

Background/Problem Statement—“HOW TO CHANGE THINGS WHEN CHANGE IS HARD.”¹

The Alabama FITWAY Colorectal Cancer Prevention Program (the program) Director contacted the Professional Development & Conference Services (PD&CS) Division of the College of Continuing Studies requesting assistance, expertise and idea generation to improve and increase rates for the use of new colorectal screening/testing modalities. The program had previously identified and focused their efforts on physician testing selection, but the program staff recently decided to shift the target group focus to workforce health plans. The program staff set new goals to increase acceptance of new testing approaches through partnerships with organizational health plan representatives resulting in increased awareness among workers of screening/testing for colorectal cancer. The University of Alabama was asked to plan, organize, recruit and facilitate an organized approach to reach the new stated goal increase from 60% to 80% of Alabamians receiving colorectal cancer screening. The program has requested training, coaching, and consulting services toward that end goal.

Idea Generation and Collaboration Expertise/Knowledge Sharing with Requestor

The University of Alabama is widely recognized for its depth of services and expertise in providing knowledge resources and collaboration. The College of Continuing Studies is also seen as a strong resource for collaboration by connecting individuals, professional organizations and local businesses to solve problems and grow business enterprises.

The PD&CS Program Manager assigned to this program provided leadership and logistical expertise with the various resources of PD&CS support staff and shared the following ideas and suggested plan of action to meet the stated goal:

- Prepare program staff to identify and gather information from stakeholders
- Train program staff in planning development and consultative problem-solving
- Invite stakeholders to share information about organizational health plans
- Determine stakeholder awareness of colorectal cancer screening and its place in organizational health programs
- Gain insight about approaching and interacting with statewide organizational staff and decision makers
- Identify organizations to approach on a cohort basis, in statewide Focus Group settings
- Prepare a plan for approaching organizations, proposing colorectal cancer screening initiatives, collaborating on the integration of screening into health programs, and measuring outcomes
- For subsequent cohorts, apply lessons learned to planning and improving effective implementation
- Compare organizational acceptance goals for each cohort with actual goal achievement
- Document and apply lessons learned to subsequent cohorts
- Assess overall program progress to determine completion of this initiative
- Analyze outcomes and report overall progress

Outcomes

The PD&CS Program Manager and support staff planned, invited, and provided a full range of resources and logistical expertise for two large business employer stakeholder Focus Group sessions; one held in Birmingham, Alabama, and the other in Huntsville, Alabama. These full service Focus Group sessions were facilitated by an

experienced HR consultant with more than twenty years of leadership development, management and supervisory development, communication skills, mediation skills, and team training experience.

Following the completion of the second Focus Group session, the program director, Dr. Kathryn Chapman stated that the staff and services provided by the PD&CS Division of the College of Continuing Studies “were amazingly efficient and well- connected,” and she expressed great appreciation of the depth of resources that The University of Alabama and the Program Manager were able to provide. In addition, Dr. Chapman stated that "working with UA was invaluable to the ADPH to identify and engage extremely large employers to discuss population based screening. UA helped us understand the human resource professional and located a group of people who were not only interested in our initiative, but willing to spend a day discussing their companies' goals for health and wellness."

¹Title taken from “Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard,” by Chip and Dan Heath.