



Connecticut Highlights Need for Data on Maternal and Child Health

Information for State Health Policy Program

SUMMARY

During 1992 and 1993, a 25-member Interagency Work Group (IWG), under the leadership of the undersecretary of Connecticut's [Office of Policy and Management](#), sought to improve the state's health statistics in order to focus more clearly on the area of maternal and child health.

The project was part of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) *Information for State Health Policy* national program. It was designed as the planning phase of an effort which, if approved by RWJF, would have advanced into an implementation phase with funding from RWJF.

Key Results

Project staff:

- Facilitated a recommitment by the state to maternal and child health issues.
- Created an interest in a maternal and child health tracking system.
- Developed a data-sharing relationship with Connecticut hospitals.
- Assisted the newly-formed Strategic Planning and Information Division in the Department of Public Health and Addiction Services to integrate the project's accomplishments into its mission and functions.

Funding

RWJF supported this project through a grant of \$149,988.

Afterward

RWJF did not select Connecticut for implementation funding because the project never articulated a clear policy question of interest.

THE PROBLEM

Connecticut sought to improve health statistics in order to focus more clearly on the area of maternal and child health. Creating a strategic information and planning division was seen as a way to make health care for women and children a priority.

THE PROJECT

The project's 25-member Interagency Work Group (IWG), under the leadership of the undersecretary of the Office of Policy and Management, was the vehicle for setting the project's health policy agenda. It also provided a forum for policymakers on the IWG to discuss linking health data to policy development.

The project had a Technical Advisory Committee that shared expertise and technical information about state agency health data that could be accessed for policy development.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Facilitated a recommitment by the state to maternal and child health issues.** The project provided a forum for state policymakers in both the legislative and executive branches to recommit themselves to these issues as the state's major health priority. The project surveyed policymakers in both branches and, with an 83% return rate, found maternal and child health to be among the top seven priority areas.
- **Created an interest in a maternal and child health tracking system.** The project exposed policymakers to the ideas of Michael Campbell, a nationally recognized expert in performance accountability. Campbell worked closely with policymakers in Connecticut to help the state implement a performance accountability system related to health services for children.
- **Developed a data-sharing relationship with Connecticut hospitals.** The Connecticut Hospital Association and the Commission of Hospitals and Health Care began a dialogue with project staff on sharing a database to be used by state health policymakers.
- **Assisted the newly-formed Strategic Planning and Information Division in the Department of Public Health and Addiction Services to integrate the project's accomplishments into its mission and functions.**

The Office of Policy and Management believed that its efforts during Phase I began an awareness in Connecticut of the need for developing and implementing a data to policy link in the health care field. The project produced a model for developing health policy using accurate, comprehensive health data.

The state was not selected for Phase II funding because the project never articulated a clear policy question of interest.

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