

Agner J, Pirkle C, Irvin L, Maddock, JE, Buchthal OV, Yamauchi J, Starr R, Sentell T. Building a Culture of Health: Insights from 18 Years of a Multisector, Theory-Based, Statewide Program to Prevent Chronic Disease in Hawai'i. International Union for Health Promotion and Education World Conference. Rotorua New Zealand. April 2019.

Background/Objectives. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recently introduced the Culture of Health Action Framework (CHAF) describing components for building a culture of health: (1) making health a shared value, (2) fostering cross-sector collaborations, (3) creating healthier, more equitable communities, and (4) integration of health services and systems. New programs were initiated under this model, but a rich history by a mature program across CHAF domains is absent from the literature. In 2000, the Hawai'i Department of Health formalized the Healthy Hawai'i Initiative (HHI) –a major, long-term, state-wide effort to encourage healthy lifestyles and promote environments, policies and system changes across all communities– effectively building a “culture of health” before this was the terminology.

Methods. We analyse 18 years of HHI through the CHAF lens to identify synergies, successes, and challenges. Data are derived from document review and 10 in-depth key informant interviews.

Results. Creating a shared vision of health across stakeholders was a crucial first step. This included deliberate concept mapping and a formative vision based explicitly on the socioecological model. Theoretical grounding provided shared language and goals to support cross-sector collaboration. The long-term vision provided time to develop trust across diverse stakeholders, which then generated leverage and collaboration to pass large-scale health promotion policy (e.g., School Wellness in 2004; Complete Streets in 2009; “Tobacco 21” in 2015). A new state data warehouse illuminated cross-sector policy impacts and suggested future actions. Successful legislative efforts, with media campaigns, helped change community norms. This has led to healthier, more equitable communities; Hawai'i is the second healthiest state with the longest lived population. Strengthening the integration of health services and systems is a more recent focus, propelled by federal-funding for secondary chronic disease prevention, necessitating new collaborations and shared visions. Resolving health disparities driven by social/economic factors remains an important challenge to health equity.

Discussion. This study illuminates synergies of the CHAF components in action over time, supports evidence-based public policy, and provides insights for other communities at earlier stages of multifaceted system change.