Leveraging Public-Private Partnerships To Strengthen the Nation's Healthcare and Public Health Sectors

What are public-private partnerships?

The healthcare and public health sectors face complex issues that make it increasingly difficult for any single stakeholder to effect sweeping, positive change alone. **Public-private partnerships (PPPs)** are cooperative efforts between public, private and nonprofit actors to split resources and decision-making abilities and work toward specific outcomes in both steady-state and crisis conditions.

How do public-private partnerships strengthen the healthcare and public health sectors?

PPPs support the healthcare and public health system by bolstering **emergency response capabilities**, **accelerating innovation**, strengthening the supply chain and enhancing the **transfer of research and technology**. PPPs provide a framework for structured collaboration where health organizations can contribute their unique core competencies to advance a common goal.

✓ **PPPs integrate core stakeholder capabilities.**

Through PPPs, public- and private-sector stakeholders can leverage their respective assets, capabilities and expertise to achieve common goals.

Private-sector capabilities include:
Specialized knowledge, manufacturing ability, infrastructure and networks, logistical expertise and an ability to engage non-traditional partners.

The public sector can:
Coordinate and manage different agencies and effect change through policy and regulation.

Benefits from PPP participation include:
Extending program and message reach, gaining an increased understanding of local circumstances, and identifying areas for innovation and future partnership.

✓ **PPPs support healthcare equity.**

Collaboration between public and private stakeholders can increase and improve outreach and healthcare access to historically marginalized communities, including those in rural and underserved areas. Partnerships can give public health initiatives access to updated technology or capitalize on the existing infrastructure of private industry, such as warehouse and storefront facilities, delivery routes and logistical resources. In a disaster, PPPs can improve the efficient use of resources as they did during the **COVID-19 vaccination rollout.**

✓ **PPPs bolster supply chain resilience.**

Supply chain resilience is the ability to prepare for and manage disruptions and shocks to the supply chain without significant interruption to patient care or healthcare delivery. PPPs can support resilience by proactively identifying potential disruptions and modifying operations to avoid delays. When the supply chain is strained, PPPs can provide relief through surge production and procurement. Additionally, they can strengthen the supply chain by bringing together the operations experience of the private sector to public sector programs.

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How can PPPs be structured for maximum effectiveness?

PPPs are most effective when they have sustainable funding, local and regional support, successful communication, effective marketing plans, flexible but responsive leadership, and are rallied around a shared vision and scalability.

An effective PPP should include:

- Jointly agreed upon goals;
- Collaborative decision-making;
- Non-hierarchical structures and horizontal processes;
- A strong level of cooperation and transparency; and,
- Shared outcomes accountability.

This framework can alleviate concerns about information gaps, reporting burdens, costs and fear of inefficiency that may arise with new collaboration efforts.

PPPs in Action

PROJECT AIRBRIDGE

A partnership between the federal government and healthcare distributor companies to transport much-needed personal protective equipment (PPE) to the United States during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Supplies arrived by air within days, rather than the traditional weeks-long shipment timelines.

VACCINATION EQUITY INITIATIVE

A Microsoft-led PPP effort to create collaboratives with public health departments, community-based organizations and local businesses. These groups deploy technology platforms to address vaccine hesitancy and improve vaccination rates in historically marginalized and underserved communities.

SUPPLY CHAIN CONTROL TOWER (SCCT)

A data-sharing partnership between the federal government and healthcare supply chain companies, including distributors. The SCCT offers insights into the healthcare supply chain to better inform demand and enhance response capacities for surges during emergencies that impact public health.

Public- and private-sector stakeholders should consult previously successful PPPs to determine potential opportunities for future collaboration. Local stakeholders engaged in past PPPs should be reengaged to improve the efficiency of relevant future projects.

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Recommendations to Inform Planning, Coordination and Response

1. Invest resources in establishing PPPs during steady-state and crisis conditions.

2. Leverage prior collaboration between publi-sector entities and private industry to build on existing relationships and infrastructure from previous PPPs.

3. Partner with the private sector to employ expertise, existing infrastructure, networks, relationships, manufacturing abilities and technologies whenever possible.

4. Solicit private-sector input in the development of data-sharing efforts to bolster supply chain resilience.

For more information, visit HDA.org/preparedness-and-response.

About the Healthcare Distribution Alliance

The Healthcare Distribution Alliance (HDA) represents primary pharmaceutical distributors — the vital link between the nation's pharmaceutical manufacturers and pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics and others nationwide. Since 1876, HDA has helped members navigate regulations and innovations to get the right medicines to the right patients at the right time, safely and efficiently. The HDA Research Foundation, HDA's nonprofit charitable foundation, serves the healthcare industry by providing research and education focused on priority healthcare supply chain issues.

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