REIMAGINING THE EXPERIENCE OF HEALTH

WHATS NEW?

Status check and a way forward

During September 2019, WellConnect(R) members evaluated work already accomplished and identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges we have and face as an organization. Next, we drafted a strategic plan that integrated findings from an organizational analysis, implemented the plan in 2020, and refined the plan for 2021.

The numerous challenges with COVID 19 have: Reaffirmed the organizational vision and significance of continuing this work, clarified the need to advance knowledge and understanding of healthy aging, and fostered a redesign of the working structure and a re-imagining of program delivery and new partnerships necessary in order to reach all those who can benefit.

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WellConnect team members have:

**Reaffirmed the Vision:** To create a Well Care system.

**Clarified the Mission:** Provide a technology platform to promote evidence based health programs, enable collaboration between community members, health professionals, organizational partners, and support research that advances knowledge on healthy living and the systems that support this.

**Redesigned the organization structure:** Transitioned to 501c3 status; created a three committee structure (Evidence Based Programs/Intervention, Technology, and Current and Emerging Collaborations) enabling individuals to advise where most interested; established a Board (Sue Degallier, President, Scott Miller, Treasurer, Sue Davies, Secretary); created a research oversight committee, related policy and procedure to oversee research proposals to assure compliance with federal and state; refreshed the Organizational Agreement and participant release forms.

**Re-imagined how we work:** Organizations transitioned a number of evidence based programs to virtual learning formats (Zoom, Facebook Live, or Hybrid options); engaged in research that addressed barriers to this transition and created a virtual Learning Toolkit for both leaders and participants; updated and simplified the referral process; several individuals from region completed Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives (PEARLS) training and will pilot this mental health program option in 2021; added key organizations and individuals who provide this work, are interested in research, and engage with minorities and at risk populations (Hispanic and Latino, Somali, Veterans).

**Re-committed our focus:** The 2021 focal points include (a) expanding access and opportunity for individuals to evidence based programs in our region (b) provide a platform and portal that supports collaboration, innovation, and data analytics (c) enlarge the scope to all 11 Southeastern Minnesota counties and include new private and public partnerships. Expanded support: In addition to the Bush Foundation Funding, WellConnect was awarded $15,000 in grants from the Rochester Area Foundation and Southeastern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging to support the creation of an Online Learning Toolkit and to pilot a mental health evidence based program.
WHO'S NEW?

Board of Directors, Advisory Board, Committee Members, and Organizational Collaborators

WellConnect has developed and evolved due in large part to the founding 22 individuals who established the portal, platform, and provided the programs. Current members who have been with WellConnect for a substantial amount of time include: Aaron Leppin, Bob Bonacci, Connie Bogard, Chersten Keillor, Sue Degallier, Nicole Guerton, Bob Heath, Kelly Owens, Cassie Greenwood, and Sue Davies.

New organizations and members recruited over the past year include: Scott Miller, University of Minnesota; Ken Baerg, 125 Live; Kathy Scheid, Elder Network; Jackie Glynn, Family Services Rochester; Gwen Meyer, Mayo Trauma; Jennifer Holbein, St Olaf College; Susan Draves, University of Minnesota Extension (SNAP); Sean Kinsella, NAMI Southeast MN.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Meaningful and Impactful Next Steps

Our six 2021 initiatives:

1) Create and promote a robust list of evidence based program offerings in a variety of different formats (ex. virtual, in person, or hybrid) that engage diverse participants.

2) Support and promote programs offered in different languages (Spanish, Somali, Cambodian) that also address cultural needs (Somali male or female Staying Active and Independent for Life, SAIL program).

3) Address inequity of access to rural and underserved populations in our region.

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WHAT'S NEXT? (cont. from page 3)

4) Explore and support new evidence based programs or interventions that address the needs of our regional population (ex. PEARLS).

5) Streamline the referral process and complete portal updates. Build a robust database of participants that enables meaningful research.

6) Pursue grant funding and sustainable funding sources.

If you are interested in this work or work with individuals who could benefit from the evidence based programs supported by WellConnect, you are invited to contact info@wellconnectsemn.org for more information.