



Transforming Community Initiative 2.0

Phase One Planning Summary Report

(July 2022 – November 2022)

WHAT IS IT:

Transforming Community Initiative (TCI) is a Springfield Community Initiative funded by Trinity Health of New England/Mercy Medical Center. Mercy Medical Center (MMC) has up to \$350,000/year for the next four years to address health and racial justice in Springfield.

Transforming Communities Initiative's goals are to:

- Advance health equity
- Advance racial justice
- Give community members the power to impact change in their community by sharing their voice and opinions with decision-makers.

HOW WE DID IT:

Trinity Health /Mercy Medical Center (MMC) contracted with two organizations to support the TCI Planning phase.

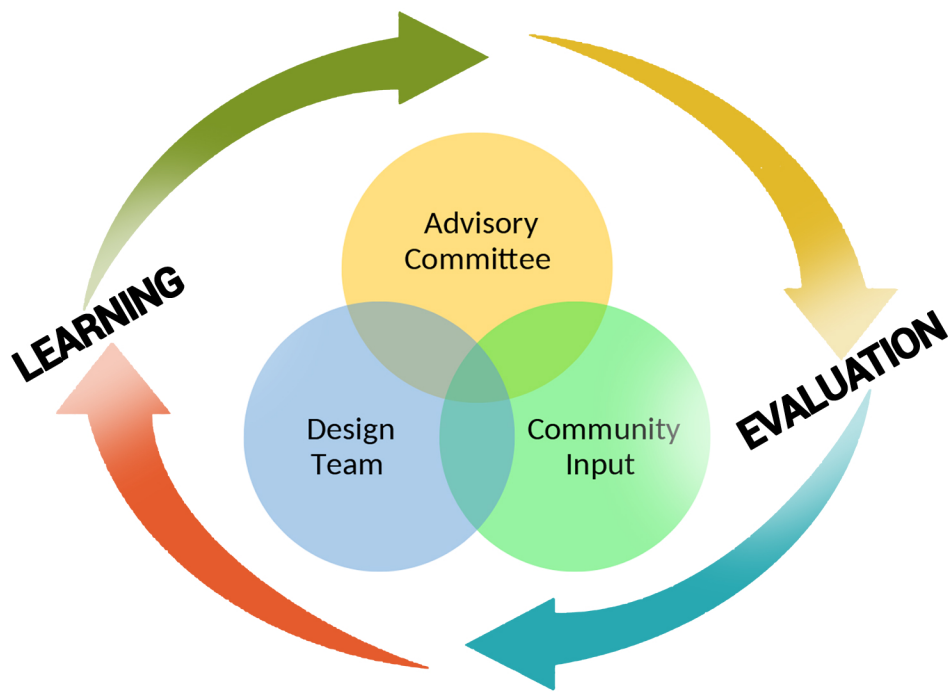
- The Public Health Institute of Western MA (PHIWM) developed and led a community engagement process that helped us narrow down the topics in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to 2 priority issues: Housing/Homelessness and Mental Health/Trauma.
- Partnership in Practice Learning & Evaluation (PIP) served as a thought partners and convener of in-person meetings to slow down, enable relationship building, reflection and synthesis.

We approached the Planning Phase with this Framework to help get everyone on the same page:

- What Impacts Health – a discussion of the importance of social determinants of health such as housing, education, income, transportation etc.
- Levels of Racism – internalized; interpersonal, institution and structural
- What it means to “move upstream” - trying to get at the root cause of an issue and fixing that rather than the individual experience or behavior.
- Focusing on Policy, Systems and Environmental change, in order to ensure sustained changes of the root causes of inequities.

La Iniciativa para la Transformación de las Comunidades o (TCI) w/ Spanish subtitles





Who

What

Why

Design Team	PHIWM, MMC	Weekly Prep/Meetings	Narrowing Process from 19 issue indentified in CHNA to 8
Advisory Committee	10 organizations, 4 residents	6 meetings – 145 hours work	Review 8 topics; add 1 more: Mental Health. Narrowed to 2 priority Issues: Housing & Homelessness; Mental Health & Trauma
Committee Input	Sessions led by organizational partners and PHIWM	5 sessions (Zoom, Brightwood Library, ROCA, SE Community Center, NNCC)	Online community survey completed by = 390 residents
Learning & Evaluation	PIP, MMC, all Advisory Committee (AC) partners	Bimonthly reflecting & synthesizing with MMC	AC conversations: 3 conversations, 22 participants

The Design Team – PHIWM staff and Trinity Health/MM staff worked together to organize the process and convene the gatherings, take notes, and respond to feedback. This group met in between the Advisory Committee meetings to talk about the last meeting and frame the next steps in the process. The work of the design team included: planning sessions, organizing meetings, reaching out to community members and community-based organization leaders, developing communication tools such as the video, launching a survey of residents, and running the sessions. The Design Team took the 19 CHNA priorities (that had been named priorities by the community) and decided to focus on Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) which narrowed the number to 8.

The Advisory Committee was made up of local community-based organization leaders and community residents.

- Gandara Center
- Mass UP Springfield
- Mercy Medical Center
- Neighbor to Neighbor
- New North Citizens Council
- Partnership in Practice
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- ROCA
- South End Community Center
- Springfield Dept of Health and Human Services
- Springfield Food Policy Council
- Springfield Office of Housing
- Square One
- Way Finders

This group met 6 times over Zoom, convened by PHIWM, to narrow the topics and learn about what it means to organize a project that uses a racial equity lens while focusing on Policy, Systems and Environmental change. The AC was diverse in focus and collectively supported a set of community agreements on how to engage in this project and a framework to help get us on the same page (see above).

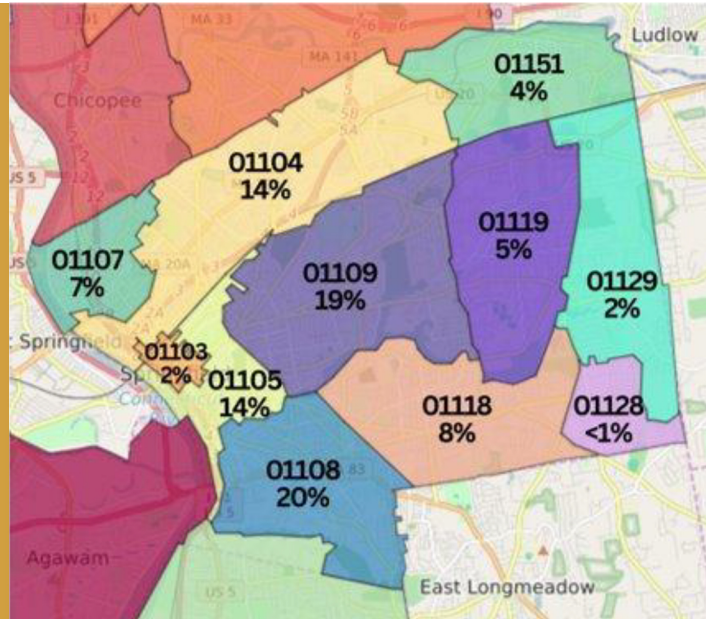
After the first meeting we turned to the findings of the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and discussed the issues that were identified as needs in the community. The Advisory Committee voted to add Mental Health as a priority given the crisis being faced by many community members. Mental Health is not categorized as a SDOH issue, rather it is seen as a potential outcome of poor SDOH conditions. Thus, we were working with 9 priority issues to start the narrowing process.

Over the next 3 meetings information was presented about the topics; assets and challenges were discussed; a straw poll was conducted and discussion about each of the topics took place. Then we held a poll to determine which topics were a priority for the Advisory Committee. This process narrowed the number of topics to four: food access and security; housing and homelessness; mental health; and violence and trauma.

Throughout this process many conversations about the issues of racial equity and justice, structural racism and historical prejudice took place.

Community Input – The next step was to engage community members on a larger scale to hear from them about priorities. Meetings took place in community settings with two events convened by PHIWM and three by Advisory Committee member agencies. We also completed an on-line survey.

- 390 Respondents
- 92% (357) are Springfield residents (many also work in Springfield)
- 4% (16) work (but do not live) in Springfield
- 4% don't live or work here OR left the answer blank



Learning & Evaluation: Partnership in Practice staff met twice monthly with MMC staff as a “thinking partner” to touch base about the Prioritization Process, offer approaches to centering racial equity in practices, to reflect on opportunities for improvement, while staying true to the grant guidelines. Due to the condensed and time bound nature of the Prioritization Process, it became evident that offering additional voluntary (and compensated) moments to slow down, share stories and experiences could deepen the impact of the Prioritization Process. Partnership in Practice offered additional meeting times for relationship building and reflection, hosting two in-person Community Conversations and a final Celebratory Dinner (with a total of 22 participants) to hear back from the AC members in a less formal manner that incorporated additional qualitative data collection to be used to contextualize the data being shared in the PHI meetings. These meetings focused on learning more about each of the partners by asking prompting questions:

- What is going on in your world right now with the folks in your community; what are you seeing (given the current issues of the economy, polarization of wealth, extreme weather, the rawness of racism and police violence to name a few)?
 - What is at the heart of the matter?
 - Given what you have heard do you want to comment further? How has it made you feel, do you have reflections that you'd like to share?
- The in-person conversations allowed folks to “Make space for the nuances that inform the process. For laughter and for some of the hard issues - we were able to embrace them as they landed.”

TCI Planning Process

Month	Activity
July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Convening of TCI Advisory Committee• Understand Community charge and goals• Review Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)• Advisory Committee Conversation
August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design Team identified 9 community health topics for the Advisory Committee to focus on based on social determinates of health needs• Review Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)
September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advisory Committee narrowed sown to 4 community-based needs for community input• Advisory Committee Conversation
October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outreached for community input through community conversations and city-wide survey• Advisory Committee review community feedback and narrowed to house and mental health
November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design team summarized planning process and prep for phase 2 of the planning phase• Advisory Committee Conversation

Reflections of the Planning Process:

We learned that the design of this process, which was organized quickly due to the deadlines outlined by Trinity Health put pressure on us all. It was unclear at times if the process would work or if we had enough time to really digest all the materials provided. (The Community Health Needs Assessment is over 175 pages!) No process is ideal, and we did the best we could, given the parameters. Adding Partnership in Practice-led sessions provided additional opportunities for participants to share stories and concerns, take time and share meals together. Themes that surfaced in the discussions will be central to the way processes are developed moving forward:



Themes from Advisory Committee Conversations

- Doing things differently is important – “Being and thinking together needs to be part of this process.”
- Racism and inequity are part of our history “People are experiencing generations of trauma and poverty.”
- The community is strong and able to solve problems, but people are tired. “People in the communities know what they need.”

Those who participated in both the Prioritization Activities and Conversations shared honestly and openly about what they know and have experienced as residents of Springfield.

Over the many hours of working together the group developed an understanding of different perspectives and began the process of building trust. It is also clear that many of the Advisory Committee members are committed to this project as is evident by the request for this report on our progress thus far and by the inquiries about “what is next”?

Timeline Going Forward

Nov-Dec. 2022

- Write contracts with the Learning and Evaluation Partner, PIP, and with the convenor, PHIWM,
- Clarify roles, expectations, and budgets.

Jan – June 2023

- An in-depth review to better understand the opportunities, the policy landscape, and the level of challenge for each of these topics.
- The Advisory Committee will finalize the topic by doing a deep dive into the potential policy and systems change that could take place for each topic.
- Organize a sub-set of partners to collaborate on the work.
- Form an Evaluation Committee
- Complete a Root Cause Analysis, Logic Model or Road Map; set of Guiding Principles and Partners; develop a Work Plan.

A Reflection from Mary Stuart

Executive Director of Community Health and Wellbeing, Trinity Health of New England/Mercy Medical Center



I moved into my role at Mercy in January of 2022. Although I live in western MA, I did not know the Springfield community and had to learn the work of my department within the hospital and the Springfield community. From the start I felt welcome into the work. Projects such as the MASS Up Collaborative and the Health Services for the Homeless Program (a partnership between Mercy and the city of Springfield) have proven to be meaningful and impactful partnerships.

When I learned we would be awarded a TCI grant for a 2nd round I was excited to deepen and expand partnerships. Thus far we have engaged in a process that has helped us better understand the

community priorities and to imagine what we can do together to make a difference. TCI is both an opportunity and a challenge. I'm no longer worried about the challenge now that I have met so many residents who care about Springfield and seen the strength of your commitments to this work, the way you care for each other, the generosity you have shown me, and the compassion you have for those who are suffering. I am honored be included into your community and I will do my best to be successful. Please reach out if you have questions or anything you want to share.



Partnership in Practice
Working to work better.



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