



INFORMATICS INSIGHTS

Public Health Informatics for Leaders

Anne Deacon, LICSW Whatcom County Health Department

The insights below are adapted from a May 2017 interview featuring Human Services Manager, Anne Deacon, LICSW, from Whatcom County Health Department in Bellingham, WA.



On the value of informatics

We need to know how we're doing. Informatics helps us understand what the issues are and whether or not our responses and interventions are working.



On demonstrating value

Informatics gives us the information we need to tell success stories about the positive impact our department has on the health of the community.



On informatics as a motivator

When you use your data to show everyone all that's been accomplished and the impact on the community's health, people go, "Oh!" They feel more energized to be part of solutions.



On the benefits of starting small

Our community started a multi-sector case-management project and purchased a web-based system that partners use to enter data. We get to practice informatics skills by taking all the data and sharing information back with the partners. It's a great microproject for informatics.



On the role of leaders

I may never be an expert in informatics, but I can help others become experts. I'm able to take the information we've gained and communicate our track record of success to our elected officials so they better understand the value of public health and human services and are more willing to fund future projects.



On sharing data and population health

When we have data systems talking to one another, we can begin to see patterns for particular populations of people in the shared data. That allows us to start analyzing strategic approaches that we've not considered before.



On public health as a community health leader

By being an information hub and expanding the concept of coordination to include sharing information, we get significant support in the community. It brings credibility to health departments who are looked to as leaders.