



## Take 2: Quick Hits of Reflections & Advice from Population Health Network Leaders

### Part Two: Reinvigorating Integrative Networks

#### Introduction

In [our introduction to this four-part series](#), Nemours associates leading our portfolio of work related to integrative activities within population health networks described the journey that we have been on with nine communities across the United States that participated in our [Integrator Learning Lab](#) between January and September of 2020. Each of the participating networks received customized technical assistance from Nemours and other [expert faculty](#) on topics including:

- Equitable Governance Structures & Distributed Leadership;
- Embedding Equity Strategies within Population Health;
- Cross-Sector Data Sharing;
- Articulating the Value Proposition of Your Network; and
- Financing & Sustainability.

[The nine networks](#) were represented by partners from a range of sectors including (but not limited to) health care, public health, community development, government, higher education, early childhood education, social services, and impact philanthropy. While each network was at a different stage of maturity, all of the networks were connected by a shared commitment to achieving health equity through resident-led systems change and an ongoing commitment of multi-sector partners to attend to the overall health and well-being of the community.

For more information on our broader work related to integrative activities within population health networks, [click here](#).

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Throughout the Integrator Learning Lab, we encouraged participants to be “leaders and learners.” In each part of this series, we lift up the leadership and experience of Learning Lab participants, inviting you to **Take 2 - two reflections and two pieces of advice** from individuals deeply involved in making population health networks work.

#### SERIES TOPICS INCLUDE:

1. **Forming Integrative Networks**
2. **Reinvigorating Integrative Networks**
3. **Planning for Network Sustainability**
4. **Deepening Community Engagement**



### Take 2: Reflections on Reinvigorating Integrative Networks

As we closed the Lab, we asked our partners from Flathead County, MT and Washington, DC to reflect on the question below. Their two primary reflections follow:

#### Q Question

**What are some unique challenges related to reinvigorating or changing the direction of an existing multi-sector network that is focused on health equity?**

#### R Reflections

##### **Challenge #1 = Transitioning to a new leadership structure.**

Taking a new direction for network partners often necessitates that we re-think whose voices should be privileged in future iterations of the work. This may mean partners sharing or giving up power to other partners and community residents. As integrators in our networks, we take on the dual challenge of onboarding new leaders while preparing previous leadership to make space at the table for new voices without losing their enthusiasm.

##### **Challenge #2 = Celebrating past successes during a transition.**

It takes a lot to revitalize a network that has an established history; whether that means taking an entirely new direction or adding significant components to the network’s strategy. A key strategy for keeping partners engaged during our transitions has been to celebrate milestones achieved while we communicate new bold goals to further our networks’ impact.

### Take 2: Advice for the Field

Our colleagues' responses to the question above, combined with insights from our broader portfolio of work on integrative activities within population health networks, leads us to offer two pieces of advice for the field:

#### **A** Focus on the opportunity that a re-fresh provides.

As our partners mentioned, pivoting the direction of a network can send mixed signals to existing and potential partners. Integrators would do well to focus on the availability of new data that point to an opportunity to change direction and have an even greater impact on the issues that a network is seeking to impact. This will help networks innovate and continue to stay relevant to meet the urgent demands of the moment.

#### Be prepared to loosen the reins.

Our colleagues' responses lead us to consider how difficult it is to “let go” of something that you have started. Integrators that are re-assessing their direction need to do the difficult work of assessing how they can support and grow new leaders while honoring the on-going role of leaders that have helped the network achieve success to this point.

### Thoughts?

We invite you to share feedback by adding comments below [our blog post introducing this series](#), Tweeting us at [@MHCUpstream](#), or by emailing us at [MHCUC@Nemours.org](mailto:MHCUC@Nemours.org).

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### Words from Our Partners

“What would we do differently? I think it would have been great if we could have engaged our members and our new leadership even earlier in the process.”

“Just because we have done it this way, doesn't mean we have to continue to do it this way... let's try to think more strategically about how we try new things.”

“I think we try to celebrate when we can & elevate members to participate in our meetings. We even added in 30 minutes check-in calls twice a month to share what our member organizations [are] doing around providing health care services and how we can take policy actions to address those areas.”