

# Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country: Community-Clinical Linkages

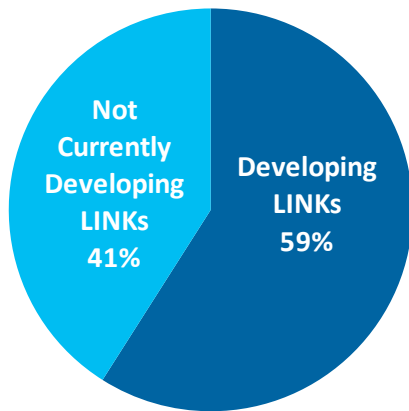


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**What are Community-Clinical Linkages?** Community-Clinical Linkages are **LINKs** between the community and clinical sectors aimed at improving population health. In a tribal setting, this may look like a tribe and a local tribal health program creating a **LINK** to serve community members. The community sector includes “community wide efforts that impact the social and built environments, such as improving food access, walkability or bikeability, tobacco use and exposure, or personal safety.”<sup>1</sup> The clinical sector includes “places where people go to receive preventive care or treatment, or emergency health care services, such as hospitals, private doctors’ offices, and community clinics.”

## Goals of Community-Clinical Linkages:

1. Form partnerships
2. Coordinate care delivery
3. Promote patient, family, and community involvement
4. Track patients across sectors to ensure positive change occurs
5. Share resources across sectors
6. Improve population health



## How many ACORNS grantees are currently developing Community-Clinical Linkages?

Over half of ACORNS grantees (59%; 13 of 22) indicated they are currently developing policies or programs to increase **LINKs**.<sup>2</sup> Among those grantees developing **LINKs**, 77% (10 of 13) are doing so in *Work and/or Tribal Settings*. Furthermore, many grantees (39%; 5 of 13) are already in the process of *implementing LINKs*, while others (31%; 4 of 13) are working to *formulate or adopt policies*. The remaining 31% (4 of 13) of ACORNS grantees are still in the process of *defining the problem or setting an agenda* for **LINKs**.

### Strengths of LINKs for ACORNS Grantees

Tribal and volunteer support  
Community buy-in  
Community Health Representatives

### Challenges of LINKs for ACORNS Grantees

Staff and client resistance to change  
Lack of transportation  
Limited staff and client availability across sectors

## Call to Action

Among ACORNS grantees who indicated they are not currently developing **LINKs**, 89% (8 of 9) said they would like to develop **LINKs** in the future.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Change Tool Healthy Communities Program. <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/healthycommunitiesprogram/tools/change.htm>. Accessed March 22, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> ACORNS Quarterly Report. January 2016. Grant Contact: Virginia Hedrick. <http://crihb.org/acorns>.



<h2 style="text-align: center;">Tips for Developing a Community-Clinical Linkage</h2>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Examples from ACORNS Grantees</h2>
<p><b>Set an Agenda</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Identify the health problem(s) and coordination needs of people served</li> <li>⇒ Identify a potential relationship across sectors to <b>LINK</b> people in need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Utilize the CHANGE Tool and Community Action Plan to make a plan</li> <li>⇒ Network with nearby Diabetes support services to <b>LINK</b> the local tribal health program and community resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build &amp; Partner</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Set up systems for referral and tracking of people served across sectors</li> <li>⇒ Recognize health outcomes of interest and how to measure these outcomes using data</li> <li>⇒ Establish necessary Memoranda of Understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Provide culturally informed nutrition and physical activity courses for students at risk for chronic diseases</li> <li>⇒ Teachers may <b>LINK</b> students to the school nurse to track student height, weight, and blood pressure monthly</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implement &amp; Track</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Start linking, referring, tracking, and sharing across sectors!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Refer diabetic patients to get blood drawn and to meet with RN who then <b>LINKs</b> the patient to food and exercise classes in the community</li> <li>⇒ Have RN provide educational support as necessary</li> <li>⇒ Have RN track lab results monthly and share lab results and class attendance with health program staff and physicians</li> </ul>

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