

How COVID-19 Impacted Community Health Coalition Functioning and Strategies Used to Adapt

Luke Vandeventer¹, Dennis Savaiano²

¹Indiana University School of Medicine; ²Meredith Professor of Nutrition Science Purdue University and Director of CTSI Connections IN Health

Background/Objective Community health coalitions are important resources for positively impacting health. Recent research analyzed how COVID-19 affected health coalition operations. This literature review examined both gray and peer reviewed literature to investigate the effect.

Methods: A manual search of the Association for Clinical and Translational Science's (ACTS) – *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science (JCTS) 2022 Abstract Supplemental Volume 6 – Issue – s1* and the American Public Health Association's (APHA) 2021 Poster Session – *PS1042.0 School Health & Wellness: Promoting School Health through Innovative Programs and Partnerships* was performed. Additionally, the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), PubMed, and OVID databases were searched for relevant articles. In total, 3393 articles were provided by the search strategy and 114 remained after removal of the duplicates, title, and abstract screening. After full-text examination, 52 were included for analysis.

Results: Of the 52 articles analyzed, 19 discussed pausing in-person coalition activities, 7 discussed member commitment or enthusiasm, 6 indicated decreased funding, 4 indicated a change in meeting frequency, and 1 indicated decreased attendance. Additionally, 42 articles mentioned incorporating technologies to communicate virtually. The three most common virtual communication methods were phone [voice call] (22), email (19), and unspecified (18). Twenty-three articles indicated new or existing health coalition partnerships were leveraged to rapidly establish trust with communities.

Conclusions: Incorporating virtual communication technologies was commonly used to avoid communication disruptions during the pandemic, but the variable impacts should be considered in future public health crises. Furthermore, the study determined a viable option to rapidly establish trust with new communities may be leveraging existing—or creating new—partnerships with organizations that have long-standing ties with target communities.

Impact and Implications: This paper serves as a resource for possible strategies that health coalitions can incorporate into their operations to potentially improve resilience in public health crises until additional research is conducted.