



Title of Design Lab:

Embracing New Technology in Public Health Practice

Topic Champion(s):

- John Oeffinger, Texas Health Institute (THI)
- Lauren Czaplicki, Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI)
- Tom Kirchner, Legacy Foundation

Summary of session:

This design lab featured two public health institutes (Texas Health Institute and Louisiana Public Health Institute) who shared their general experiences, successes, and challenges with technology partnerships and solutions to support innovations in population health. Participants explored practical strategies for identifying mutually beneficial partnerships and technological solutions that address programmatic needs and research design.

Key Takeaway points:

1. It is critical to formulate research questions appropriately – example: studying the phenomenon or studying technology
2. Data drives technology – often allows for better collaboration/results – need leadership (example: Colorado has open source data across counties)
3. In technology, being the “first mover” (the first to develop a technology) can be very risky; risk must be weighed against potential benefit ; Research & Development can be very expensive
4. Challenge: use existing data or potential data creatively to impact health outcomes (point of sale tobacco, etc.)
5. Crowd or open sourced data collection – powerful but can be expensive, have a high bar to accessing in that platform/technology needs to be configured from scratch; often easier to utilize “out of the box” solutions; if you pay for a technology, you can hold someone accountable (open source may be limited in this regard)
6. Data collection and getting potential participants/community-level participants to utilize data can be difficult. There are many barriers that create inequalities – lack of access to technology, limited market access, and lifestyle/choice – big challenge in public health interventions. Can be increasingly expensive to intervene where populations have not adopted new technology standard; often cheaper to give these populations the new technology instead of intervening.

Action Steps:

At minimum, the group decided to engage in further discussion/dialogue to lead the way to collaboration, if appropriate.