

POPULATION HEALTH FORUMS

Population Health Readiness

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September 9, 2015

The Fall Forum season began with a fitting and timely presentation on population health by Dr. Wayne Giles, the Director of the Division of Population Health within the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Dr. Giles first outlined the broad scope of CDC's population health initiatives and used the phrase "cross-cutting and emerging issues in prevention" to capture the essence of public health today. The CDC's strategic directions include: global health and health security; leading causes of death and better prevention of the leading causes of illness, injury, disability and death; and strengthening of public health and health care collaborations.

Referring to [Kindig's](#) classic definition of population health, Giles emphasized determinants of health that influence health outcomes. In particular, he stressed the geopolitical jurisdiction as an important factor

in population health. He also described the drivers of health, leading causes of death and actual causes of death. Through the use of [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System \(BRFSS\)](#) data he shared key trends in the U.S. and Pennsylvania for obesity, diabetes, blood pressure, and smoking.

Giles tipped us off to the U.S. Surgeon General's [National Call to Action on Walking](#) which was formally announced just a few hours after the Forum. Known as *Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities*, this initiative promotes the health benefits of walking and addresses issues related to lack of safe and convenient places to walk. Dr. Giles discussed the importance of opportunities for physical activity, safer conditions in communities, and access to healthier food.

Using the expanded chronic care disease model, Dr. Giles explained the challenges of the patient-provider relationship in influencing change. Despite the limited time frame of these encounters, he believes that the interaction can be extremely influential in creating the bridge to behavior change and healthier outcomes.

Giles described categories of population health activities and highlighted the CDC's [Partnerships to Improve Community Health \(PICH\)](#), an initiative designed to support communities, improve health and reduce chronic disease through evidence-based strategies. For example, Boston Public Health Commission implemented city-wide strategies to improve built environment for walking and biking.

Dr. Giles went on to discuss emerging opportunities in population health such as the [National Healthy Worksite Program \(NHWP\)](#), a program aimed at improving the health of workers and their families and reducing the risk of chronic disease. The program also supports the promotion of sustainable workplace health activities and forming community partnerships and health coalitions.

Dr. Giles concluded his presentation by sharing a wealth of CDC resources including:

[The Community Health Improvement Navigator](#), [Sortable Risk Factors and Health Indicators](#), [The Guide to Community Preventive Services](#), and [CDC Fellowship Opportunities](#).

