2.2, which corresponds to a score of *adequate* on the survey rating scale.

The four lowest rated individual survey items received a *needs improvement* rating from over 35% of ACH participants statewide. Three related to community engagement and the fourth was about sustainability:

- The ACH engages the broader community with participation opportunities
- The ACH communicates effectively with the broader community
- The ACH engages ethnically and racially diverse communities
- The ACH is executing a sustainability strategy

Backbone organization: Key to building ACH capacity

The backbone domain received the highest average rating statewide, which at 2.9 corresponds to a *good* rating. This aligns with the focus areas of ACH work during the first year, which emphasized building operational capacity and infrastructure and depended on facilitation by backbone organizations.

ACH backbone organizations were rated well for all domain items, receiving a *good* or *outstanding* rating from at least 70% of respondents for each:

- Providing the administrative support needed for the ACH
- Effectively providing support for collaboration
- Separating [their] own agenda from the ACH's agenda

"The [backbone] staff do an amazing job but are juggling so much work and complexities of players and sectors."

Governance & operations: Developing governance but uncertain of sustainability

The statewide average rating for the governance and operations domain was 2.7 across seven items, indicating a split between *adequate* and *good* on the survey scale.

Respondents rated ACHs well on involving all participants in decision making, leaders who bring skills and resources to the ACH, and leaders who promote and support collaboration, with at least two-thirds of respondents rating them as *good* or *outstanding*.

ACHs were also rated well on having an effective governance structure, with over 60% of respondents rating them as *good* or *outstanding*.

Lower ratings for executing a sustainability strategy and members investing resources in ACH operational capacity suggest a statewide opportunity for growth and progress in the future. For example, over 60% of respondents said their ACH's sustainability strategy was *adequate* or *needs improvement* and there were many *don't know* responses. This aligns with the stage of development expected for ACHs at this point in the initiative. ACHs are still forming and developing core functions and need to clarify their operations and priorities before planning for sustainability.

ACH membership: Progress made, clarity still needed

The statewide average rating for the membership domain was 2.6 across four items, which corresponds to a split between *adequate* and *good* ratings on the survey scale. This suggests survey respondents believe the ACHs have made progress in this domain, but there is room for improvement as the ACHs continue to develop.

Respondents overall rated ACHs well in getting active engagement from key stakeholders, where over two-thirds of respondents rated their ACH either *good* or *outstanding*.

On the other hand, clearly defined roles for ACH members was rated lower, with more than half of respondents rating this item *adequate* or *needs improvement*. This suggests an opportunity for improving roles and expectations as ACHs continue to develop and clarify their structure and operations.

Mission, goals & objectives: Strong shared vision but challenges with action planning

With a statewide average rating of 2.4 across five items, which corresponds with *adequate* on the survey scale, respondents rated this domain lower than three of the five domains. A high proportion of *needs improvement* and *adequate* ratings on some of the items indicates areas for improvement.

"I hope the role and boundaries of the ACH will be clarified sooner than later so we can keep the positive energy we have been able to build so far." Having a shared vision and mission was rated highly, compared to other items in this domain, with over 60% of respondents scoring it *good* or *outstanding*.

Ratings for agreed on health priorities based on regional health needs show opportunities for progress. Most respondents rated the item *good*, but 45% of said *adequate* or *needs improvement*.

The three items related to a collective ACH project suggest many ACHs are struggling with this area of work. More than 55% of respondents indicated their ACH *needs improvement* or is *adequate* for:

- Having a realistic action plan for one ACH project
- Making progress on one collective ACH project
- Members investing resources in collective ACH projects

In addition, these survey items had a high proportion of *don't* know responses, suggesting ACHs may have opportunities for further discussing or clarifying their work in these areas with their participants.

Community engagement: Opportunity for improvement

The community engagement domain received the lowest average rating statewide at 2.2, which corresponds to an *adequate* rating on the survey scale. This domain is an opportunity for improvement, and ratings are anticipated to rise in future years as ACHs continue to grow, strengthen relationships between stakeholders and enhance outreach and communications within their communities.

The highest rated item within the domain was ACHs having support from key community leaders. More than 45% rated performance in this area as *good*.

Two-thirds of respondents rated communicating effectively with the broader community and engaging the broader community with participation opportunities as *adequate* or *needs improvement*.

ACHs were also rated low on engaging ethnically and racially diverse communities. More than 55% of respondents said ACHs are *adequate* or *need improvement* when working with diverse communities.

"A clear definition of what an ACH is and how it will affect the broader community can be helpful [...] sent out to community leaders and common folk [...] This is a paradigm shift and requires community education."

ACH participants identify hopes, concerns & opportunities

Respondents were asked four open-ended questions about their hopes, concerns, and suggestions for improving their own ACH and the statewide ACH initiative. Overall, respondents wanted greater clarity about the work they are doing, solid ACH governance structures, and consensus on priorities and strategic plans. Respondents were also eager to transition from forming ACHs to making tangible progress on regional collaboration and health improvement projects. ACH participants were hungry for action and wanted to see the ACHs demonstrate their value as regional health improvement coalitions.

Hopes for the next year of ACH work:

Governance – Finish forming governance and move on to community activities.

"[I hope we will] refine governance [and] move forward on meaningful work to improve population health."

Regional health improvement plans (RHIP) – Develop and implement clear action plans for improving population health in their communities.

"A solid regional health improvement plan with regional measures and related initiatives."

Projects & Collaboration – Implement collaborative and substantive health improvement activities.

"I hope that [the ACH] can pull our community together around one or more projects that increases collaboration in a meaningful way."

Community engagement – Engage members of the public and diverse community representatives.

"Agree to a structure and process that fully empowers and includes communities who are marginalized in the health and social service structures to-date."

Concerns about upcoming challenges:

Resources – Adequate staff capacity, resources, and funding.

"Those who are heavily involved in the ACH [...] are very over-burdened."

"Sustainable funding for the ACH infrastructure and projects."

Engagement – Both maintaining the engagement of current participants and involving new community members in ACH governance and activities.

"Ability to sustain engagement and establish a common agenda that all partners are invested in."

State-level direction – Concerns about state agency decisions that surprise ACHs or do not align with regional priorities and activities.

"[...]I worry this will continue to create a disconnect between what each state organization expects ACHs to do and accomplish in short timeframes and the reality of the resources and organizational capacity of ACHs."

Medicaid waiver – Implications for ACH activities and infrastructure for becoming coordinating entities.

"None of the ACHs [...] are ready to be a coordinating entity next year. There needs to be a [...] capacity building strategy so that ACHs don't fail due to operational immaturity."

Suggestions for ACH improvement:

Communications – Internal sharing of information and progress to keep everyone aligned.

"As the work [...] progresses, being acutely aware of how each [group] leverages each other's work and making sure to facilitate this alignment."

Public relations and community engagement – Raise awareness throughout the region and consistently communicate and involve individuals/consumers and representatives from diverse communities.

"More community engagement, leveraging stakeholder activities to reach a broad range of communities and involve them at the front end."

Feedback on statewide ACH initiative:

Guidance – Respondents overwhelmingly asked for clarity and guidance from Healthier Washington staff, in terms of governance, timelines, priorities for projects, and preparing for the 1115 Medicaid waiver.

"Need some real clarity about the ACH vision, components of a successful ACH, and identifying the limits and powers of the ACH."

Facilitation – Respondents asked for Healthier Washington staff to facilitate idea sharing and spreading of best practices across the ACHs, where ACH participants can engage, as well as backbones.

"Communication between ACHs will be critical for us to learn from one another, rather than everyone trying to reinvent the wheel."

Transparency and consistency – Comments also asked for greater transparency from all levels of state government and Healthier Washington staff on the direction and expectations for ACHs, including more consistent communications across the ACHs and more communications with the public.

"[...]HCA should be more diligent in its ability to be transparent across sectors participating in this work rather than solely working through the ACH backbones or adhoc groups."

Summary & conclusions

Survey findings showed ACH participants, overall, believe their ACHs are developing well as coalitions for regional health improvement. Higher ratings in areas of ACH operations and function, including backbone organization activities, operations, and vision, are expected given ACHs are in the early stages of development, relationship-building, and collective action. Opportunities for improvement around community engagement and planning for sustainability are to be expected in baseline survey data this year, as ACHs will mature and strengthen performance in these areas in future years. Open-ended comments also suggested many ACH participants are eager and motivated to receive guidance and clarity on the ACH initiative, so that ACHs can take action on health improvement projects within their regions and share best practice with each other across the state.

Appendix A: Methods and Response Rates

Survey Design

Survey questions were drawn from validated tools and existing surveys that assess coalition functioning. The evaluation team revised the questions to fit the context of ACHs, their role within Healthier Washington, and the evaluation's Theory of Change – a framework for how the ACHs will grow into functioning and sustainable coalitions (appendix B).

The survey (appendix C) included questions in the following sections:

- Respondent characteristics Role in ACH, length of participation, level of engagement, and satisfaction rating. ACH role categories were tailored to each ACH's governance structure.
- ACH coalition functioning Twenty-three items categorized into five domains, including: ACH membership; mission, goals & objectives; governance & operations; backbone organization; and, community engagement. Items were rated on a scale of Outstanding, Good, Adequate, Needs improvement, and Don't know.
- Overall feedback Seven questions on regional benefits of the ACH, rated on an agree/disagree scale. Concluded with four open-ended questions asking about ACH participants' hopes, concerns, and suggestions for improving regional and statewide ACH efforts.

Data collection

The survey was administered using SurveyMonkey and invitations to the survey were distributed to ACH participants via email. Distribution lists were provided by each ACH's backbone organization; inclusion in the list was left to the discretion of each ACH. Responses were collected from October 22 – November 30, 2015, with regular reminder emails sent from SurveyMonkey and ACH backbone staff.

Response rates

A total of 824 ACH participants were included in the survey sample, with the number by ACH ranging from 19 to 306. A total of 391 responses were received for a 47% response rate, with individual ACH response rates ranging from 36% to 78%.

Analysis

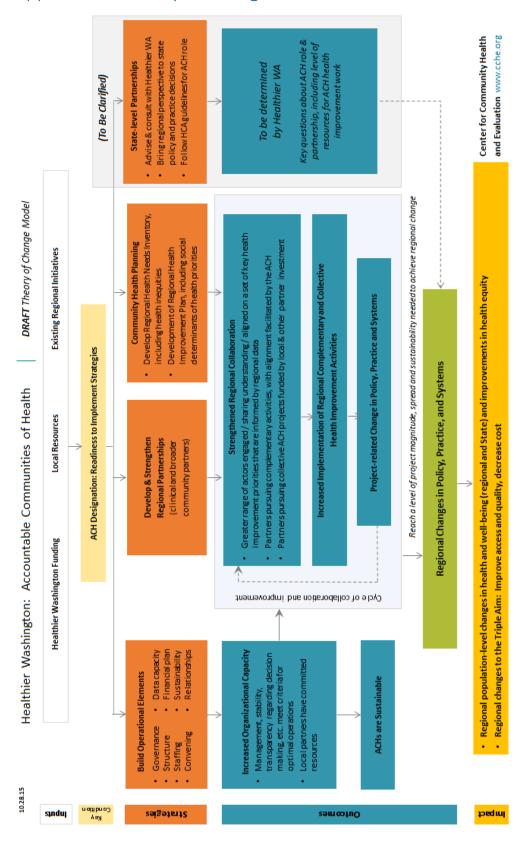
Average scores were computed for each of the five domains of ACH coalition functioning, both overall and by ACH. These domain scores provide an overall picture of areas of strength and weakness for the ACHs. Given the differences in the participant lists provided – e.g., some very inclusive, others limited to decision-makers – scores by individual ACH are not presented. Ratings by ACH will be provided in future surveys when we can look at changes over time in key measures. In addition, analyses were conducted to assess whether the domain-level scales were valid and reliable; all domains met conventional criteria for validity and reliability. Finally, comments from the open-ended questions were coded and analyzed to identify themes, including statewide themes for each survey question, and regional themes for each ACH.

Data characteristics

The survey rating scale was used to calculate average scores for each survey item where outstanding=4, good=3, adequate=2, needs improvement=1, and don't know=N/A.

When ACH participants responded "Don't know," to a survey item, that response was treated as missing data when averaging the scores for each survey item and domain. Respondents who said they were "engaged" or "very engaged" in ACH activities selected "Don't know" less often. Some survey items received a high rate (>20%) of "Don't know responses" from all ACHs, which is noted in the sections about each survey domain.

Appendix B: Theory of change for ACH evaluation



Appendix C: Survey questions

Thank you for responding to the 2015 ACH participant survey.

Completing the survey will take about 10 minutes. Your responses are confidential. A summary of survey results will be shared with ACH backbone organizations and participants.

Please direct questions to Lauren Baba (baba.l@ghc.org) at CCHE.

1. What is your role in the ACH? (mark all that appl	the ACH? (mark all that apply	our role in the ACH? (What
--	-------------------------------	------------------------	--------------------------

Board

Leadership Council

County coalition

2. How long have you participated in ACH activities (including Community of Health planning grants in 2014, if applicable)?

Less than 6 months

6 months – 1 year

1-2 years

3. How would you rate your engagement in the ACH in the last year?

Very engaged

Engaged

Somewhat engaged

Not engaged

Membership

4. Please rate the extent to which your ACH currently has...

	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Needs improvement	Don't Know	
Active engagement from key stakeholders from multiple sectors.	0	0	0	0	0	
Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for ACH members.	\circ	\circ	0	\circ	0	
Trust among members.	0	0	0	0	0	
Members operating in the shared interest of the ACH versus their own personal/organization interest.	\circ	0	\circ	\circ	0	

Mission, goals & objectives

5. Please rate the extent to which your ACH currently has...

	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Needs improvement	Don't Know
A shared vision and mission.	\circ	\circ	\circ	0	0
Agreed on health priorities based on identified regional health needs.	0	0	0	0	0
A realistic action plan for at least one collective ACH project.	0	0	0	0	0
Made progress on at least one collective ACH project.	0	0	0	0	0
ACH members that are investing adequate resources into the collective ACH project(s).	0	0	0	0	0

Governance & operations

6. Please rate the extent to which your ACH currently...

	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Needs improvement	Don't Know
Involves all members in the decision-making process.	0	\circ	0	0	\circ
Has an effective governance structure to make decisions and plan activities.	0	\circ	\circ	0	\circ
Communicates information clearly among members to help achieve ACH goals (via meetings, emails, calls, etc.).	0	0	0	0	0
Has leaders who bring the skills and resources that our ACH most needs.	\circ	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\circ
Has leaders who promote and support effective collaboration.	0	0	0	0	0
Has ACH members that are investing adequate resources into <u>ACH</u> operational capacity.	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ
Is executing a sustainability strategy.	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ

Backbone organization

7. Please rate the extent to which your ACH's "backbone organization" currently...

	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Needs improvement	Don't Know
Effectively provides support for collaboration among ACH member organizations.	0	0	0	0	0
Provides the organization and administrative support needed to maintain ACH operations and activities.	0	0	0	\circ	0
Separates its own organizational agenda from the agenda of the collective ACH.	0	0	0	0	0

Community engagement

8. Please rate the extent to which your ACH currently...

	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Needs improvement	Don't Know
Has support from key community leaders for the ACH's mission and activities.	0	0	0	\circ	0
Communicates effectively with the broader community about the ACH mission and activities.	0	\circ	0	\circ	0
Engages the broader community with opportunities for public comment or participation.	0	0	0	0	0
Engages ethnically and racially diverse communities in ACH activities.	\circ	0	0	\circ	0

Overall feedback

9. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
My ACH has increased collaboration across organizations and sectors in our region.	0	0	0	0	0
My ACH is helping reduce duplication of efforts by forming linkages between organizations in our region.	\circ	\circ	\circ	\circ	0
My ACH is helping to align resources and activities across organizations and sectors in our region.	0	0	\circ	0	0
My ACH is making a positive contribution to health improvement in our region.	0	0	\circ	\circ	0
My ACH is addressing the broader issues that affect our region's health needs.	0	0	0	0	0
My ACH is effectively promoting health equity.	\circ	\circ	0	\circ	0
Participating in the ACH is a worthwhile use of my organization's time and resources.	\circ	0	\circ	0	0

10. Please indicate your overall level of satisfaction with how your ACH is currently operating:

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Not satisfied

- 11. What do you hope the ACH will accomplish in your region in the next year?
- 12. Are there any challenges you are worried the ACH will encounter in the next year?
- 13. Do you have suggestions about how to improve your ACH?
- 14. Do you have suggestions about how to improve the statewide ACH initiative?

Appendix D: Survey data, individual item results

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding and do not include "Don't know" responses. Total number of respondents (N) does not include "Don't know" responses treated as missing values.

Length of participation	N (total=383)	% respondents
<6 months	111	29%
6 months – 1 year	117	31%
1 -2 years	155	40%

Level of engagement	N (total=387)	% respondents
Very engaged	106	27%
Engaged	119	31%
Somewhat engaged	127	33%
Not engaged	35	9%

Overall satisfaction	N (total=340)	% respondents
Very satisfied	56	16%
Satisfied	168	49%
Somewhat satisfied	99	29%
Not satisfied	17	5%

Membership	N	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Needs	Don't know
					improvement	
Active engagement from key stakeholders	347	23%	46%	17%	14%	8%
Clearly defined roles	337	11%	35%	31%	23%	11%
Trust among members	325	13%	46%	26%	15%	14%
Members operating in the shared interest of the ACH	323	14%	42%	26%	18%	15%

Mission, goals & objectives	N	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Needs improvement	Don't know
Shared vision and mission	346	16%	46%	25%	13%	7%
Agreed on health priorities based on identified regional health needs	338	13%	42%	25%	20%	9%
Realistic action plan for one ACH project	313	11%	31%	25%	32%	16%
Made progress on a collective ACH project	291	11%	33%	26%	30%	22%
Members are investing resources in collective ACH projects	286	6%	35%	31%	29%	23%

Governance & operations	N	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Needs improvement	Don't know
Involves all members in decision-making	325	22%	44%	22%	11%	11%
Has an effective governance structure	323	18%	46%	22%	14%	12%
Communicates information clearly among members	339	30%	38%	19%	13%	7%

Has leaders who bring skills and resources	331	26%	47%	18%	9%	9%
Has leaders who promote and support effective collaboration	336	31%	43%	21%	6%	8%
Members are investing resources in ACH operational capacity	289	10%	36%	29%	26%	21%
Executing a sustainability strategy	273	8%	330%	26%	36%	25%

Backbone organization	N	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Needs improvement	Don't know
Effectively provider support for collaboration	322	25%	45%	21%	8%	12%
Provider administrative support needed for the ACH	325	31%	40%	20%	9%	11%
Backbone organization separates its own agenda from the ACH	303	28%	45%	18%	9%	17%

Community engagement	N	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Needs improvement	Don't know
ACH has support from key community leaders	318	11%	46%	26%	17%	12%
Communicates effectively with the broader community	316	8%	26%	28%	38%	12%
Engages the broader community with participation opportunities	308	7%	26%	28%	38%	14%
Engages ethnically and racially diverse communities	292	11%	30%	23%	36%	19%

Goals for regional ACH benefits	N	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Increased collaboration in our region	304	20%	67%	11%	2%	15%
Helping reduce duplication of efforts	268	9%	64%	22%	5%	25%
Helping to align resources	287	10%	71%	16%	2%	20%
Making a position contribution to regional health improvement	262	14%	72%	11%	3%	27%
Addressing the broader issues that affect regional health needs	304	18%	67%	13%	2%	15%
Effectively promoting health equity across the region	267	13%	67%	18%	3%	25%
Worthwhile use of my organization's time and resources	304	J27%	64%	7%	2%	15%