

UIC Solutions Suite Webinar Series

Transcript for how-to webinar on A Step-by-Step Guide for Planning and Conducting a Health Fair

Recorded by Pat Nemec

Slide 1:

Thank you for visiting the University of Illinois at Chicago's Health & Recovery Solutions Suite. The following recording comes to you from the UIC Center on Integrated Health Care and Self-Directed Recovery. Visit our online Solutions Suite to obtain free tools that promote health, self-direction, and employment for the behavioral health field.

Slide 2:

Hello. My name is Pat Nemec and I work as a consultant with Peggy Swarbrick at the Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey Wellness Institute. Peggy and I assist with activities at the UIC Center on Integrated Health Care and Self-Directed Recovery, which offers a Solutions Suite of free health, self-direction, and employment tools for the behavioral health field. You can visit the Solutions Suite on the website where you found this webinar, at www.center4healthandsdc.org.

Slide 3:

Today, I'll be discussing how to use one of the tools found in our Solutions Suite, called *A Step-by-Step Guide for Planning and Conducting a Health Fair*. We created this tool through a joint project by the UIC Center and the Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey Wellness Institute. The UIC Center and its Solutions Suite are jointly funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Community Living; and by the Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The work of the Center does not necessarily represent the policy of any agency or endorsement by the federal government.

Slide 4:

There are several learning objectives for this webinar. You'll hear about the purpose and format of the *Step-by-Step Guide for Planning and Conducting a Health Fair*. You'll also learn about what a health fair is and how it can benefit participants. I will cover some details about how to you can make a health fair happen, what should be included, and the qualifications and training needed for health fair staff and volunteers.

Slide 5:

A health fair is an event where people can access brief health screenings for different medical conditions. You may have seen signs for free blood pressure screening at a local pharmacy. Or, you may have noticed ads about free screening for vision, hearing, or dental health at a local school. A health fair offers similar free screenings to assess risks for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and other serious health conditions. Health fairs also can provide information on self-help and other local resources, health care and related services, cooking demonstrations, and even brief exercise classes. A free health fair encourages people to learn about their health status and health risks in a low-key environment. It can reach people who would otherwise avoid going to the doctor, due to fear, cost, or simply lack of access.

Slide 6

There is an urgent need to pay attention to the physical health of people served by public behavioral health systems because they have a high rate of medical problems and are at risk for disease. Some studies have shown that they are dying 25 years earlier than the general population. A health fair is a one-stop location for health screenings, making it easy to access a health and wellness information in a single visit. When a health fair is specifically geared to people with mental health and substance use conditions, it provides an effective way to increase their awareness of their own health and wellness, while giving them the tools they need to reduce their risk of medical diseases and early death.

Slide 7:

Our *Step-by-Step Guide for Planning and Conducting a Health Fair* is a 168-page how-to manual. This *Guide* came out of a joint research project between the Center on Psychiatric Disability and Co-Occurring Medical Conditions at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey Wellness Institute. In this project, health fairs were organized and offered in four states, and screening data were collected. The early versions of the *Guide* were developed as a way to train project staff and to set up the health fairs in consistent ways. The team learned so much about the process of planning and conducting a health fair, and participants found them so useful, that offering a *Step-by-Step Guide* to the field seemed like a logical next step.

Slide 8:

People who attend a health fair gain general medical knowledge, specific information about their own health, and tips for preventing illness and improving wellness. Supportive staff and volunteers help participants make sense of their screening results, understand the information they receive, and identify specific steps they can take to improve their own health and wellness. Organizers and volunteers also benefit from networking with local resources, as they learn information and make connections that they can use later in their work and in their own lives.

Slide 9:

The manual is exactly what the title says; that is, *A Step-by-Step Guide for Planning and Conducting a Successful Health Fair*. It begins with reasons for offering a health fair and continues with details about organizing a planning committee, budgeting, thinking through the details of who you want to reach, when and where to offer a fair, and what booths or stations to include. The *Guide* provides instructions for setting up the screening stations, as well as a planning checklist and handouts with medical information. It also explains the importance of peer support for discussing the screening results. Finally, it suggests ways to plan for potential emergencies, such as discovering that a person has dangerously high blood pressure.

Slide 10:

Health fairs are usually organized into stations. I'll describe 11 stations that we included in our fairs and provide greater detail about them later in this webinar. Some stations were logistical, such as a check-in or welcoming station, and a check-out station. Other were testing stations to measure things such as body mass index, glucose and diabetes, lipids and triglycerides, blood pressure, and heart health. Two lifestyle stations assessed nicotine use and the use of alcohol and drugs. Another important station offered peer support for understanding screening results and

planning for next steps. For the remainder of this webinar, I will walk you through the different sections of our health fair manual to illustrate how you can use it to plan your own event.

Slide 11:

Each participant uses a personal health passport while going through the health fair. A health passport is a document that includes information about each test or screening, as well as space to record screening results from each station.

Slide 12:

The *Guide* begins with a description of the reasons to conduct a health fair specifically for people served by the public mental health system. The research study that I mentioned earlier informed our *Guide*. In that study, we learned that nearly half of the participants were smokers and over one-third of people screened were obese. Rates of high glucose, indicating diabetes or a risk of diabetes, also were high, at 14%, which is 7 times the rate found in the general population. Risk of heart disease also was high, at 10%, which is more than 3 times the rate found in the general population.

Slide 13:

Many people in our research study also had low health literacy, meaning they may have trouble finding, evaluating, understanding, or using health information. You may find the same at your health fair. You also may find that some participants doubt their ability to improve their health. They may benefit from support and encouragement, as well as learning about small lifestyle changes that can have a big effect on their health and wellness.

Slide 14:

Now let's take a look at some of the main tasks you will undertake when planning a successful health fair.

Slide 15:

In our *Guide*, we suggest that the first step in planning a health fair is to form a committee, since there are many tasks to complete in order for the health fair to be a success. Early on in the planning process, the committee needs to identify the people you want to reach.

Slide 16:

For example, do you want to include all of the people in recovery in a certain geographic area? Do you want to limit the fair to people who use services at your agency? Do you want to invite both service users and service providers? Do you want to target certain groups, like people over 50 or under 25? Maybe you want to open your health fair to an entire town or neighborhood, even if your primary aim is to support people in recovery.

Slide 17:

Once you have identified your desired participants, you need to figure out how to reach them. As described in our *Guide*, your marketing and advertising strategies will depend on who you hope to attract. For example, if you want to reach only people who use services in your agency, then your marketing will be quite local, and probably will rely heavily on direct personal connections. If you are reaching out to an entire community, then using flyers, newspaper advertisements, and

public service announcements may be needed. Any marketing materials should be carefully prepared to be inviting, respectful, and accurate. Proofread carefully and get input from the kind of people you want to reach. Starting your planning well in advance will ensure that you have enough time to get the word out.

Slide 18:

Participants will benefit from being prepared about what to expect from your health fair. For example, people need to know whether a blood testing station will require them to have fasted in advance, or whether a blood pressure station requires them to wear a short-sleeve shirt. You may want to recommend that people bring a list of their current medications to your fair. If mammograms will be offered, women need to know not to use lotion or deodorant on the day of the fair. If you'll be offering brief exercise sessions throughout the fair, participants can be told ahead of time to wear comfortable clothing and supportive shoes. Additionally, if parking, childcare, snacks, or lunch will be provided, let people know. Also, let potential participants know that peer support will be offered.

Slide 19:

For some people, emotional preparation to participate in your fair may be needed, especially if someone has had difficult experiences with health care services or has a family history of a serious health condition. When marketing your health fair in a face-to-face setting, you can offer reassurance and encouragement, explaining that the health fair staff and volunteers are well-trained and non-judgmental, and that everyone's privacy will be protected throughout the event.

Slide 20:

As explained in our *Guide*, choosing a site for your health fair is an important part of planning. Many of the decisions you make will affect your space needs, such as how many booths or stations you will have, and the number of stations that will require a private space. When choosing the venue, you also want to consider how easy it will be for participants to get there, as well as whether it has the amenities you need, such as electrical outlets, refrigeration, and running water. Our planning *Guide* provides a formula for estimating your needed square footage based on these types of considerations. In thinking about your venue, also consider your time requirements, such as whether your fair will be one afternoon, a whole day, or a multi-day event. Holding your fair at a time that coordinates with another event may make it easier or harder to find the right space. Including another group in your health fair, such as a mobile mammogram unit, can be a great idea, provided you include their space and resource needs in your plan. Be expansive and creative in considering community spaces, but also keep in mind that you want to be somewhere that is comfortable for your participants. Some community venues will be free, but others may charge a fee for using the space or hiring a custodian for the day. Be sure to budget for any space-related costs.

Slide 21:

A successful health fair requires adequate supplies and resources. As detailed in our *Guide*, what you need to order depends on what you are planning to offer. Informational resources, such as pamphlets about common health conditions or services provided by local clinics, are an obvious need. You may choose to offer snacks, drinks, or a meal. Supplies and equipment for each health screening station will be needed, which may include a refrigerator or Internet access. Office

supplies, such as pens, clipboards, and staplers also are necessary. The supplies needed for each station are described in our *Guide*, along with the general supplies you will need. You also need to plan for trash removal, including safe disposal of the used medical supplies, because they are considered a biohazard. Other resource needs, such as signs, paperwork, and freebies for participants, are described in detail in our *Guide*. Many resources you will need can be obtained through donations from public health departments, stores, vendors, and other local suppliers.

Slide 22:

Health fairs vary in the types of booths or stations that are offered. Our *Guide* describes 11 stations. The next section of this webinar covers each of these 11 stations. For each of these stations, we provide step-by-step instructions for how to operate it, along with a handout to post at the station containing these instructions, and a Station Results Recording Form for anonymously documenting individual test results for data collection purposes. You may choose to offer fewer, more, or different stations than we did. For example, you may want to include a station on local farmers' markets, nutrition, or dental health.

Slide 23:

The first station described in the *Guide* is parking. Although this is technically not a health fair station, including it on the list of stations reminds your planning committee to assign staff to organize parking and validation, drop off and pick up, shuttles, or any other transportation arrangements for participants, volunteers, and staff, as well as for partners and vendors.

Slide 24:

The first stop for participants is a reception station, or welcome booth. Registration is done here, and participants pick up their health passport or a pre-printed page for recording test results. As I mentioned earlier, a health passport is a document that includes information about each test or screening, as well as space to record personal results. A sample passport is included in our *Guide*, which I will describe a bit later in the webinar. People at this station are responsible for greeting participants and providing a brief orientation of what to expect, the right to skip or refuse any test or screening, how long the fair will take, and how to get started.

Slide 25:

The first screening station described in our *Guide* is for measuring body mass index, which indicates whether a person's weight falls into a category that suggests being at higher risk for various health conditions. Body mass index is calculated by taking a person's height, weight, and waist circumference. It's important to include this station because many preventable health conditions are complicated, or even accelerated, by being overweight or obese, including diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, arthritis, asthma, and sleep apnea. It's also important to include this station because certain types of medications lead to weight gain. We found that we had to purchase a digital scale that could weigh people up to 500 pounds, and we needed the longest tape measure available. Weight is a sensitive topic, and this station must be set up and staffed to assure privacy and support to help people feel okay about stepping on the scale.

Slide 26:

The next station described in our *Guide* is for glucose testing and diabetes screening. This station is important because many people in mental health recovery are at high risk for insulin resistance

and diabetes, which may be partially due to the use of psychiatric and other medications. The American Diabetes Association emphasizes that early detection and treatment of diabetes can decrease the risk of developing the complications of diabetes, such as skin and eye problems, nerve damage, and stroke.

Slide 27:

In our *Guide*, we recommend using the hemoglobin A1c test, which gives blood glucose levels over the past three months to determine whether a person has diabetes or pre-diabetes. Our *Guide* includes a description of the procedures, the supplies, and the equipment needed, as well as an emergency protocol for people with dangerously high glucose levels. This station requires a medically-trained worker, such as a nurse, to take a small drop of blood and to interpret the results. At our fairs, in order to avoid pricking people's fingers two different times, our nurses took slightly more blood than is normally required for the A1c test, so that they could use the extra drop to test people's lipids at the next station. For this reason, we located these two stations very close together.

Slide 28:

High blood cholesterol and triglycerides are a risk factor for heart disease, and it's very common for people in recovery to have elevated levels. This is why we offered a station to assess cholesterol and triglycerides. This station also is staffed by medically-trained personnel, such as a nurse. Most health fairs will use a non-fasting test of lipids. For the most accurate screening, however, a primary care provider would order a fasting test, where the person has had nothing to eat or drink besides water for the previous 10 to 12 hours. A non-fasting test is still useful as a screening tool, but you will need to encourage health fair participants whose test results indicate high cholesterol or high triglycerides to follow up with their primary care providers to discuss whether to undergo a fasting test.

Slide 29:

High blood pressure is a serious health risk that can lead to heart attack, stroke, kidney disease, and blindness. Because high blood pressure also is common among people with mental health conditions, blood pressure screening is an important station to include in your health fair. While taking a person's blood pressure is fairly simple to do, the *Guide* recommends using medically-trained personnel to ensure accuracy. Many people experience what is called "white coat syndrome" when having their blood pressure taken. This means that their pressure goes up just by virtue of having it measured. We found this to be fairly common at our fairs. So, we took a second reading for anyone whose blood pressure suggested that they had hypertension at the first reading. Many people's blood pressure went down after they sat with both feet on the ground, did some deep breathing, and relaxed for about 5 minutes. In addition to the step-by-step instructions for this station, the *Guide* includes a sample emergency protocol for people who are found to have extremely high blood pressure.

Slide 30:

A lifestyles station may include a variety of surveys on health habits that can put people at risk such as alcohol or drug use, sexual health practices, physical and emotional safety, or community exposure to toxins such as lead. Keep in mind that health fair participants may find some of these topics to be too sensitive or too personal to discuss, which may make some people avoid the

booth or even the health fair. This is one reason why preparing people in advance for your health fair is especially important. Potential participants can be told before they arrive what kinds of lifestyle risks will be assessed at your fair, and that they can skip any screening they don't want to do. While the staff for a lifestyles station do not require medical training, they do need to be skilled at obtaining honest answers while avoiding judgments that could shame or embarrass participants. Including someone in recovery from alcohol or drug abuse as the person who staffs this station may help participants feel more comfortable and open up about their current wellness habits and routines.

Slide 31:

A separate station looks at smoking and other forms of nicotine use. You probably know that smoking is associated with many health problems, such as lung disease, cancer, heart disease, and stroke. Dependence on tobacco is extremely common among people in recovery, so this is a very important station to consider at your health fair. There are various questionnaires that can be used to assess use of and dependence on nicotine, such as the Fagerstrom Test for Nicotine Dependence. In order to get accurate answers, and to provide the needed support to participants, station staff need to have a warm and accepting approach, as well as excellent communication skills. Using staff who are former smokers, or who are working on quitting, may help make participants feel more comfortable. It's important to have educational resources at this booth for people who want to learn more about how to cut down or quit smoking.

Slide 32:

Because many people in recovery have hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, sleep apnea, and other heart health risks, we recommend including a heart health station at your fair. For our heart health station, we administered the well-known Framingham Risk Assessment. This is done using a free web-based application that calculates a person's risk of heart attack within the next decade, along with how that risk compares to the risk of other people of the same age and sex. If you want to use this assessment, you'll need to be sure you have Internet access. If that isn't possible, then a paper version of this assessment is available. To do the calculation, people need to know their total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, systolic blood pressure, and smoking status. People also share their age, gender, and whether they use blood pressure medication. The screening provides a useful way to educate people about how their risk of heart attack changes if their cholesterol or blood pressure goes down, or if they could answer that they do not smoke. We located this station after all of the others, so that people could use their most recent values for the calculation.

Slide 33:

Our *Guide* emphasizes the importance of offering support at each station. A separate station also is recommended for peer support and resources. At this station, participants are given the opportunity to review their results with a peer and, together, they can talk about what the results mean and how the participant's life might be affected. Participants can get their questions answered, and discuss how to follow up with a doctor or other medical provider, if needed. Peers can also suggest other resources or provide more information that might be helpful. The chance to debrief with supportive peers gives participants hope that they can manage their health conditions and prevent new ones from developing. It's best if peers have specialized training as a health or wellness coach. If this isn't possible, then you should provide the peers with training

about how to talk with participants about test results, how to motivate participants to believe they can work on better health, and local resources in your community.

Slide 34:

The last screening station in the health fair is for check-out. Here, you can give any additional information people need, ask them to complete a satisfaction survey, and offer them a gift bag. If registration included a formal log-in process, this station can log-out each participant.

Slide 35:

In addition to these screening stations, we found it's important to add some fun to your health fair. Our participants enjoyed booths that offered cooking and nutrition demonstrations, Zumba, and yoga instruction. Two of the most popular stations we offered were for free chair massage and free foot massage. Participants, volunteers, and staff all loved these stations, and they helped create a fun atmosphere.

Slide 36:

Besides interactive or fun booths at your fair, you also might want to include booths staffed by experts in smoking cessation, diabetes, lung or heart health, or dental health. To staff and resource these booths, information and volunteers might be available from local chapters of the American Heart Association and the Lung Association. At the national level, the National Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health America offer health information and tips, and your local chapter may have related resources. The YMCA or YWCA and the Visiting Nurses Association may provide information or even participate in your fair. Local hospitals, medical clinics, sleep centers, and dental providers also may be able to offer resources or even volunteer their time. Large pharmacy chain stores and supermarkets may be willing to make contributions of the testing supplies or snacks for participants. Local organizations like a Rotary Club, Elks Lodge, or Chamber of Commerce may provide support, including space to locate your fair. Working with partners adds benefits and challenges, especially the time needed to reach out to these groups, so your organizing committee needs to consider all of the pros and cons of this sort of expansion.

Slide 37:

Once you know the number and types of booths you will offer, it's time to consider how to place them in the space you have available. Our experience suggests that it is best to place the stations in a specific order. For example, as I described earlier, we placed the 2 stations that required medically-trained personnel to draw blood close together, and we placed the heart health station last since it required information from most of the previous stations. If you plan to offer information booths or activity areas, think carefully about how to arrange them so as not to interfere with the screenings. We offer sample room layouts in our *Guide* to help you think about how much space to put between your stations, and how to alternate screening with more enjoyable activities.

Slide 38:

For the next part of this webinar, I will provide more information on staffing, financial considerations, and other materials included in our *Step-by-Step Guide*.

Slide 39:

We've found that hosting a successful event involves understanding the skills, competencies, and strengths that different staff and volunteers will bring to the fair. Some of your stations will require medically-trained staff. Others will require working knowledge of the various health risks faced by people in recovery, along with common barriers to a healthier lifestyle. Still other stations will require people with life experiences similar to those of the participants and the ability to offer effective peer support and education. Other stations will simply need friendly volunteers to direct participants to where they need to be, such as the welcome or parking stations. Additionally, you'll need staff or volunteers to help with planning and marketing your fair, reaching out to community partners, setting up and breaking down your fair, and coordinating any refreshments. Once you have a clear sense of the different staff and volunteers you'll need, it's easier to see the kinds of training that will be required. You will need to build in training time, practice sessions, and materials to prepare all staff and volunteers. Also, be aware that you may need copies of certification and insurance carried by the registered nurses or physicians who will handle blood, urine, or other medical tests at your health fair.

Slide 40:

Running a successful health fair can be rather expensive, although you may be able to offset some costs through donations and sponsors. You have probably already thought about many expenses as I have been describing our health fairs, such as testing kits, food, or disposable supplies. Other costs are less obvious, such as the costs of transporting participants, in addition to equipment and furniture. You also may incur personnel costs to ensure you have the staff needed to run your stations. Careful planning is important. To help with this, we offer a *Health Supplies & Budget Spreadsheet* in our *Guide*. This spreadsheet also can be downloaded from the UIC Center's web site, so you can revise it to best reflect your own planning activities.

Slide 41:

In addition to the details about planning for the fair and running the stations, our *Guide* includes supplemental materials in several appendices. Next, I will briefly describe what is included in each appendix.

Slide 42:

The first appendix in our *Guide* is a list of resources and web sites with useful information to use when planning a health fair. It includes information put out by federal agencies like the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It's important to consider local resources as well, such as health clinics and providers, local affiliates of national organizations that focus on diabetes, heart health, and lung disease. Businesses in your area also may be a resource, including pharmacies, sports supply stores, department stores, and restaurants.

Slide 43:

To help you stay on track for launching a successful health fair, our *Guide* includes a countdown, with planning checklists and timelines for what you need to do, starting 6 to 12 months before your health fair. This seems like a long time, but even a small health fair involves a lot of coordination. It's important to take the time to do it right. Examples of activities for 6 to 12 months in advance of your fair include forming the planning committee, reaching out to

sponsoring partners, choosing a date and location, and preparing the initial budget. Activities for 3 to 4 months out include preparing and distributing marketing materials, securing free giveaways for your event, and reserving rented supplies like tables, chairs, handcarts, or biohazard disposal containers. Examples of activities for 1 month out include finalizing the lay-out of testing stations and booths, training all staff and volunteers, and pre-registering participants to get a sense of how many people plan to attend your event. This spreadsheet also can be downloaded from the UIC Center's web site, so you can revise it to best reflect your own timeline for planning.

Slide 44:

Sample flyers for advertising a health fair are included in the appendix of our *Guide*. Additionally, we provide sample layouts for the health fair space, based on locating it at a hotel and at a university. These layouts can be very useful for your planning committee, as they consider where and how to best place screening stations and information booths. We also provide a detailed spreadsheet for all of the supplies we used at our health fairs, including columns for how much each supply costs to help you stay within budget. Also included are sources for various screening supplies.

Slide 45:

At our health fairs, we passed out medical fact sheets at every screening station. Even if people's test results were in the normal range, we provided them with information about the condition they were screened for. These fact sheets are in our *Guide*, addressing body mass index, diabetes, cholesterol, and high blood pressure. Also in our *Guide* are fact sheets we created on alcohol use, drug addiction, and smoking. You'll also find the handouts we created to support health fair participants' good health habits and routines, including different types of exercise, motivation to exercise, fat and salt in the diet, and a summary of "steps for a healthier you."

Slide 46:

As I mentioned earlier, we developed a health passport for participants to record their test results at each of our screening stations. This health passport is included in the appendix of our *Guide*. It is also available as a separate tool in the UIC Solutions Suite. On each page where a participant can record test results, there's a description of the test, along with health web sites for further learning. The *Guide* recommends using an ID number on the health passport, rather than participants' names. This helps protect peoples' privacy, especially if their health passport gets lost or misplaced.

Slide 47:

Earlier, I described lifestyle surveys that we administered at our health fairs. We've included 3 of these surveys in the appendix of our *Guide*, along with scoring instructions. These 3 tools are in the public domain, and can be copied and used without charge at not-for-profit health fair events. The *Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test* is an alcohol screening tool to help identify people who have active alcohol use challenges or who are at risk due to drinking. The *Drug Abuse Screening Test* assesses whether the person engages in recreational drug use, or uses prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications in excess of or contrary to the directions for safe use. The *Fagerstrom Test for Nicotine Dependence* is used with smokers to determine level of dependence, which may be useful information when discussing options for quitting or cutting

back. If your agency is already licensed to use other screening tools, and your staff are familiar with their use, you may choose to substitute those for the ones we provide in our *Guide*.

Slide 48:

Regardless of the tools that you use, keep in mind that these assessments ask about very sensitive topics. Like many Americans, participants may under-report their use of alcohol, drugs, and nicotine. At the same time, they may over-report the frequency of positive health behaviors, like eating well and exercising. Training and reminders on the day of the health fair need to emphasize creating a shame-free, non-judgmental environment. This helps participants feel comfortable in accurately reporting their actual behaviors. Staff at all stations need to be skilled in sensitive interviewing practices. Even if they think a person may be misreporting their lifestyle behaviors, staff should not challenge or confront anyone. Instead, staff should offer options and describe choices, while avoiding giving advice, persuading, or pressuring participants to change.

Slide 49:

The *Guide* ends with a sample satisfaction survey that participants can complete and turn in at the check-out station. If a free gift or a goody bag is provided at the check-out station, this can be exchanged as an incentive for completing the satisfaction survey, which can boost returns. We found participant feedback to be very helpful for planning future health fair events.

Slide 50:

As you plan your health fair, there are other issues to consider beyond setting up the space and the stations. Some of these considerations include the languages and cultures of the participants you expect to attend. You want them to feel welcome and safe, and to have access to professional interpreters, if needed. You may have participants with limited reading ability, whether due to their primary language, education level, a learning disability, or vision problem. We recommend having volunteers available to assist, and that you offer this assistance to everyone, as part of a shame-free approach. Disability access is critical for parking, getting in the building, the washrooms, and for using any station within the health fair.

Slide 51:

Earlier, I mentioned that some screening tests may indicate that a person needs urgent care, due to dangerously high blood sugar or blood pressure. This has happened with at least one person at every health fair that we offered. This is why our *Guide* strongly encourages you to plan for possible crisis situations by developing an emergency protocol, and we provide samples. This protocol outlines exactly what will happen in the event that someone needs to be taken to an emergency department due to concerning test results. This is another good reason to have medically-trained personnel at your health fair to help assess if a person is in crisis and, if so, what to do next. As the sponsoring organization, your agency may decide to get additional insurance for the event, particularly if it is held off-site.

Slide 52:

We want to emphasize again that providing peer support at health fairs is of critical importance in supporting participants' use of the resources you provide. In addition to staffing the peer support station, peers can be used as guides throughout your health fair, and may be assigned to

accompany participants who need or want additional support or assistance. Peer supporters encourage participants to consider making changes or improvements as a result of what they learn. Even the smallest of steps can have large effects over time. Including people who have experienced health issues similar to the participants' can facilitate connection and inspire hope, especially when they are taking action to maintain their own wellness.

Slide 53:

We know for sure that people gain a lot of knowledge from a health fair, which includes general health and wellness information. At our fairs, many participants expressed surprise when informed of their high levels of health risks, and this was sometimes accompanied by feelings of concern. Many people didn't realize that even small wellness habits can be effective in preventing disease. They didn't know that creating new health habits could prevent further damage or complications, if they already have certain diseases. Many of our participants were relieved to learn that they could take action to improve their health. Although our health fair study did not track participants over time, experience with running health fairs at Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey has shown positive changes for some people over time.

Slide 54:

If possible, we recommend that you offer local follow-up for participants, especially if your health fair is offered only to people served by your agency. For example, if you have a nurse on staff, or are affiliated with a local health center, you might provide contact information for making an appointment. Or, you might arrange for a drop-in clinic to be held a week after the health fair, to make it easier for participants to follow up on their test results. If you cannot arrange for direct follow-up for your participants, you can provide information on how to access further help, such as through your state smoker's QuitLine or your local chapter of the American Diabetes Association. We recommend helping participants while they're still at your health fair to make a plan for how to contact various providers. Their sense of urgency and motivation may decrease over time, so it's good to help participants think through how they'll set a plan for better health and wellness once they leave your fair.

Slide 55:

Health fairs teach people about health risks, and wellness habits within their control, such as what they eat, sleeping, walking, smoking, or alcohol use. By learning about wellness habits, people can make more informed choices about next steps. Planning and running a health fair requires a substantial investment, but has large potential payoffs. Many people we care about are at serious risk. The assessments, information, and support offered at your health fair can help people learn more about the steps towards wellness within their control so they can live a longer and healthier life.

Slide 56:

If you still have questions after this webinar, you can request free technical assistance, which we offer on a time-limited basis. Click on the "free technical assistance" button on the health fair manual page of our web site to learn more.

Slide 57:

Thank you for listening. You can obtain additional Solutions Suite recordings, or download a transcript, by visiting the Center's web site.