UNC Healthy Solutions uses 21st century solutions to help agencies, foundations, organizations, and citizens transform communities to achieve equitable health and social outcomes.

We operate as a service-oriented team within the Department of Health Behavior at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. We enjoy working with local, state and national organizations.

Our team is located within a major research institution, and we specialize in tailoring research-tested methods to build program capacity and promote the use of policy, environmental, and system strategies.

Our Team
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Building Program Capacity
To help build program capacity we seek to understand the skills and needs of an organization. From this foundation we foster collaboration to strategically plan for effective and sustainable capacity development.

For organizations already implementing projects, we use action-oriented and real-time evaluation methods and provide feedback to enhance opportunities and promote innovation.

We are highly skilled in designing and facilitating workshops for adult learners. We tailor workshops and mentoring sessions to the level of skill and experience of participants, and we can provide technical assistance to sustain the learning. As faculty and lecturers, we help cultivate the future workforce by teaching and mentoring graduate and undergraduate students.

Using Policy, Environmental, and Systems Strategies
We encourage groups to promote healthy living by ensuring a supportive infrastructure for healthy behaviors. For example, people can be more physically active when they have sidewalks for safe walking, worksite policies encouraging active commuting, and school policies supportive of student physical activity. These structural strategies can help transform the health of an entire community, however many public health professionals do not have experience applying them. We create a supportive and welcoming setting for anyone learning the skills to diagnose and improve policies, built environments, and systems for healthy living.
Policy Skills Instruction. Our competency-based curriculum teaches professionals how to apply policy solutions to public health problems. The curriculum consists of five skills-based courses: 1) problem definition; 2) policy analysis; 3) advocacy; 4) implementing rules and regulations; and 5) evaluation. The copyrighted curriculum is supported by the Directors of Health Promotion and Education (DHPE) with CDC funding. We also serve as the “master trainers” for the curriculum. For more information visit: www.ShapingPolicyForHealth.org.

Policy, Systems, Environmental Change. We provide strategic guidance and technical assistance to national, state, and local organizations seeking to use policy, system and environmental strategies. For NC CTG and CPPW Projects, we helped design the project strategies, and suggested infrastructure adjustments to better respond to opportunities and challenges. For CPPW, we designed and advised a statewide, multi-agency policy intervention to improve physical activity opportunities in NC. The project included an extensive policy analysis to help four state agencies (Commerce, DENR, DHHS, DOT) plan new policy objectives.

Coordinated Chronic Disease Planning. We guided a participatory process to coordinate chronic disease planning in North Carolina based on disease burden, modifiable risk factors, and evidence-based strategies.

Injury Prevention. We have delivered program planning, evaluation, technical assistance and training services to the national Indian Health Service (IHS) injury prevention program. Since the mid-1990s we have established effective collaborations with IHS headquarter, area and district offices and over 130 tribal entities. We also have guided statewide strategic planning for the NC Injury Branch.

Leadership and Management Capacity. We provide training and consultation to better integrate public health principles with human capital management. We work with public agency executives and managers in multiple states to help them enhance their leadership skills. We also help project teams improve their communication dynamics.

Cultural Respect. For almost 20 years, we have cultivated close alliances with American Indian tribes and Alaskan native populations. These relationships have helped us develop a uniquely respectful approach toward serving culturally and geographically diverse populations, especially groups experiencing health and social inequities.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA). We developed a 2-day HIA workshop that provides an interdisciplinary experience for public health professionals and land-use/transportation planners. Participants learn to use several tools to screen, scope and plan an HIA project.

Walking and Bicycling Environments. For AARP, the NC Division of Public Health, and regional non-profits we developed tools and training for communities to audit their local built environments for walking and bicycling. With these data communities can advocate for improvements. To download the tools visit: www.unc.edu/~jemery/WABSA.

Environmental Health and Justice. With the Exchange Project we promoted dialogue among professionals and communities striving for environmental health and justice. The project is designed for use by professionals, communities and schools. For more information visit our website: www.ExchangeProject.unc.edu.