SUCCESSION PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICE IN WASHINGTON STATE LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES: THE CURRENT SITUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BETTER PRACTICE

John Michael Wiesman

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Public Health in the Department of Health Policy and Management within the Gillings School of Global Public Health.

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Approved by:
Edward L. Baker Jr, MD, MPH
Suzanne Havala Hobbs, DrPH, MS
Dorothy Cilenti, DrPH, MPH, MSW
Karl Umble, PhD, MPH
Pat Libbey
ABSTRACT

JOHN MICHAEL WIESMAN: Succession Planning and Management Practice in Washington State Local Public Health Agencies: The Current Situation and Recommendations for Better Practice (Under the direction of Dr. Edward Baker, Jr)

Strong organizational leaders make it a priority to ensure their organization grows its future leaders and that leaders are ready to lead the challenges of tomorrow, not today or yesterday. This mixed methods study examined succession planning and management practices (SP&M) in local public health agencies (LPHAs) in Washington State using a web-administered survey and semi-structured interviews in three exemplary LPHAs.

A systematic literature review identified 25 SP&M best practices, which formed the basis for the study. The two main impetuses for LPHAs to implement SP&M programs were: 1) Discovering the large percentage of employees able to retire in the very near future after profiling their workforce by length of time to retirement, and 2) Requirements for a workforce development plan to achieve national accreditation. It also found that 85% of LPHAs selected high potential-high performers (HP-HP) for development, 76% sent HP-HP to formal technical and management/leadership training, and 70% used cross-functional team projects and 67% used stretch assignments to develop their employees. Many of these SP&M programs were informal in nature and lacked transparency, creating a potential environment for bias and inequitable access to opportunities. Barriers to implementing SP&M were: too many other competing demands for time, believing the LPHA’s workforce was too small for a SP&M program, and concerns that there would be union barriers. Semi-structured interviews noted
the importance of having a top local public health official that championed the need and modeled its importance.

A plan for change to increase the number of LPHAs implementing SP&M programs is included, using Kotter’s 8 steps to transforming organizations. The plan recommends creating urgency by focusing on retirement profiles in one’s LPHA and emphasizing the need for workforce development plans in accreditation. It advocates using national associations and the public health training centers to assist LPHAs in developing SP&M training programs.
To my mother, Lois Wiesman, who passed on during my dissertation year, and

   to my father, Leo Wiesman,

   who have always been and always will be my heroes.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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and Bennet Waters for broadening my leadership lessons, to Dr. Sandra Greene for helping me get a solid start on my dissertation methods, to Dr. Rebecca Wells for expanding my systems and strategic thinking, to Gene Matthews, JD for helping me understand the legal basis for my administrative practice, to Dr. Jon Oberlander who helped me understand health care systems and improved my research writing, and to Marci Thomas who impressed upon me the importance of my fiduciary responsibilities.

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<td>Association of State and Territorial Health Officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTE</td>
<td>Full-Time Equivalent (employees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP-HP</td>
<td>High Performer(s)-High Potential(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRSA</td>
<td>Health Resources and Services Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPHA(s)</td>
<td>Local Public Health Agency/Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPHO(s)</td>
<td>Local Public Health Official(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACCHO</td>
<td>National Association of County and City Health Officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NALBOH</td>
<td>National Association of Local Boards of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHAB</td>
<td>Public Health Accreditation Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP&amp;M</td>
<td>Succession Planning and Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

There once was a junior public health employee who had sequential supervisors that recognized his high performance and his high potential. They gave him stretch projects, supported him during his successes and failures, and encouraged his self-development. He was by all accounts successful and became a top local public health official (LPHO).

Shortly before his first day on the job of his first top LPHO position, he discovered the book, *The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at all Levels.* He developed an entrance plan into his new local public health agency (LPHA) based on that book as well as his observations of his previous supervisors’ leadership. He sent his new staff an introductory e-mail message even before he arrived on site, and followed up with an all-staff meeting within his first two hours on the job during which he further introduced himself, shared the framework of his entrance plan, and described his expectations. He e-mailed the information from that meeting to all of his new staff.

He started his new job shadowing staff; he tactically started with those areas of the agency that he knew the least and ended up with those areas he knew the most. He spent the first 30 days learning about his new agency. The next 45 days he reached out to other county government officials and key community stakeholders and leaders to learn about their organizations, their priorities, and their perspectives on his LPHA. These data informed his assessment of what was working and what needed change. From there, he developed an initial plan of action.
Eager to do a great job, he took full responsibility for his department and the functioning of his leadership team and his first-line management group. But as time marched on, he learned from his managers during individual meetings and full management team meeting debriefs that he was not delegating appropriately nor effectively coaching those who reported to him. He realized something major was wrong. He was holding back his managers and the agency; he was a problem. He realized he had not let go of being the technical expert. He also discovered, while reading the first edition of *The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership-Powered Company*, that his own promotions from one level of management to another had occurred without his mastering all of the important transitions: transition from technical line staff to supervisor to manager of managers, and finally to functional manager of a LPHA.

That top LPHO would be me, John Wiesman, DrPH doctoral student and director of Clark County Public Health in Washington State (see Appendix A page 121 for the content of my first all staff meeting).

I believe my failures in acquiring the necessary skill changes between levels of management are similar to many top LPHOs. My experience fuels my passion to change the system in which we prepare our future managers and leaders. As I have grown into my position, I see managers in my LPHA who have not been developed and coached into their current roles, just like I was not. That cycle must end with us top LPHOs. We are developing the future leaders. We need to ensure that those future leaders have the skill sets they need for the challenging management and leadership environments they will face during their leadership years.

To prepare our future leaders we must intentionally lead organizational succession planning and management (SP&M). My dissertation examined SP&M best practices, researched
the current environment of SP&M in Washington State’s LPHAs, and developed a plan for change to improve LPHA’s SP&M.

**SUCCESION PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DEFINITIONS**

**Definitions from the Literature**

Succession processes can be thought of as a continuum in which replacement planning would be on one end of the continuum, and succession management on the other end, and succession planning somewhere in the middle. All three are intended to identify successors for positions. Most often, replacement planning and succession planning systems focus on the top two or three levels in an organization while succession management systems focuses on all management levels. The active development of successors is more likely to be found in succession planning and succession management than in replacement planning. However, replacement planning, succession planning, and succession management are often used interchangeably as there are no standardized definitions in the field at this time. Thus, when one reads the literature, one must contextually figure out what is being studied and reported.

I am greatly influenced by the following two definitions of succession planning, given my pragmatic worldview and systems thinking, which in my mind, border on succession management. The first definition was found in a book authored by Charan, Drotter, and Noel: “Succession planning is perpetuating the enterprise by filling the pipeline with high-performing people to ensure that every leadership level has an abundance of these performers to draw from, both now and in the future.”

The second definition was found in Rothwell’s book reporting on work by Norman H. Carter, in which Carter defines succession planning as:

[a] means of identifying critical management positions, starting at the levels of project manager and supervisor and extending up to the highest position in the organization. Succession planning also describes management positions to provide maximum
flexibility in lateral management moves and to ensure that as individuals achieve greater seniority, their management skills will broaden and become more generalized in relation to total organizational objectives rather than to purely departmental objectives. 

Both definitions focus on all levels of organizational hierarchy, thereby taking a systems perspective. The succession process was taken further by Rothwell as he described a SP&M program as: “a deliberate and systematic effort by an organization to ensure leadership continuity in key positions, retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital for the future, and encourage individual advancement.”

And finally, Rothwell identified systematic succession planning as occurring when: “an organization adapts specific procedures to insure the identification, development, and long-term retention of talented individuals.”

Definitions for Dissertation

I used the following definitions for my research:

**SP&M**: the systems and procedures used to identify, develop, and retain high performing-high potential individuals (HP-HP) for future management and leadership roles and how HP-HP are placed into those roles.

**HP-HP**: persons who are performing very successfully in their current role and for whom the organization deems as having strong potential for promoting within the organization.

**IMPORTANCE OF THIS RESEARCH**

**Workforce Turnover**

There are about 2,800 LPHAs in the United States. In 2010 the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) identified 2,565 LPHAs for a public health services and systems profile survey and in 2008 identified 2,794. More than three in four top LPHOs were in their first top LPHO positions in 2010 with 22% of those holding their positions for less
than two years,\textsuperscript{5(p.28)} which was down from 27% in 2008.\textsuperscript{6(p.28)} That is a large number of new local leaders, an estimated 600+, taking on demanding health leadership roles over a two-year period of time.

Those same data can be used to project future demand for top LPHOs. In 2010, almost one-quarter (23%) of the top LPHOs were 60 years or older, suggesting they were already eligible for retirement or would be within five years. Added to that, another 45% were 50 through 59 years of age.\textsuperscript{5(p.27)}

These two perspectives demonstrate that, at the top LPHO position alone, large numbers of individuals will be needed to assume dynamic leadership positions. Include the leadership and management positions at the other organizational levels, and there is an even greater need for HP-HP public health leaders.

**Accreditation**

The Institute of Medicine issued a report in 2003 entitled, *The Future of the Public’s Health*, in which it recommended that: “The Secretary of DHHS should appoint a national commission to consider if an accreditation system would be useful for improving and building state and local public health agency capacities.”\textsuperscript{7(p.158)} That recommendation, following the development in 1998 of The National Public Health Performance Standards Program,\textsuperscript{7(p.156)} work by a Voluntary Accreditation Committee established by NACCHO,\textsuperscript{7(p.157)} and the Exploring Accreditation Group\textsuperscript{8} lead to an 8 year process that resulted in the first national accreditation program for governmental public health agencies. The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) released Version 1.0 of the PHAB Accreditation Standards and Measures in July 2011 and launched the application process in September 2011.\textsuperscript{9}

Domain 8 of the PHAB Standards and Measures includes two standards related to maintaining a competent workforce, both of which are relevant to this dissertation. Standard
8.1, “Encourage the Development of a Sufficient Number of Qualified Public Health Workers”, contains the following measure of importance: “[e]stablish relationships and/or collaborate with schools of public health and/or other related academic programs that promote the development of future public health workers” (measure 8.1.1). The second standard, Standard 8.2, “Assess Staff Competencies and Address Gaps by Enabling Organizational and Individual Training and Development Opportunities”, contains two measures of importance: 1) “Maintain, implement and assess the health department workforce development plan that addresses the training needs of the staff and the development of core competencies” (measure 8.2.1), and 2) “Provide leadership and management development activities” (measure 8.2.2). These standards and measures are reproduced in Appendix B on page 124.

My doctoral research adds to the workforce development literature at the very time that LPHAs are applying for national accreditation and need to focus on workforce development.

**DISSERTATION AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

My dissertation aims were to identify and understand how LPHAs are and are not implementing SP&M and to make recommendations for improvement. Therefore, my three primary research questions were:

1. **What are the best practices in SP&M?**
2. **What elements of SP&M are being implemented in LPHAs and do LPHAs have a comprehensive SP&M program?**
3. **For those LPHAs implementing SP&M, how is it being implemented, what are the barriers to implementation, what are the facilitators to implementation, and what are the lessons learned?**
BENEFITS AND PRODUCTS OF THIS RESEARCH

My dissertation developed a plan for change that if implemented can promote the adoption of comprehensive SP&M systems in LPHAs to help meet accreditation standards, and more importantly, to develop leaders who are prepared to lead the public health system into the future. Along the way, I hope I will have inspired my colleagues and created urgency for them to implement SP&M best practices in their organization, and in doing so, increase their own leadership skills as they prepare our future leaders.

My vision is that my dissertation findings and resulting plan for action will lead to transformational changes in LPHAs. My plan uses Kotter’s eight stages of transformation as a guiding framework. My intention is to influence the Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials, the NACCHO, and the National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH) to take on projects that support the top LPHOs in developing and implementing SP&M programs. The goal is that future, first-time, top LPHOs enter their tenure well prepared for the challenges of their positions.

EXISTING RESOURCES

Leadership Training Programs

A number of early- and mid-career leadership programs were specifically developed for LPHOs, in part in response to two Institute of Medicine reports. These programs were geared toward leadership development, and while not specifically created as part of SP&M, they can assist LPHOs in their leadership skill development relevant to current and future leadership positions. As you will see from Table 1.1, the number of available slots is small compared to the leadership turnover noted earlier. Furthermore, barriers to participation in these programs
include traveling to off-site trainings, time away from the worksite, and financial cost to participants or their organizations.

**Table 1.1. Summary of Public Health Specific Leadership Training Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name (Sponsors)</th>
<th>Years in Operation</th>
<th>Total Number of Participants Since Inception</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Public Health Leadership Institute</td>
<td>1991 - 2011</td>
<td>806 (through 2006)</td>
<td>A one-year leadership development program for high-potential leaders with a commitment to leading in their own organizations and communities, but also leading system change on the national scene.(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(UNC-Chapel Hill/CDC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Public Health Leadership Institutes</td>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>4877 (through August 2007)(^b)</td>
<td>Varied, but similar to the national leadership institute above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(varies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survive and Thrive Fellowship</td>
<td>2008 - 2010</td>
<td>50(^c)</td>
<td>A learning opportunity designed to enhance the skills of new top executives at local health departments. Fellows gain practical tools and tactics to help engage elected officials and community partners; best manage strategic planning and human, financial, and information resources; and bolster one’s ability to resolve challenges unique to one’s new role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(NACCHO/RWJ)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Cohorts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Cohorts</td>
<td>2010 – early 2012</td>
<td>34(^c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Academy</td>
<td>1991 - present</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>The Management Academy for Public Health prepares teams of health professionals for new management challenges in community health. Management Academy will build your skills in managing money, people, data and partnerships. Every team writes and presents a public health business plan designed to address a key public health problem in their community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNC – on Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNC – “on the road”</td>
<td>2009 - present</td>
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and health backgrounds, but may lack formal management training. Managers are selected for the program in teams of three to six participants.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name (Sponsors)</th>
<th>Years in Operation</th>
<th>Total Number of Participants Since Inception</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This description was taken from [www.phli.org/about/index.htm](http://www.phli.org/about/index.htm) on January 23, 2010 at 1055hrs, Pacific Time.

This description was taken from [www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/surviveandthrive](http://www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/surviveandthrive) on January 23, 2010 at 1101hrs, Pacific Time.

This description was taken from [www.maph.unc.edu/whatis/index.htm](http://www.maph.unc.edu/whatis/index.htm) on February 12, 2012 at 1240hrs, Pacific Time.

**ASSUMPTIONS AND BELIEFS**

I entered into this dissertation study with the following assumptions based upon my years of experience in local public health practice.

- I assumed that few LPHAs had SP&M programs in place.

- I assumed that many current managers and LPHOs were ill prepared for their positions in terms of having acquired the skills, use of time, and work values that correspond to their level of management position.

- I assumed there was a hunger for this type of information as evidenced by the large attendance NACCHO receives at its annual pre-conference session for top LPHOs who are in their first two years of the job to hear from more seasoned top LPHOs, as well as the large interest in the public health leadership programs noted earlier.

- I assumed that many, if not most, top LPHOs who work in departments in a larger organizational structure can implement many, if not most, of the identified SP&M best practices, even if the parent organization has not adopted a formal SP&M program.
As LPHOs, we health leaders are responsible for ensuring that our LPHAs are strategically positioned to best meet the public health needs of our communities, not only for today, but also for the future. I believe that if we implement SP&M programs we will:

- Have managers who better manage and support their staff, which will improve the quality of our programs and services.
- Have top LPHOs operating at the appropriate skill level for their management level in the organizational hierarchy, which will improve governmental public health’s status within communities and its political capital with local, state, and federal elected officials and other policy makers and community leaders.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

LITERATURE REVIEW RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My literature review answered the first research question: “What are the best practices in SP&M?” and informed the development of the survey questions and semi-structured interview questions used to answer the other two research questions. I examined both the scientific and practice-based literature given the practice-based nature of my dissertation topic. To answer the first research question, the following literature review questions were asked:

What does the literature indicate are the best practices in organizational succession planning to develop its leadership pipeline?
Do they differ between the private sector and the governmental sector?

SP&M—BEST PRACTICES

Methods

A systematic literature reviewed approach was used. I anticipated that the peer reviewed literature would be sparse and that other literature would need to be examined; thus peer reviewed and trade journal articles that were indexed in the databases I searched were all considered, along with books published on this topic.
**Search Methods**

SP&M is not unique to the fields of public health, health services, or government. It spans business, management, and social sciences disciplines and is indeed relevant to all fields and types of organizations that have managers and leaders. Therefore I searched a broad array of electronic databases on the UNC University Libraries web page (www.lib.unc.edu/) that were available to me as a UNC student in March 2010. Five electronic databases were searched. Those databases and their descriptive information are presented in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1. Electronic Databases Searched and the Years of Coverage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electronic Database</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Source Premier</td>
<td>1965 – March 2010</td>
<td>This database includes indexing, abstracting, and full text for more than 8,800 serials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PsycINFO</td>
<td>1887 – March 2010</td>
<td>The American Psychological Association’s database, with over 2,000,000 records, is the most comprehensive international database of psychology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>1974 – March 2010</td>
<td>This database covers about 140 academic journals, which focus on the study of the administration, functions, and outcomes of public and governmental institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERIC</td>
<td>1966 – March 2010</td>
<td>This database is produced by the Educational Resource Information Center and provides indexing and abstracting for journal and report literature in education and related disciplines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PubMed</td>
<td>1957 – March 2010</td>
<td>This database is a service of the National Library of Medicine and includes citations for biomedical articles back to the 1950’s. These citations are from MEDLINE and additional life science journals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I explored each of these electronic databases to become familiar with their operations and with potentially useful search terms and then engaged a health sciences librarian to become familiar with searching strategies in PubMed. Together we explored Business Source Premier.

After running numerous iterative practice searches in each of the above databases, I used the search terms and strategy presented in Table 2.2.
Table 2.2. Search Strategy for the Question, "What Does the Literature Indicate are the Best Practices in Organizational SP&M to Develop Its Leadership Pipeline?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Succession Planning</th>
<th>AND</th>
<th>Best Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;succession plan&quot; OR &quot;succession planning&quot; OR &quot;succession management&quot; OR &quot;executive development&quot; OR &quot;leadership pipeline&quot; OR &quot;talent pipeline&quot;)</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>(best practice OR best practices OR guideline OR guidelines OR evidence based practice)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I believe that these search terms gave construct validity to the research question. In terms of external validity, I did not include population limiting search terms in order to stay true to the operational definition used in this dissertation. That definition conceptualizes a leadership pipeline, which indicates that to become an executive, one must gain the skills necessary over progressive levels of management: from technician to supervisor to manager to functional leader to executive leadership. One does not prepare top LPHOs through a specialized or unique SP&M system but rather through an overall succession system encompassing all levels of organizational leadership. Similarly, the system does not vary much from one type of organization to another.

In addition to the electronic database results, additional material was identified through a review of references in retrieved articles.

**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

I searched each database without limitation; therefore all years of publication within each database were retrieved. Given the wide range of years searched, I decided in advance that if it became obvious that a substantial body of newer research invalidated an earlier publication’s findings, that earlier study would be excluded from the analysis. In addition, if a reference came up in other than English language, it would be excluded.
I decided not to limit my searches only to academic journals because I anticipated scarce literature in peer reviewed journals; instead, I included any materials identified in the database searches. I also decided to categorize materials into research studies, expert opinion, or practice-based material derived from other knowledge. I excluded three types of material from actual review: 1) Dissertations, due to limited access and time constraints, 2) Books, due to time constraints, and 3) Review articles or book reviews that reported on other literature, as those would not add new information to this review.

Articles that only addressed a portion of SP&M, such as the identification of talent, or that only addressed SP&M at a departmental level versus the larger organization, were excluded. My rationale for excluding was that anything that looked at less than an organization-level approach indicated an isolated approach, and did not support the larger system.

**Review of Search Results**

I conducted the entire material review and made all decisions. While most systematic reviews would include at least two people independently conducting reviews, this would have been impractical for my dissertation.

The review of material was conducted in the following manner.

1. Each item was screened based upon its title. If the title indicated that the material was from another topic area, it was immediately excluded and the topic area and reason for exclusion noted in the abstraction form. If there was any doubt about whether or not an article might be relevant, it was passed on to the next step.

2. The remaining materials with abstracts, if available, were screened. Here the abstract had to indicate that the material could be relevant to the research question. If the material was excluded based upon an abstract, the reason for
the exclusion was noted on the abstraction form. If no abstract was available, it was passed on to the next step. If there was any doubt about whether or not an article might be relevant, it was passed on to the next step.

3. The full material, if available, was then retrieved electronically. If it was not available electronically, it was requested through interlibrary loan and, if available, I reviewed it. I read each article for applicability. If it was not applicable, the reason for exclusion was noted on the abstraction form. All applicable materials had information abstracted and entered into the abstraction form.

All references were entered into the abstraction form as a way to account for my decision-making and to track the exclusion process. Table 2.3 below identifies the abstraction variables.

Table 2.3. Abstraction Form Variables

For all database references:
- Included in final review? (yes or no)
- If excluded, at what step of the process (title, abstract, or article review)
- If excluded, what was the reason?
- Authors
- Publication year
- Publication title
- Journal title, volume, number and pages

For all materials included in the review
- Source type (research study, expert opinion, practice-based material)
- Type of study, if relevant
- Subject(s), subject descriptions, and subject recruitment, if relevant
- Study purpose and methods, if relevant
- Research themes, if relevant
- Best practice findings, if any
- Outcome and conclusions, if any
- Future research suggested by authors, if any
- Electronic database(s) that identified the source material
RESULTS

The five electronic databases were queried using the pre-identified Boolean search strategy. Business Source Premier was queried on March 6, 2010, and the remaining four databases were queried on March 7, 2010. In all, 141 references were identified with 11 duplicates, resulting in 130 unique references.

Table 2.4 identifies the exclusions at each step of the screening process. One unanticipated issue was the occurrence of SP&M articles that focused on SP&M in family businesses or in the actual planning for the hand-off of a business from one entity to another. I excluded these articles as these two kinds of succession plans are unique and would likely jeopardize the external validity for my research purposes.
Table 2.4. Flow of Articles through the Different Phases of this Systematic Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Business Source Premier</th>
<th>Psyc INFO</th>
<th>Public Admin Abstracts</th>
<th>ERIC</th>
<th>Pub Med</th>
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<td>10</td>
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<td><strong>Number Remaining</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Removed by Article Review</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family or Business Succession</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duplicate Report of a Single Study</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not New Knowledge/Review Article</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number Remaining</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Articles Identified by Scanning Article Citations</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINAL NUMBER OF REFERENCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description of the Literature

As anticipated, this topic lacked much formal study. Case studies were the only research studies identified and cases were limited to organizations recognized for their exemplary work.
in SP&M. Researchers usually interviewed senior leaders in these organizations and gathered documentation of the organization’s SP&M systems. Researchers then looked for themes that described the organization’s approach and reported on those.

Even more lacking were attempts to measure the effectiveness of SP&M systems. Only one article attempted to measure effectiveness but did so without clearly defined measurement. Most mentioned the importance of evaluation, and most encouraged ongoing quality improvement.

Much of the literature was published in trade publications and books. For this review, books were eliminated, leaving mostly individual authors describing what they believed to be important elements of SP&M.

The literature that remained presented a common framework from which most articles viewed SP&M and there was significant repetition of identified best practices.

**Common Framework**

I found three common elements to SP&M systems. Those were: developing talent pools, having CEO leadership, and linking to an organization’s strategic future.

The field has clearly moved away from succession planning simply as replacement planning where an organization identifies an heir apparent for key positions. Succession planning was contemporarily viewed as succession management in which potential talent is consciously and carefully identified and systematically selected and developed over time, creating a pool of talented individuals that could fill multiple positions from early to middle management all the way to the CEO of an organization. This is known as creating a talent or leadership pipeline.

A second theme was the importance of CEO commitment, engagement, and leadership in the succession management process. The literature noted that SP&M is not something human
resource departments should be doing alone; they emphasized the importance of human resources and CEO and all levels of management and employee involvement in succession management.

The final theme was that identifying, selecting, and preparing future leaders requires a SP&M system connected to an organization’s strategic future. To do this the organization identifies the types of experiences for which one needs to be most prepared (e.g., international experiences for a global economy) and identifies strategic action learning projects for its HP-HP. These strategic action learning projects give HP-HP an opportunity to grapple with strategic issues and management the opportunity to see how the HP-HP perform on those strategic projects. They also allow the organization to implement findings so that these are not just exercises but are real work that moves an organization strategically forward.

**SP&M Best Practices**

Given the nature of the literature, I segmented the best practices findings into results of formal research, expert/author opinion, and practice-based articles that translate knowledge to practice. Best practice findings are presented in three mind map diagrams, Figure 2.1 (page 20) for the formal research study findings, Figure 2.2 (page 21) for the expert/author opinion findings, and Figure 2.3 (page 22) for the practice-based literature. Each diagram starts with best practices at the center and is surrounded by main topics identified in the three bodies of literature. Each main topic is further differentiated into subtopics or subcomponents of the main topic. The main topics are arranged in a logical flow starting at the twelve o’clock position and rotating clockwise. The number with an R in front of it is a code that links to the actual article that identified that as a best practice.
Figure 2.1. Succession Planning Best Practices - Findings from Research Studies
Figure 2.2. Succession Planning Best Practices - Expert/Author Opinion

Best Practices - Expert Opinion

Pre-Planning
- Agree on system design and process R18
- Identify future business challenges and key leadership roles R18, R122/R123

Talent
- Conduct talent review R18
- Provide feedback and development recommendations for talent R18
- Conduct aspiration conversations R18
- Discuss talent and their plans R18, R122

Management Development
- Ongoing dialogue between manager and talent R123
- Emphasize on-the-job development
- Discuss successes, strengths R123
- Discuss needs and aspirations R123

Career planning R123
- Offer a diverse range of career building experiences R123
- Create progressive assignments R122/R123
- Individualized development through coaching, ongoing feedback, and mentoring R122/R123
- Help managers make crucial connections with peers, peers, colleagues, and supervisors R122

Management System
- Comprehensive approach R17
- Agree on measures & establish baseline R18
- Conduct satisfaction evaluation R18
- Decide on modifications improvements R18

Defining breadth of experiences for top candidates R17 (e.g., international experience, function and business line role)

Board Involvement
- Review development of a leading cadre of executives R17
- Opportunities for leading cadre to gain visibility with board R17 (professionally & socially)

References:
R17 = Nelson
R18 = Barnett
R122 = De Koning (3/10/2005)
R123 = De Koning (4/14/2005)
Figure 2.3. Succession Planning Best Practices - Practice-based Literature

**Organizational Culture**
- Need to know the organization's strategic perspective and link to strategic management program R100, R102, R108, R128
- Board should be involved R118

**Organizational Planning**
- Create databases/computerized systems to support the strategic management system R100

**Best Practices - Practice Literature**
- Feedback (above and beyond annual reviews)
- Organizational Culture
- Organizational Planning
- Identify Succession Candidates
- Create the Leadership Profile
- Create Leadership Development System
- Maintain Relevancy
- Identify key competencies (R128), defined in behavioral outcomes R100

**Identify Succession Candidates**
- Compare employees' performance on their current job competencies against requirements for future moves R100
- Identify (R128) and rank candidates R130
- Differentiate between manager and candidate to explore opportunities, interests, and plans R100
- 360 degree assessments R102
- Roleplays R102

**Create Leadership Development System**
- Develop-success measures and targets R128
- Summarize progress on key competencies R109
- Summarize feedback in specific developmental experiences R120
- Evaluate progress by interviewing, gauging, and measuring individual's progress R119
- Formal training/continuing education R110, R118, R128
- Develop specific, individualized plans R128
- Special project or task force assignments R100, R132
- Assign stretch assignments, R118, R128
- Utilize external and visibility opportunities R100
- Develop mentoring and coaching programs R100, R102, R118, R128
- Develop leadership peer support groups R100
- Implement 360 degree feedback programs R118

**Create the Leadership Profile**
- Align with the organization's strategic direction R100, R102
- Identify key competencies, responsibilities, and decision-making authority R110
- Define key competencies (R128), defined in behavioral outcomes R100
- Identify critical outcomes R100
- Identify position duties and responsibilities R100

**Maintain Relevancy**
- Conduct periodic assessments of the system R100, R118
- Review current management development processes and training
- Make recommendations for improvement R101

**References**
- R100 = Abrams
- R102 = Brenthal
- R118 = Walker
- R128 = Aquila
Formal Research Study Results

Five papers\textsuperscript{14,15,16,17,18} were identified that described primary research on organizational SP&M best practices. In addition to the mind map displaying the best practice findings (Figure 2.1, page 20), Table 2.5 describes the study subjects and methods. All of these studies were descriptive case studies of organizations that some, often undefined, experts felt made the organizations exemplary, again, often undefined, in their SP&M practices. And while one paper, Groves\textsuperscript{15}, did not specify the exact nature of the organizations studied, it appeared that most, if not all, were very large, national and international organizations. Just one paper\textsuperscript{18} evaluated and reported on the effectiveness of the organizations’ SP&M programs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID #</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Study Subjects</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 14   | Bhatnagar J | 2008 | One anonymous multi-national company in India.  
• 461,000 employees in 190 countries.  
• Electrical and electronics engineering. | Interviews  
Review of archival data  
*Note: article did not report the interview questions or archival data examined.* |
| 15   | Groves KS | 2007 | 30 CEOs and human resource executives across 15 unidentified best practice U.S. national health care organizations  
• 7 single-site hospitals, 7 multi-site health care systems, and 1 medical group  
• renowned for best practice leadership development methods and highly successful CEO successions  
• identified by senior partners in an unidentified leading national U.S. health care executive search firm | Interviews  
*Note: article did not report the interview questions.* |
| 16   | Conger JA and Fulmer RM | 2003 | Six organizations that had achieved a high degree of success in succession management compared to 16 sponsoring companies.  
• Six high degree of success organizations: Dell, Dow Chemical, Eli Lilly, PanCanadian Petroleum, | Site visits with in-depth interviews  
Detailed questionnaires collected quantitative data  
*Note: article did not report the* |
| 17  | U.S. General Accounting Office | 2003 | Government agencies (number unspecified) in four foreign countries. The countries were studied earlier by the GAO for their implementation of results-oriented management and human capital reforms. Questionnaires received from 30 senior human capital officials and 50+ interviews with government officials in national audit offices, central management, and human capital agencies. |
|     | Government Accounting Office report 03-914 |     | Questionnaires |
|     |                                               |     | Interviews |
|     |                                               |     | Document review |
|     |                                               |     | **Note:** article did not report the questionnaire or interview questions. |

| 18  | Karaevli A and Hall DT | 2002 | “Representatives” from thirteen businesses known for their succession planning and talent identification and development programs (undefined): |
|     |                       |     | Interviews |
|     |                       |     | **NOTE:** Article did not note the questions asked. |
Taken together, these studies described a logical, systematic approach to SP&M (see Figure 2.1 for the mind map combining the findings of these studies). When you examine this map, you can see that SP&M includes both a) systems components for developing an organization’s capacity to implement SP&M (identified in green) and b) systems components that develop individuals (identified in orange).

As already stated, only one article, by Karaevli and Hall, evaluated the effectiveness of SP&M. They evaluated thirteen organizations for best practices and, through interviews, assessed whether or not these systems were creating leaders prepared to lead in turbulent times. They used a report card approach for their evaluation, giving grades for areas they deemed important. Unfortunately, there was no measurement definition for the grading scale, so it was difficult to tell what they were grading against. Still, their findings were instructive.

Only one of the four evaluated areas was given a high grade. The authors found good news in progress these organizations were making towards defining and using “learning agility” in their SP&M. They stated that:

> [s]ince leaders have boundary-spanning roles between organizations and their environment, these leaders’ adaptability and cognitive complexity directly affect organizational responsiveness to environmental discontinuities. Thus, the question is whether succession planning processes include elements to identify and develop adaptable and mentally agile leaders.\(^{(18)}(p.69)\)

They found that these organizations recognized learning agility as a critical skill and incorporated the concept into their HP-HP talent selection and development systems. For this progress, they assessed a grade of “A-”.

They found, however, that the talent replacing current executives looked very much like the existing executives and they called this “executive cloning.” They believed this made organizations more rigid and nonadaptive. In other words, these new executives were selected for “best-fit” for that current time and challenges, not for the strategic work of the future.
Furthermore, this talent replacing process did not promote diversity at the top of the organization, which, in their view, meant a “lack of variety in perspectives, knowledge and skills, which limits firms’ ability to foresee and respond to sudden crises effectively.” They gave these organizations a “D” grade when it came to eliminating “executive cloning.”

The two authors also gave two “C” grades. One was for putting too much stress on the identification of talent rather than on the actual development of the workforce itself. They pointed out that the people who were offered development were the ones that were selected through the identification process. Having focused so much energy on selecting individuals that somehow differentiated them from others, leaders neglected the opportunity to influence the overall environment that supported development to which everyone would have been exposed and benefited. They argued that spending more time promoting a learning agility environment and other development would create a larger pool of people with the motivation to stretch themselves and stay engaged in the organization.

The second “C” grade was given for linking executive development to strategy. Their interviews found that for many organizations this link was more rhetoric than implementation. The identified barriers seemed to be that there was not a clear single corporate strategy that drove SP&M and that, in fact, different business units used their own operating strategies and identified different needs. Furthermore, line managers were so focused on operational demands that they did not have much time to think about longer-term strategy.

**Expert Opinion Results**

The expert opinion articles identified similar best practices as the research study papers and the practice-based papers (see Figure 2.2). Perhaps the most interesting contribution from this literature addressed the criticism from Karaevli and Hall that succession planning needed to be better tied to an organization’s strategy. Barnett and Davis saw the
same issue and proposed that by incorporating role theory into succession planning one could better link succession planning to the organization’s strategy and its likely future business scenario. They proposed a process that had two elements. The first, which is not new, had executives identifying key business issues they believed their organizations would face, which, if addressed, would strengthen the organization's business strategy. The second element that enhanced SP&M was to incorporate role theory by asking, “What roles will that leader need to perform to effectively address the key business issues of the future?” That question identified the type of leadership and leader the organization would need to be successful in the future. Twelve different roles were identified at the enterprise leader level. Those roles were: business performance driver, change sponsor, coach, cultural leader, executive-at-large, external influencer, internal influencer, international executive, strategist, talent manager, team leader, and visionary. While many, if not all of these roles are part of executive positions, they proposed that certain roles would play more prominently in the future challenges the leader would face and that those should be identified and be incorporated into the development and selection process. For example, if one determined that increased diversity in the population was going to challenge the organization’s success, the upcoming CEO may need to emphasize her role as a cultural leader. If the organization was in need of a major turnaround, the upcoming CEO may need to emphasize his role as a change sponsor.

**Practice Based Results**

The practice-based literature\textsuperscript{23,24,25,26} also described best practices that were in sync with the primary research studies and the expert opinion articles (see Figure 2.3). This literature emphasized the importance of:

- Undertaking SP&M.
- Keeping implementation as simple as possible.
• Making use of electronic tools to help management track the talent pool both for filling open positions and monitoring diversity of the candidate pool and to help candidates take responsibility for their information and their development plans.

• Making sure the succession planning process is tied directly into the organization’s strategic plans.

DISCUSSION

The first question to ask when evaluating how these best practice findings translate to local public health practice is, “How similar or dissimilar are the organizational environments and do those differences impact the external validity of the findings?” Two obvious differences include the for-profit business environment and the size of the organizations. I propose that both of these differences impact how LPHOs are able to translate the findings into practice.

Three of the five case study articles\textsuperscript{14,16,18}, and most likely a fourth\textsuperscript{15}, exclusively examined for-profit organizations, which are more likely than governmental public health agencies to have employees with business and/or management degrees as well as employees who are driven more by financial profit than by social justice or community service. This could translate to SP&M programs in the private sector that are more attuned to business models that focus on strategy and leadership, have a better appreciation for lateral moves in disparate parts of the agency to learn the various elements of an agency, and that have profit as a motivator in employee retention practices. It is also probable that the private sector can be more agile when it comes to trying new approaches and giving employees differential opportunities.

Organizational size was also extremely different. The case study organizations employed tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of people, while LPHAs employ a median of 17 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees and a mean of 64 FTE employees.\textsuperscript{5(p.33)} This many orders of magnitude difference undoubtedly translates to fewer SP&M resources, as well as fewer HP-HP.
I propose that these major differences require both a different mindset to SP&M as well as some probable adaptation of the best practices. While SP&M is about creating a pool of talent ready to take the place of higher-level managers and leaders within an organization, I propose that LPHOs will need a more collaborative than competitive mindset. Given the relatively skewed number of small to medium-sized LPHAs, there may not be a “pool” of persons to fill higher-level positions. If that is the case, there may indeed be an heir apparent or none. If there are limited opportunities for promotion and there is a pool of candidates, LPHOs will need to accept that they are grooming talent to move on to other organizations. This is where LPHOs are going to have to take a larger systems approach and focus more on cooperation rather than competition.

I also propose that the best practices for local governmental public health themselves are likely to need modification. The first area for modification is in the area of talent development. When looking at competency and leadership development, the mere fact that most public health professionals lack formal business and management training means that we will have to create a wider range of business and management training opportunities that span from very basic to advanced. This may require obtaining outside resources and increasing the cost of SP&M. Similarly, there may be a lack of internal mentors if the existing managers and leaders have underdeveloped management and leadership skills. This may require senior leadership to bear more of this responsibility and/or that LPHOs will need to look outside their organizations and perhaps the public health field for mentors. If so, this may create an unintended opportunity to increase HP-HP exposure to other disciplines and community partners, and thereby enrich their development.

Secondly, job rotation and special assignments may also be more challenging. If you have fewer positions, there are fewer jobs in which to rotate. And if you have a rigid
governmental job classification structure or a union work environment, you may be more constrained in allowing people to work out of their assigned job classification. And if you do work them out of classification, it may increase your financial outlay if you need to pay additional compensation.

Thirdly, cross-functional task forces may be more challenging in small LPHAs simply because there may not be a pool of talent to groom for higher positions. This could require looking for opportunities outside one’s immediate LPHA, which again could be an opportunity to increase a LPHA’s external partnerships.

Another area for adaptation is likely to be the organization’s system for identifying and tracking a talent pool. For LPHOs that have little business and management training, the chief executive may not be versed in or appreciate the need for SP&M. Since chief executive involvement was an important element in best practice organizations, national associations like NACCHO may need to educate their members on its importance. Similarly, if a LPHA does not have a strategic plan or if its LPHO does not support strategic thinking, the LPHA may struggle with identifying the future needs of the organization and therefore not have the information to select potential talent that is prepared to lead programs and organizations in the future.

Finally, smaller LPHAs are more likely to have very limited management support systems, which may require adaptation of best practice implementation. A single generalist human resources professional may be less well versed in SP&M, or if she is well versed, there simply may not be the capacity to take on a major project like this for development. If this were the case, seeking outside consultants would also increase the SP&M expenditures. This may again be where NACCHO needs to develop model systems and template materials for local adaptation. Similarly, smaller organizations may have limited capacity for evaluation and quality improvement programs. Since best practice organizations regularly measure their progress and
implement quality improvement, smaller organizations may need to seek this expertise elsewhere.

There may very well be other barriers created by the different business orientation and/or the much smaller employee scale. The opportunity, however, is that these barriers can increase collaboration with other local partners, promoting a systems orientation to workforce development, or can increase collaboration with neighboring LPHAs, which could promote shared services across multiple jurisdictions.

**Quality of Primary SP&M Studies**

The first major limitation to the primary research studies was how corporations were identified for inclusion. It is left unstated how the one, anonymous multi-national corporation in Bhatnagar’s study\(^{14}\) was selected, other than it was somehow known to have a talent pipeline system. Groves’ study\(^{15}\) relied upon senior partners in a “leading” (undefined) national US health care executive search firm to identify 15 health care organizations “renowned” (again, undefined) for best practice leadership. And Conger and Fulmer\(^{16}\) somehow identified, six undefined “high degree of success in succession management” organizations. Without having specific inclusion or exclusion criteria, it is difficult to examine this research for selection bias or to know if there is internal validity with the subjects being studied across these three case studies.

A second major limitation is that only one study evaluated the effectiveness of each organization’s SP&M system. As such, there are no evaluation criteria. How is success defined? Is it some minimum ratio of individuals deemed ready to assume a higher level position for the number of those positions in the company, how prepared one believes he is when taking a promotion, how successful one is deemed to be by subordinates, how much profit one makes for the company in a new position, or something else? Not having these data calls into question
if our practices are really best practices or simply what we do because it seems to be the right thing to do.

A third limitation is that the methods are not clearly identified. None of the studies reported on the interview questions or the methods for identifying archival or supporting documentation. This makes it impossible to evaluate for construct validity.

**Limitations and Future Research**

As mentioned earlier, there are a number of books written on SP&M that include best practices and are likely to present some research evidence. Because this review excluded books, it is possible that significant best practices have been missed or even that contradictory evidence has been discovered.

This review also limited electronic searches to those databases that UNC-Chapel Hill had available on their library web site and that seemed most appropriate for this review. It is possible that there are human resource or organizational development specific electronic databases that would have identified other SP&M research. However, a quick review of the journals list for Business Source Premier found seven journals that started with “human resource” and 11 academic journals that began with “organization” or “organizational” so clearly some of this literature is in this electronic database.

In terms of the research identified, I was not surprised by the lack of research studies nor the limitations on study design and methods. This field is ripe for more research. I would deem three areas of research to be reasonable next steps. A first area would be to conduct qualitative research (case studies) on a much wider array of organizations focusing on organizations with many fewer employees and from a mix of government, non-profit, and for-profit. A second area would be the identification of evaluation criteria that are reasonable SP&M effectiveness measures and conduct some evaluation research. A third area would be to
design and conduct some prospective case/control studies or at least a time series to evaluate controlled systems and implementation for best practice confirmation.

In the meantime, leaders must be pragmatic. With the baby boomers retiring, the significant number of public health jobs needing new managers and leaders, and accreditation requiring workforce development, SP&M principles and best practices as known today are likely to move LPHAs forward if implemented. In doing so, leaders would be wise to prioritize formative evaluations, quality improvement processes, and outcome evaluation studies to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of what works, what does not work, and what innovations can be developed.

**SP&M—PRACTICE-BASED MODELS**

While books were excluded for my formal literature review, I have reviewed a few for this dissertation. The first book, *The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership-Powered Company*, was a book I acquired prior to my doctoral program as part of my self-development and my interest in developing other managers. The second book, *Effective Succession Planning: Ensuring Leadership Continuity and Building Talent from Within*, was a book recommended to me by a colleague who had an employee take a succession planning course through the University of Washington prior to my doctoral program. These two books have informed some of my thinking and have influenced my plan for action.

**Leadership Pipeline Model**

**The Model**

The leadership pipeline model focuses on the development and progression of employees from line level all the way to the CEO. In doing so, it describes “career passages,” that is, those points from which a person moves from one level of management to another. This
movement from one level to another represents a change in organizational position—that is a passage, and those passages are described as a pipeline turn. They are described in this manner because a person moving from one level to the next is required to increase her complexity of leadership and is required to focus her skills, time applications, and work values differently. The number of turns varies by the complexity of the organization. To illustrate this concept, I am reproducing the authors’ figure illustrating this concept (see Figure 2.4), followed by Table 2.6 that I constructed, highlighting the skills, use of time, and work values required of the seven levels and six passages depicted in their figure.

**Figure 2.4.** Reproduction of Charan, Drotter, and Noel’s Critical Career Passages in a Large Business Organization Diagram

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Figure is recreated with permission from Charan R, Drotter S, Noel J. The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership Powered Company. Second ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; 2011.
Table 2.6. Skills, Use of Time, and Work Values Associated with Management Levels and Passages of the Leadership Pipeline Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Manage Self (Individual Contributor)</th>
<th>Manage Others (1st Line Manager)</th>
<th>Manage Managers (2nd Level Management)</th>
<th>Functional Manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Passage One</strong></td>
<td><strong>Passage Two</strong></td>
<td><strong>Passage Three</strong></td>
<td><strong>Passage Four</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
<td>Do assigned work within given time frames and ways that meet objectives. They make increased contributions and are then considered “promotable”.</td>
<td>Learn to plan work, fill jobs, assign work, motivate others, coach others, and measure work of others.</td>
<td>Learn to identify and select individuals for management and coach them to management. They bring people into the leadership pipeline—big responsibility.</td>
<td>Learn to become skilled in taking other functional concerns and needs into consideration because they report to multifunctional general managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quality work. Appropriate content.</td>
<td>• Planning, Coaching</td>
<td>• Assigning managerial and leadership work to their managers and measuring their progress as managers (and coaching them).</td>
<td>• Team play with other functional managers AND compete for resources based on business needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
<pre><code>                                                             |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                        | • Strategic thinking—identify strategic issues that support the overall business. Think beyond their functional area.                                                                 | • Become proficient strategists for their functional area as well as blending w/ the overall business strategy.                                                                                                        |
                                                             |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                        | • Coaching managers into managers rather than individual contributors. Return managers to individual contributor levels if they can’t embrace management.                                                                 | • Delegate responsibility for overseeing many functional tasks to direct reports.                                                                                                                                  |
                                                             |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                        | • Think and act like a functional leader rather than a functional member.                                                                                                                                       |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Manage Self (Individual Contributor)</th>
<th>Manage Others (1st Line Manager)</th>
<th>Manage Managers (2nd Level Management)</th>
<th>Functional Manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Time</strong></td>
<td>Learning involves planning so that work is completed on time and of quality.</td>
<td>Learn to reallocate their time so they not only complete their assigned work but also help others perform effectively. Shift from doing work to getting work done through others. Learn to let go of their “old” work—technical—and embrace management.</td>
<td>Coaching managers (implement the instruction-performance-feedback cycle repeatedly).</td>
<td>Participating in business team meetings and working with other functional managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reliable.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Make time for others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Values</strong></td>
<td>Accept company culture and adopt professional standards.</td>
<td>Usually the most difficult change. Learn to value managerial work rather than just tolerate it. Learn to value making others productive.</td>
<td>Learn to value strategic and go beyond individual contributions and functional work.</td>
<td>Learn to value areas outside their own functional expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Adopt a broad, long-term perspective. Long-term strategy (e.g., state-of-the-art, futuristic thinking for their function) that is a sustainable competitive advantage—not just immediate/temporary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Skills

Learn to integrate functions (not just becoming more strategic and cross-functional in thinking). Learn to shift from looking at plans and proposal functionally to a profit perspective and long-term view.

- Skilled in working with a wider variety of people than ever before.
- More sensitive to functional diversity issues.
- Communicating clearly and effectively.
- Balance between future goals and present needs and making trade-offs between the two.
- Meet quarterly profit, market share, product and people targets, and plan 3-5 yrs into future.

Learn to run two or more businesses.

- Inspire and support the performance of business managers that report to you.
- Proficient at evaluating strategy for capital allocation and deployment (learn to ask the right questions, analyze right data, and apply right corporate perspective to evaluate multiple strategies).
- Develop business managers.
- Evaluate the portfolio of businesses (right mix, what to add/subtract).
- Assess core capabilities to win (avoid wishful thinking). Factor complexities of running multiple businesses.

- Long-term visionary thinkers.
- Develop operating mechanisms to know and drive quarter-by-quarter performance in tune w/ long-term strategy.
- Well-developed external sensitivity, ability to manage external constituencies, sense external shifts and do something about them proactively.
- Inspiring the entire employee population through a variety of communication tools.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Business Manager</th>
<th>Group Manager</th>
<th>Enterprise Manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of Time</td>
<td>Learn to take thinking time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stop “doing” every second of the day and reserve time for reflection and analysis. (Leadership pipeline becomes clogged if this doesn’t happen.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Assemble high-achieving and ambitious direct reports (know some want his job).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Values</td>
<td>Learn to value and effectively use staff functions.</td>
<td>Learn to value multiple businesses.</td>
<td>Learn to value outward looking perspective and mind-bending trade-offs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trust, accept advice, and receive feedback from all functional managers.</td>
<td>• Value the success others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The premise of this leadership pipeline model is that only sustained (defined as at least three years) high performers at one level with anticipated ability and capacity to develop the new skills and willingness to take on the higher level challenges that come with the next turn should be promoted. To assist in making these pipeline turn judgments, the authors created three categories of employee “potential”: turn potential (ready for promotion), growth potential (assigning more challenging work at the same level), and mastery potential (helping one improve in their current role with the same effort). They provide concrete standards for this judging of potential, citing a source of Drotter Human Resources, Inc., for which is reproduced below in Table 2.7.

**Table 2.7. Standards for Judging Potential from Charan, Drotter, and Noel as Cited from Drotter Human Resources, Inc.**

**Turn Potential (can be promoted through the next passage within three to five years)**

*NOTE: This designation needs at least one-over-one confirmation, as the immediate boss has not hired people for her own level but her boss has.*

- Exhibits operating, technical, and professional skills that are extremely broad and deep
- Exhibits managerial skills that are expected at the next highest organizational level
- Demonstrates leadership skills that are expected at the next highest organizational level
- Regularly works at building new skills and abilities
- Aspires to higher level challenges and opportunities
- Demonstrates “fire in the belly”
- Has a business perspective beyond the current organizational level
- Is oriented toward total business results, not just focused on the success of own area

**Growth Potential (can be promoted to a bigger job at the same leadership level within three years)**

- Exhibits operating, technical, and professional skills that are high for the current organizational level
- Exhibits managerial skills that are high for the current organizational level
- Frequently demonstrates leadership skills that are high for the current position
- Adds new skills when the job calls for it
- Aspires to greater challenges but primarily at the same organizational level
- Is motivated to do more than is expected
• Has a business perspective beyond the current position
• Is focused on the success of own area and the team

**Master Potential (can improve in current role with some effort)**

*NOTE: This individual may have the desire, but may not yet have demonstrated the ability, to progress to bigger jobs.*

• On balance, exhibits operating, technical, and professional managerial, and leadership skills that are acceptable for the current organizational level
• Demonstrates little effort to build new skills but keeps current skills sharp
• Aspires to stay with the company, as opposed to assuming bigger challenges or higher personal contributions
• Is motivated to do what is needed in the current job
• Understands the job
• Is focused primarily on technical issues.

---


The authors encourage giving candidates stretch projects or assignments that incorporate the skills needed in the next level of management to help measure their capacity to perform at the next management level. This model shies away from the loosely defined term of “high potentials” and substitutes it with this more measurable definition.

**Discussion**

This model offers many advantages for a LPHO looking to implement a SP&M program. First, it is very concrete, practical, and flexible. It clearly outlines important elements for success in each level of management that can form the foundation for the development of job descriptions and performance review criteria. This can then be easily incorporated into performance management and evaluation systems and tools. Because it is flexible, one can adapt the management position labels and the number of passages or turns to the scope and size of the LPHA.

Second, this serves the individual employee who is looking to move up into the organization. It helps the employee anticipate the work of various management levels. In doing
so, it helps the employee understand what she needs to give up and what she needs to take on as she moves into the next management level. This can inform her self-development plan.

Third, this provides a concrete model from which to coach employees. Knowing the skills, use of time, and work values required of the various levels facilitates the diagnosing of performance problems and provides a foundation on which to coach improvement. It also provides the supervisor, and the organization, with a framework in which to judge an individual’s potential for and to support the development of a pool of candidates for succession. This facilitates a supervisor’s knowledge to understand and identify stretch assignments and projects that can help an employee grow in the direction of the next level of management.

Fourth, this provides the organization with a framework to understand organizational inefficiencies and dysfunctions. Organizations that are struggling to get the work done or to get the “right” work done often have leaders and managers that are working at a level or two below the appropriate level. Subordinates experience this situation as micromanaging and limiting their potential, in fact, disincentivizing their performance. This references the lesson learned for me as I reported in the introduction.

From my perspective, the only issue with this model is that it needs to be thoroughly evaluated in multiple work settings. I am not aware of evaluation research of this model.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

MY PHILOSOPHICAL WORLDVIEW

I believe that we as practitioners need to be science driven and incorporate peer reviewed research findings, proven and promising best practices, and theory into our work whenever it is available. I am also practical. Many times we practitioners do not have all the data we would like and there are times programs cannot be implemented with fidelity. In such circumstances we have to decide if it is important to act or not, and when we decide to act, we need to do so with the best available evidence. This worldview leads me to the viewpoint that, if I think it is likely to work, I will give it a try as long as I believe it to be ethical.

My interest in this research was to improve the manner in which we prepare our employees for management and leadership roles at all levels of the organization so they are better equipped to fulfill their job functions at time of entry into a new position. And more specifically, I wanted to find applications of SP&M that work for LPHAs, which I anticipated would be modifications from the literature that primarily comes from private sector companies with workforce numbers that far exceed those of an LPHA. My dissertation was intended from the very beginning to further my crusade for system change and thus, I approached this research from an advocacy and participatory worldview. Creswell\textsuperscript{27(p.9)} writes that:

An advocacy/participatory worldview holds that research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and political agenda. Thus, the research contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individual’s work or live, and the researcher’s life. Moreover, specific issues need to be addressed that speak to important social issues of the day, issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation. The researcher often begins with one of these issues as the focal point of the study.
I borrowed from multiple fields of study that had something to lend as I conducted this research. This is my pragmatic, practitioner approach.

**STUDY SUBJECTS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

My study subjects were all 35 of the top LPHOs in Washington State’s 35 LPHAs, persons with primary responsibility for implementing SP&M activities, other SP&M champions, and LPHA staff identified by their organizations as HP-HP. The primary unit of interest and analysis was the LPHA organization, not the individual.

There are 35 LPHAs in Washington State and they are of three types: county government departments, city/county departments that operate under a charter negotiated between the county and the largest city in that county, and health districts, which are separate governmental organizational entities. Health districts may either be a single or multiple county district and, while separate governmental entities, they do not have taxing authority. Local Boards of Health govern each LPHA and are either comprised solely of elected officials (e.g., county commissioners/county councilmembers or that in combination with city council members) or of elected officials and non-elected officials, but elected officials must comprise the majority of the board. LPHA governance is codified by the Registered Code of Washington (RCW) to include RCW 70.05 for county departments, RCW 70.08 for city/county departments, and RCW 70.46 for health districts (go to [http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/) for more information). The LPHA is led either by a physician leader (called health officer in Washington State) or by directors/administrators possessing a wide range of training.
STUDY DESIGN AND INVESTIGATOR ROLE

My research used a mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) study design and employed a sequential explanatory strategy (see Figure 3.1). The data collection began with a World Wide Web administered cross-sectional survey delivered to the top LPHOs in Washington State’s 35 LPHAs. The survey ascertained what SP&M activities LPHAs were undertaking and used quantitative survey methods. The survey results were used to purposefully identify three LPHAs that were implementing more comprehensive SP&M activities or programs, one each from a small, medium, and large sized LPHA. These LPHAs were used as cases to help explain how in practice SP&M programs have been implemented in Washington State. The case agency data collection used subjective data from semi-structured interviews and objective data from document review. This component used qualitative research methods. Interpretation of both the survey data and the case agency data occurred together to inform my findings and recommendations.
My investigator role was that of participant/observer in at least five ways. First, I am one of the top LPHOs in Washington with first-hand knowledge of the system as well as professional and personal relationships with many of the top LPHOs. Second, I completed the survey as a participant for my agency, Clark County Public Health. Third, I have worked as a manager/leader at two other LPHAs in Washington State (Public Health—Seattle & King County and Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department) and thus have prior work experience and knowledge in those.
organizations. Fourth, I had been reading and thinking about leadership pipelines and preparing others for the top LPHO positions prior to my doctoral program. And finally, I took an advocacy/participatory approach to this research topic as described earlier.

**WEB-DELIVERED SURVEY**

The web-delivered survey was designed to answer the second research question, “What elements of SP&M are being implemented in LPHAs and do LPHAs have a comprehensive SP&M program?” and components of the third research question, specifically—what are the barriers to implementation and what are the facilitators to implementation? All 35 top LPHOs in Washington State were invited to complete the survey.

**Survey Instrument and Data Collection Procedures**

The survey questions were developed with the intent of describing SP&M in LPHAs and I used the findings from the literature review to inform the development of the survey questions. I added questions that I hypothesized might predict which LPHAs would be more likely to implement SP&M activities and programs (see Appendix D page 134 for the web survey).

I pilot tested the survey questions with five top LPHOs outside Washington State who were professional contacts. They were asked to time how long it took to complete the survey, make notes on anything they did not understand, identify which questions they would need staff to answer or for which they would need to track down information, and provide comments or reactions to the survey itself, including questions they would eliminate and questions or data they thought were missing. The survey took these pilot test takers between 20 and 30 minutes to complete and modifications to the draft survey were made based on their input.

All 35 top LPHOs were invited to participate in the survey. An initial introductory letter was mailed to each LPHO’s office with an enclosed $2 bill to help ensure the letter would catch
the attention of the LPHO and/or their assistant (see Appendix D page 130). Approximately one week later, each LPHO received an e-mail delivered invitation to take the survey. The e-mail invitation linked the LPHO to a SurveyMonkey™ site that delivered the informed consent and the survey. The e-mail invitation included a .pdf of the survey to help the LPHO’s prepare their answers. Step-by-step protocols are found in Appendix C, page 128.

**Variables and Measures**

The dependent variable was a composite succession score. The composite succession score was intended to measure the comprehensive nature of a given LPHA’s SP&M program and was derived from the first 25 questions of the web-administered survey that asked about specific SP&M systems and activities in a given LPHA. Each of the 25 questions was assigned a score of four (4) points if an agency was implementing that system or activity “agency-wide” and a score of two (2) points if it was implementing this “in parts of the agency, but not agency-wide.” All other responses (agency does not do this, respondent is unsure, or respondent did not answer the item) were assigned zero (0) points. Thus “comprehensive” was a combination of implementing all of the SP&M best practices surveyed and implementing each of those “agency-wide.” The composite succession score could thus have a value range from zero to 100. The composite succession score for the agencies of the five individuals pilot testing the survey questions were: 28, 28, 42, 42, and 60.

The independent variables were those variables describing the LPHA and its director. They included both discrete and continuous variables.
Data Checking

I reviewed every answer from the first eight completed surveys to ensure that the electronic survey tool was working correctly and that all variables were properly programmed, including all skip patterns. I discovered two programming errors. The first, question 33, was discovered by noting that four of the first eight respondents skipped that question asking the number of employees that had retired in the last year, while they had answered all the other questions. After looking at that variable, I realized I had incorrectly set the numerical field to not allow for a zero. I called each of the four responders who skipped that question and confirmed their organization had no retirements then corrected the database and correctly programmed that variable. That prompted me to look at similar variables and I found that question 34 needed the same fix. That question did not have any missed answers up to that point, as all had at least one employee that resigned or was terminated in the prior year.

After all surveys were completed, I reviewed every answer to again make sure there were no mistakes. Two errors were noted. Both involved a question that should not have been able to be answered, as the skip pattern would have not presented the question. After again confirming that the skip pattern was programmed correctly and was working correctly, I surmised that the responder must have gone back in the survey, which was how I programmed the survey, and changed their answer from one that would have presented the question to one that would have skipped the question. Thus, the database was corrected to remove the answer to the question that would not have otherwise been presented.

Data Analysis

I hired two epidemiologists to analyze the data. Both worked together on the analysis plan. One did the majority of analyses while the other double-checked the work.

Data were analyzed using SAS® v9.2 on a Windows® based personal computer.
The analysis used descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics used case counts and proportions to describe the use of various SP&M best practice activities in LPHAs and to profile the LPHAs and their top LPHO. For the demographics, means, medians, and ranges were calculated.

The inferential statistics first used univariate linear regression (linear regression T score test) to determine if there were any statistically significant associations between the independent variables and SP&M activities of LPHAs as quantified using the composite succession score. The criteria for statistical significance was set at the standard \( \alpha < 0.05 \). Given the lack of prior research on this topic, all independent variables that had at least 80% complete data were tested. Following that, all of the statistically significant independent variables were analyzed using backward stepwise linear regression to identify the best model to predict composite succession score. These analyses resulted in a regression equation as follows:

\[
CSS = \beta_0 + \beta_1(var1) + \beta_2(var2) + \beta_3(var3)
\]

One major limitation of the regression modeling was the limited power inherent in the relatively small sample size of 35 LPHAs. Power calculations were done on the binary variables using Open Epi, version 2.3.1 and were calculated after the data were collected, using the actual CSSs for each variable’s two groups.

**CASE AGENCY DESCRIPTION COMPONENT**

The case agency description component was designed to answer the third research question, “For those LPHAs implementing SP&M, how is it being implemented, what are the barriers to implementation, what are the facilitators to implementation, and what are the lessons learned?” To accomplish this, three LPHAs were purposefully selected for case description research. Selection occurred by sorting LPHAs by the number of FTEs in the LPHA
and grouping them into “small-sized” LPHAs with up to 35 FTE, “medium-sized” LPHAs with 35 up to 100 FTE, and “large-sized” LPHAs having 100 or more FTE. Then within these groupings, the LPHA with the highest composite succession score was invited to participate in the case agency study. Given my conflicted role, I decided a priori that Clark County Public Health would be excluded from the case agency description component.

I conducted each of the in-person site visits with each of the case agencies. Up to five people from each LPHA were interviewed using semi-structured interviewing techniques. In addition, documentation of SP&M practices and tools were collected to triangulate data and supplement information obtained in the interviews.

**Case Agency Data Collection Procedures**

I contacted the top LPHO at each of the three LPHAs selected for case agency study to inform him or her of the study and invite their organization’s participation (see Appendix F page 152 for the general script). The top LPHOs from all three initial LPHAs selected agreed to have their organization participate in this component of the research.

Each LPHO provided names of the person with primary responsibility for implementing the SP&M activities in their department, persons who were viewed as SP&M champions, and some HP-HP. All LPHOs knew I wanted to interview up to 5 persons, including the top LPHO. The smallest department provided four names, the medium sized department five names, and the largest department eight names. To narrow the total number invited for participation in the largest department, the champions and the HP-HP were put into separate groups and alphabetized within group by last name. Then random numbers were generated using the random number feature of Microsoft® Excel® and two champions and two HP-HPs were invited for interviews. All initial persons selected agreed to be interviewed.
Upon top LPHO agreement, the LPHOs were asked to provide dates that would work for site visits. All site visits occurred over a three-week period in May 2012.

Site visits consisted of semi-structured interviews (see Appendix H page 159 for the interview guide) and document collection. All participants gave permission for their interviews to be electronically recorded and that was done with two recorders to guard against the loss of data if there was a malfunction of equipment or unintended deletion of the recording.

I took handwritten notes during the interviews and used those notes at the end of the interview to summarize with the subject what I initially understood to be the main points from the interview and sought subject confirmation or alteration of those points. Immediately following most of the interviews, I made electronic summary notes with my observations of the subjects, the main points of the interview, my general impression of the interview, and quality improvement notes of my interview skills and how I conducted the interview. Those quality improvement notes guided me in improving my interview performance.

Prior to each LPHA site visit, I reviewed that LPHA’s answers from the quantitative survey. I also reviewed any archival documents and tools the organization shared with me in advance of the site visit.

Variables and Measures

The qualitative interviews sought narrative information on what SP&M best practices were being implemented, how they were being implemented, what best practices needed to be modified, what were barriers to SP&M, what were facilitators to SP&M, and what lessons were learned.

Analysis

I hired a professional transcriptionist to transcribe the interviews verbatim, without making note of pauses. Each subject was given an opportunity to read and make any corrections
to the written transcription. Their edits were then incorporated and considered to be the final written document.

The semi-structured interviews inquired about LPHAs’ experiences with SP&M and, therefore, the unit of analysis was the organization. Data analysis occurred using the web-based qualitative and mixed-methods research product Dedoose, accessed at www.dedoose.com.

While multiple organizations were described, each was independent as there was not an intervention in common to employ a comparative design. Therefore, no hypotheses were tested across organizations.

Subject transcriptions were tagged by LPHA and their role in SP&M (i.e., LPHO, a champion, or a HP-HP). Pre-identified codes included codes for each of the 25 SP&M best practices, barriers, facilitators, and lessons learned. Coded data excerpts were compiled by like codes and reviewed for information to describe each individual case.

The data obtained in the semi-structured interviews were triangulated with historical documents (e.g., SP&M program descriptions and tools). All of these data were analyzed together to identify the SP&M systems and policies that were created in the practice environment, tools that were used to implement the system, roles various individuals filled as the organization undertook its SP&M work, and lessons learned.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS LINKED TO DATA COLLECTION**

Table 3.1 specifically links the identified research questions in this dissertation with the specific data collection to answer those questions.
Table 3.1. Data Collection Instruments that Provide Data to Answer the Study Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Research Question</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are the best practices in SP&amp;M?</td>
<td>Literature review – see Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a. What elements of SP&amp;M are being implemented in LPHAs?</td>
<td>Quantitative survey questions 1 through 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b. Do LPHAs have a comprehensive SP&amp;M program?</td>
<td>Quantitative survey question 30 and Composite Succession Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For those implementing SP&amp;M,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a. How is it being implemented?</td>
<td>Quantitative survey questions 26-29, 33-34, 37-42, 44-45, and 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b. What are the barriers to implementation?</td>
<td>Quantitative survey question 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c. What are the facilitators to implementation?</td>
<td>Quantitative survey question 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d. What are the lessons learned?</td>
<td>Exclusively via qualitative interviews.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IRB AND CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES

This study was approved by the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill IRB on February 27, 2012 (study #: 12-0342) and was exempted from further review.

All electronic data for this study were stored on non-networked computers that were password protected or were stored on the secure servers of the companies supporting SurveyMonkey and Dedoose.

I deleted all digital recordings within a month of the subjects returning their finalized written transcripts.

All electronic datasets and hardcopy data used subject codes for the LPHA and individual subjects. The dataset linking code with agency and individual subject were kept in a separate file with a unique password known only to me.
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter first presents the data analysis from the two components of this research study, the web-administered survey and the semi-structured interviews from the three case agency LPHAs. A discussion then presents the key findings for study questions two and three, the limitations of this research, and recommendations for future research, which inform the plan for change presented in the following chapter.

DATA FROM SURVEY

The web survey was administered from March 8 to April 2, 2012.

Demographics of Subject Agencies

The subject population for this study was all 35 LPHAs in Washington State and data were collected through the top LPHO for each agency. All 35 top LPHOs completed the survey, for a response rate of 100%.

The majority of LPHAs (60% 21/35) were a “single department” public health agency while the remaining 40% (14/35) were a combined public health and human services agency. Most LPHAs (63% 22/35) operated as a department in county government while 31% (11/35) operated as an independent health district and 6% (2/35) operated under a charter agreement between the county and the largest city in the jurisdiction. Almost three-quarters (74% 25/34) had a unionized workforce.

The number of FTE employees in any given LPHA had a very large range, from 3.8 FTE to 1,385 FTE (with one LPHA not reporting data). Public Health—Seattle & King County was by far
the largest agency and skewed the mean of 86.8 FTE (SD=236.8). The median number of FTE employees was 26.7 FTE and the combined total was 2,951.45 FTE. The number of individuals in a LPHA ranged from 5 people to 1,502 people with a median of 28.5 people (mean=93.94, SD=256.5) for a combined total of 3,194 people.

When examining employee turnover, I found that any given LPHA had from 0 to 78 employees resign or be terminated for reasons other than retirement in the last year (median=3, mean=6.6 with a SD=14.8, total=230). In addition any given LPHA had from 0 to 48 employees retire in the last year (median=1, mean=3.45, SD=8.82, total=100).

To assess the demand to replace retiring workers, survey respondents were asked to estimate the percent of their workforce eligible for retirement in the next 5 years. Thirty percent (10/33) estimated that up to 5% of their workforce was eligible to retire within five years, 15% (5/33) estimated that percentage to be 6 through 10%, 39% (13/33) estimated from 11 through 24%, and 15% (5/33) with 25% or more.

**Demographics of the Top LPHOs**

Recalling that the study subjects were the organizations, not the top LPHOs, the demographics for the top LPHOs describe the characteristics of the most senior leaders in Washington’s LPHAs. These demographics were used as independent variables in analyses examining the composite succession score.

For the overwhelming majority of top LPHOs, 91% (31/34) reported that this was their first top LPHO job. Of the three that were top LPHOs previously, two held that position once before and one held that position four times before. In asking how prepared the top LPHOs felt for their first top LPHO position, 20% (7/34) responded that they felt very prepared, 24% (8/34) felt prepared, 38% (13/34) felt somewhat prepared, and 18% (6/34) did not feel prepared.
The mean number of years in their current top LPHO job was 7.03 years (SD=6.08 with a range of 0.5 to 25 years). Only three top LPHO positions were less than full-time, one was 0.25 FTE, one 0.6 FTE, and one 0.9FTE (with one not reporting this data).

The age range of the top LPHOs was from 38 to 64 years with a mean of 54.6 years (SD=6.8) and a median of 57 years. Twenty-two percent (7/32) had a bachelors degree as their highest degree, 59% (19/32) a masters degree, and 19% (6/32) their doctorate.

In terms of SP&M for the top LPHO positions, it is important to know how likely these officials believed it was that they would either retire or voluntarily leave their agency in the near future. Fifty percent believed it was likely (6=highly likely, 7=likely, and 4=possible) that they would leave their jobs within five years and 50% believed it was unlikely (8=unlikely, 9=highly unlikely), with one not reporting.

**Importance of and Agency Capacity for SP&M**

All top LPHOs indicated that SP&M was at least somewhat important to the future of their agency. Thirty-two percent (11/34) believed it was very important, 41% (14/34) important, and 26% (9/34) somewhat important.

One measure for agency capability and capacity to undertake SP&M is whether or not staff is trained in this subject matter area. Nine of the 34 top LPHOs responding either had taken training specific to SP&M or knew of staff in their LPHA who had, 23 indicated that no one had the training, and 2 did not know. Three of the directors themselves had training in this area.

**Implementation of SP&M Best Practices**

Twenty-five best practices for SP&M were derived from my literature review and grouped into six areas of best practices: pre-employment, selecting HP-HP, leadership and competency development in individuals identified as HP-HP, coaching and mentoring, goal
setting and performance measurement, and retaining HP-HP. The two tables below present the best practices used by a majority and by a minority of LPHAs.

**Table 4.1. SP&M Best Practices Used by at Least 50% of the LPHAs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%(^b) of LPHAs</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Selecting HP-HP</td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Our agency identifies HP-HP from our workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>Q20</td>
<td>Our agency uses HP-HP employee and supervisor dialogues to set performance goals specific to their development for new roles/jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>Our agency sends HP-HP employees to technical and/or management/leadership trainings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Selecting HP-HP</td>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>Our agency assesses individuals for problematic behaviors that may derail their career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>Our agency identifies cross-functional projects, task forces, or teams for HP-HP employees to serve specifically to develop their knowledge, skills, and ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>Our agency gives HP-HP employees exposure to general organizational management (as opposed to program specific management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>Our agency purposively assigns HP-HP employees stretch projects/assignments to develop their knowledge, skills, and/or ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Pre-employment</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Our agency uses student internships and/or practicums as a means of identifying HP-HP for entry-level positions in our agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>Q21</td>
<td>Our agency evaluates a HP-HP employee’s performance against their development plan and that evaluation is put in writing and verbally discussed with the HP-HP employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Selecting HP-HP</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Our agency assesses individuals for job competencies that are a level or more above their current position to help identify HP-HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Selecting HP-HP</td>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>Our agency assesses individuals for learning agility (an individual’s readiness and ability to learn from experiences and be adaptive to changing environments)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)For the complete data tables, see Appendix E page 135

\(^b\)The percent combines both “agency-wide” use and “in parts of the agency”
Table 4.2. SP&M Best Practices Used by Less than 50% LPHAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%(^b) of LPHAs</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Q15 Our agency creates and delivers internal workshops and courses specifically for HP-HP employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Retaining</td>
<td>Q25 Our agency increases a HP-HP employee’s pay specifically to retain the employee in the agency (either to prevent the employee from looking elsewhere or to retain the employee when the employee has been offered a position elsewhere)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Retaining</td>
<td>Q23 Our agency sometimes creates new lateral-level positions specifically to give HP-HP employees the opportunity to gain new experience within the agency or to retain HP-HP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Q10 Our agency conducts 360 degree feedback assessments for HP-HP employees as a tool to help them identify areas of growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Q7 Our agency rotates HP-HP through jobs in various parts of the agency or encourages lateral moves specifically to develop the employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Q11 Our agency develops individualized development plans with HP-HP employees specific to their preparation for new positions in the agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Selecting HP-HP</td>
<td>Q6 Our agency creates lists of individuals to be developed for higher level positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Retaining</td>
<td>Q24 Our agency sometimes creates new higher-level positions specifically to give HP-HP employees the opportunity to promote within the agency or as a tool to retain a HP-HP employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Coach/Mentor</td>
<td>Q17 Our agency assigns new employees a mentor or coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>Q19 Our agency uses formal meetings with HP-HP employees to define and further develop their job descriptions specifically to create developmental opportunities to help them prepare for new positions in the agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Q14 Our agency creates action-learning projects for HP-HP employees in which teams of people work on a project strategic to the agency’s development and then has them formally report on the project to the highest levels of management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Coach/Mentor</td>
<td>Q18 Our agency offers HP-HP employees mentoring and coaching opportunities by someone other than their supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Q16 Our agency encourages development by having HP-HP lead training sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Retaining</td>
<td>Q22 Our agency limits some or all recruitments to internal applicants only, specifically to help retain HP-HP employees, and then may or may not open the recruitment to external applicants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)For the complete data tables, see Appendix E page 135

\(^b\)The percent combines both “agency-wide” use and “in parts of the agency”
The set of 11 best practices that were implemented in more than 50% of LPHAs (Table 4.1) was a reasonable grouping of SP&M activities representing pre-employment, HP-HP selection, and development activities. Analysis of these 11 best practices found that the median number being implemented by any single LPHA was 8, indicating that half of the LPHAs were implementing 72% of that group of best practices. Having such commonality suggests those best practices were the most practical and relevant for LPHAs as well as able to be implemented in the public sector. And since the best practices were derived from literature focused almost exclusively from the private sector, this is important information.

I also examined the total number of best practices being implemented in each agency. Those data are visually depicted in Figure 4.1 below. The figure represents 411 best practices implemented across 34 LPHAs reporting data. Of those, 43% (177/411—the solid bars) were being implemented agency-wide and 57% (234/411—the shaded bars) in parts of an agency. The median number of the 25 best practices being implemented was 12, with a range of 3 to 21.

Figure 4.1. Number of Best Practices Implemented in Parts of each LPHA or Agency-Wide
Pre-Employment Best Practices

One opportunity to identify new talent for an organization and simultaneously develop formal relationships with academic institutions is to use internships and/or practicums to identify HP-HP for entry level positions. Most LPHAs in Washington State (62%, 21/34) made use of this opportunity, which suggested strong practice-academia connections.

Selecting HP-HP Best Practices

Implementing SP&M requires that an agency either formally or informally identify HP-HP from its workforce. The vast majority, 85% (29/34), of LPHAs in Washington State indicated they do identify HP-HP, although only 32% (11/34) created formal lists of individuals to be developed for higher-level positions. Seventy percent (24/34) indicated they assess their HP-HP individuals for problematic behaviors that could derail their careers, 56% (19/34) indicated they assess individuals for competencies one level above their current position, and 53% (18/34) assess for learning agility, a skill increasingly viewed as important for leaders during ever rapidly changing times.

Developing HP-HP Best Practices

After HP-HP individuals are identified and assessed, developing their leadership skills and other management and technical skills are critical. LPHA strengths in this area were that 76% (26/34) sent HP-HP to technical and/or management training, 70% (24/34) identified cross-functional projects, task forces, or teams to develop HP-HP knowledge, skills, and abilities, 68% (23/34) intentionally assigned HP-HP stretch projects/assignment to develop their knowledge, skills, and/or abilities, and 68% (23/34) exposed HP-HP to general organizational management as contrasted with program specific management. Much less utilized best practices were: having HP-HP lead training sessions (47% 16/34), creating action-learning projects in which teams work on a project strategic to the agency’s development and then has them report formally to the
highest levels of management (44% 15/34), creating individualized development plans (29% 10/34), rotating HP-HP through jobs in various parts of the agency (29% 10/34), conducting 360 degree feedback assessments (26% 9/34), and creating and delivering internal workshops and courses specifically for HP-HP (15% 5/33).

Coaching and Mentoring Best Practices

Formal coaching and mentoring was employed by less than one-half of the LPHAs. Forty-four percent (15/34) offered coaching and mentoring opportunities with someone other than their supervisor and 35% (12/34) assigned new employees a coach or mentor.

Goal Setting and Performance Management Best Practices

When it came to setting goals and performance measures for HP-HP, 79% (27/34) used employee and supervisor dialogues to set goals related to new roles/jobs, although only 35% did so agency-wide. Fifty-nine percent (20/34) evaluated HP-HP employees performance against their development plan and put that in writing and verbally discussed it with the HP-HP. Formal systems were lacking in this area as well, given that only 35% (12/34) of LPHAs indicated they used formal meetings with HP-HP to define and further develop their job descriptions to specifically create developmental opportunities to prepare the HP-HP for new positions within the agency.

Retaining HP-HP Best Practices

Retaining HP-HP employees using the best practices derived from the literature review was more of a challenge across the system, which given the nature of public sector rules and union contracts, is not surprising. The most commonly used tool to retain HP-HP was to limit recruitments to internal applicants only, which 47% (16/34) of LPHAs used. That was followed by sometimes creating higher-level positions specifically to give HP-HP employees an opportunity
to promote (32% 11/34). Least used best practices were creating new lateral-level positions to
give HP-HP opportunity to gain new experiences in the agency (24% 8/34) and increasing a HP-
HP’s pay specifically to retain the employee (21% 7/34).

**LPHA SP&M Plans and Workforce Profiles**

Only 3 LPHAs (8%) had a written SP&M plan. Two of the three answered the follow-up
questions and both indicated they review the plan and evaluate its effectiveness at least once
every two years. Neither of their plans called for identifying and developing employees who
could lead in the areas their agency need to strategically move towards nor did they identify a
leadership role for the top LPHO.

When it came to having written, summary profiles of the LPHA workforce, the vast
majority, 77% (27/35), did not have a summary profile by length of time to eligible retirement
for each employee. However, of the 27 that did not have the profile, 23 believed they had
sufficient data to get such a profile. Of the 8 LPHAs that did have such a profile, only 2 reviewed
that data at least annually.

More encouraging, 46% (16/35), had a written, summary profile of their workforce by
length of time they have been employed at the LPHA. For those that did not, all but one thought
they had sufficient data that they could create such a profile.

**LPHA SP&M Activities**

None of the 35 LPHAs indicated that they had an agency-wide SP&M program that is
comprehensive, defined as identifying, developing, and retaining HP-HP individuals for future
management and leadership roles and identifying how HP-HP are placed into those roles.
Twenty-nine percent (10/35) indicated they had an agency-wide SP&M program that was not
comprehensive and the remaining 71% (25/35) said they did not currently undertake specific
agency-wide SP&M activities.
For the 10 agencies that did have agency-wide SP&M planning, in 50% (5/10) of those, the top LPHO was the primary person responsible for leading SP&M. For the remaining 5, one each reported the following responsible parties: the administrative services manager/chief operating officer, a human resources director/staff person, another senior manager, a line staff member, and their director’s group with HR involvement. One noted their LPHA had done this with their Board of Health and initially used a consultant. In addition, 5 of the LPHAs (50%) used a committee, work group, or task force to develop and implement their program. Most of the 10 agencies had been more recently engaged in SP&M, one having started in the last year, 5 having been engaged in SP&M from 1 through 4 years, 2 for 5 through 9 years, and 2 for 10 years or longer.

**Barriers to SP&M**

For the 25 LPHAs not undertaking agency-wide SP&M, the three most commonly reported reasons for not doing so were: that given everything else the agency needs to do, SP&M is not a high enough priority (68%, 17/25), that their staff was too small in number to make this a worthwhile effort (60%, 15/25), and that the top LPHO believed union issues would prevent it for working in their agency, although the top LPHO had not yet raised the issue with union representatives (28%, 7/25). Three each (12% 3/25) also indicated these barriers: they were a department in a larger organization and the top LPHO did not have the authority to implement this on her own, they were intentionally seeking new staff from outside the agency to bring in new ideas and/or new skill sets, and they did not have the expertise on staff and did not have the resources to hire a consultant to lead this for them. One top LPHO indicated he did raise the issue with the union and could not get agreement and another one indicated he was working with the union and had not yet given up.
Facilitators to SP&M

For the 10 LPHAs implementing agency-wide SP&M, 80% (8/10) indicated that identifying workforce development as a strategic need led to an investment in SP&M. Fifty percent of those (5/10) saw it as a way to help their LPHA meet the Washington State public health standards and/or national accreditation and 50% (5/10) had staff ask for developmental opportunities to grow their knowledge and competencies. Forty percent of the top LPHOs were personally motivated to develop and retain HP-HP employees and therefore made it an agency priority. Three of the 10 LPHAs had an employee(s) who wanted to develop and lead SP&M efforts.

Benefits to SP&M Activities

For the 10 LPHAs indicating they did have an agency-wide SP&M program, 50% (5/10) said it developed their staff to its full potential, it increased the effectiveness of their public health programs, it prepared supervisors and managers to lead the agency where it strategically needs to go, and it improved the morale of the workforce. Forty percent (4/10) said that it retained staff that would have otherwise left the agency and it increased their supervisors’ and managers’ performance. Finally, 30% (3/10) said it helped identify people who were not ready for a promotion.

Identifying, Developing, and Promoting HP-HP

Just over one-half (53% 18/34) of the LPHAs did not identify employees to be part of a HP-HP pool for development. In the 16 LHPAs (47%) that did, it was most typical for senior management to identify the employees. Table 4.3 shows, in order of decreasing frequency, the people that identified or nominated employees to be part of a HP-HP pool.
Table 4.3. Frequency of Who Identified or Nominated Employees to be Part of a HP-HP Pool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person(s) who identify or nominate</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The top LPHO</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The administrator/administrative services manager/chief</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operating officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another senior manager</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A human resources director/staff person</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An entry or mid-level supervisor/manager</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A line staff member</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Health member</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff can self-nominate</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External partners</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (self-specified):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Director’s group with HR involvement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is no formal process; if a supervisor or</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>administrator sees potential, we note that and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>follow up to the best of our ability.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This is done informally within the department by</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supervisor’s/team leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aSixteen LPHAs identified/nominated employee to be part of HP-HP pools, so the maximum frequency was 16. Multiple responses to this question were permitted.

Only 3 LPHAs had a procedure for identifying succession candidates for management or leadership positions with all three indicating their LPHA identified a pool of persons who could fill a specific position or a variety of positions in the agency. One said her LPHA usually identified a specific person to fill a specific position with nobody else being considered.

When it came to filling supervisory or management positions, 77% (27/35) of LPHAs usually made people compete for the position while 23% (8/35) did not.

**Composite Succession Score and Linear Regression Model**

The composite succession score is a summary score intended to measure the relative comprehensiveness of a given LPHA’s SP&M program and can range from 0 to 100. Composite succession scores were computed for all but one of the LPHAs, as one LPHA had missing data for all of the 25 best practice questions. With that LPHA removed, the range of the composite
succession score was from 6 to 76. The mean score was 34.59 (SD=18.71) with a median score of 33.

As mentioned in the methods section, each independent variable with at least 80% complete data was tested for a statistically significant association with the composite succession score using univariate linear regression. Five variables were found to have an association. Those 5 were:

- Having an agency-wide SP&M program (binary analysis, p=0.015)
- Having a written, summary profile of the LPHA workforce by the length of time to which they will be eligible for retirement (binary analysis, p=0.0006)
- Having a written, summary profile of the LPHA workforce by the length of time they have been employed at the LPHA (binary analysis, p=0.0056)
- How important the top LPHO feels SP&M is to the future of their agency (both as a continuous variable p=0.0326 and binary p=0.0161 when combining important and very important versus not important and somewhat important)
- The likelihood that the top LPHO would retire or voluntarily leave their LPHA within the next 5 years (binary analysis p=0.0487 when combining highly likely, likely, and possible versus unlikely and highly unlikely). When this ordinal variable was analyzed as a continuous variable, it did not reach significance (p=0.543).

These 5 variables were then modeled using backward multiple linear regression, without any interaction terms so the model would not be overwhelmed due to the limited number of respondents. All 5 of the variables were loaded into the primary model and the model was stable despite the small sample. The final model included two variables: 1) An agency-wide SP&M program, and 2) Having a written, summary profile of the workforce by
length of time to being eligible for retirement, as having had the best fit for the data. The final model was:

\[
\text{Composite Succession Score} = 24.95 + 14.31 \times \text{(having an agency-wide SP&M program)} + 16.57 \times \text{(having a retirement profile)}
\]

The model had an \( R^2 = 0.39 \), indicating that it explained 39% of the variance. It is likely that other factors contribute to the composite succession score that were not found in this analysis and that if repeated with a larger sample, would allow for a more robust model. And in fact, power calculations did indicate challenges in detecting real differences, if they do in fact exist. The table below displays the power calculations. All variables with greater than 90% power were found to be statistically significant, while statistical significance was not achieved for most variables with less than 90% power.

Table 4.4. Power Calculations for the Binomial Analysis of the Variables Used in the Regression Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Data Treatment</th>
<th>Power for binomial analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q 28:</td>
<td>Yes vs. No or unknown</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25:</td>
<td>Yes vs. No or unknown</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13:</td>
<td>Agency-wide vs. Not agency-wide</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q34:</td>
<td>Very important + important vs. Somewhat important + not important</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20:</td>
<td>Identifies HP-HP vs. Does not identify HP-HP</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q45:</td>
<td>Highly likely +</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Data Treatment</td>
<td>Power for binomial analysis</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>your current agency sometime in the next five years?</td>
<td>likely + possible vs. Unlikely + highly unlikely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q37: Are any of your agency’s supervisors/managers unionized?</td>
<td>Union vs. Non-union</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q35: What percent of your workforce would you estimate is eligible to retire in the next five years?</td>
<td>0 through 10 yrs. vs. 11+ yrs.</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q55: What type of organization is your agency?</td>
<td>Single dept. vs. Combined dept.</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24: When filling supervisory or management positions, does your agency usually make people compete for the position?</td>
<td>Yes vs. No</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q36: Does your agency have unionized workers?</td>
<td>Union vs. Non-union</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q50: Have you, or anyone you know of on your staff, taken training specific to succession planning (e.g., workshop, course, etc.)?</td>
<td>Yes vs. No</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DATA FROM SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

(Notes: quotes in this section were excerpted from the interviews and are anonymously attributed to the person referenced in the text. To avoid pronouns that would disclose the gender, name of a person, or category of the interviewee, other than the top LPHO, pronouns and personal nouns in quotes have been substituted to help ensure anonymity. Substituted words are placed in brackets, as are clarifying words.)

**Case Agency Description – Small-Sized LPHA**

**Overview**

I interviewed four persons at this LPHA in May 2012. Of these four, one was the top LPHO, one was a SP&M champion, and two were HP-HP.
This LPHA became concerned about its aging workforce in 2008 as it recognized that 50% of its staff would be retirement eligible during the next 10 years. That led the top LPHO to hire a consultant to lead the agency in a concept mapping knowledge elicitation project. The top LPHO recognized that the agency’s culture was to transfer knowledge through the verbal sharing of staff experiences at staff meetings and “on-the-fly” as part of their daily work. The concern was that this knowledge would be lost if somehow not captured in a manner that withstood the passing of time and employee turnover.

The goals of the concept mapping project were to: 1) Foster a common vision of public health for the agency’s work to promote and improve the health of the community, and 2) Reduce the time and cost of integrating new staff into the agency. The product was to be a customized visual knowledge model that would respond to the overall focus question: “What are the essential knowledge and capabilities needed by the agency to effectively protect and improve community health?” That led to concept maps that visually described the agency’s strategic goals, the scientific knowledge and skills the agency needed to do its work, and the agency’s jurisdictional authority. Maps were also produced to capture very detailed, program specific information. For example, one map diagramed considerations when posing the question: “What core public health knowledge and capabilities guide the decision to file a child protective services report?” and another diagramed the decision process answering the question: “How does environmental public health prioritize complaint investigations and intakes to ensure effective use of limited resources?”

The final product consisted of 20 linked concept maps. The intent was to use these maps in orienting new staff and to be a knowledge resource for existing staff. After these maps were produced, few new staff was hired due to the impacts of the Great Recession. However, the top LPHO indicated that the goal for enhancing a shared agency vision for community health and
environmental public health was achieved, that training procedures and tools for prioritization and planning were achieved, that the maps had been used with the few staff that had been hired, and that the decision tool for environmental public health had been adopted.

Prior to the concept mapping project, the agency initiated in 2003 a performance based budgeting process. That was followed in 2004 by a strategic planning process based on the Washington State Public Health Standards. Then the concept mapping process was initiated. Following that, the agency engaged in Lean Sigma training. The purpose of noting this sequence is to point out that the planning history of this agency was one of continuous progress where the energies and learning of an activity seem to spawn the next organizational development. That is to say it is a dynamic process, each building upon the prior without a pre-planned path.

This agency is not currently intending to apply for national accreditation. It scored very highly on Washington State’s Public Health Standards and its Board of Health is inclined to wait until it is required or more reasonable to do so in terms of available human and financial resources.

**Impetus for SP&M**

The agency’s SP&M efforts began when the top LPHO, motivated by that official’s own advancing age, profiled the age of the agency’s workforce and found that 50% of the staff were eligible for retirement over the next ten years. That top LPHO said, “I was looking at the age of our workforce and decided that we needed to talk about it and decide who we were going to replace our workforce [with] and keep the expertise [in the agency], and so we started a project to identify what are the components of expertise needed in a health department and what do we need here.” That project was the concept mapping project noted above.

All interviews clearly noted that the top LPHO’s leadership and personality were the driving factors to this agency’s SP&M efforts. This leader strongly promoted personal growth,
encouraged further formal educational studies leading to academic degrees, and mentored staff. Others in the department indicated they were modeling these traits as well. One interviewee, answering a question I asked about where that interviewee acquired the skill of encouraging further employee development and mentoring said, “I think it came from [the top LPHO] to tell you the truth . . . and because of [the top LPHO’s] beliefs and flexibility, [the top LPHO] passed that on to me and I pass it on also.”

**SP&M Best Practices**

Promotional opportunities in the agency were very rare given the small workforce, few management positions, and infrequent management position turnover. Even when promotional opportunities arose, many employees in this community enjoyed a work/life balance that did not make management positions very attractive. Added to that, with this unionized workforce, the top LPHO could offer better pay and benefits inside the union than in non-union management. To address those challenges and to keep employees engaged and growing, the top LPHO created technical lead positions within the union ranks.

The selection of HP-HP, given the organizational realities, was mostly undertaken for lead positions. The process was an informal one, done by the top LPHO, given that person’s leadership for SP&M and the very flat hierarchy. There was no organizational policy giving guidance on this selection. In scanning the workforce for potential leads, the top LPHO said, “They have to be passionate about the field. They don’t have to necessarily be a leader. They have to work hard. They have to be [the] kind of workers in terms of vision . . . [that] they get the big picture and they’re not afraid to go look at it . . . there’s a natural command in their presence, there’s a natural expertise.” In addition, when the top LPHO assessed HP-HP for advancement to the next level, that person considered if the HP-HP was “doing a great job and really handling the pressures and traumas that I see in their jobs, [I ask] are they ready for the
next piece?” The others confirmed the informal nature of this process. One said, “I’m not sure it was ever explicitly stated like we are going to develop you in a leadership role, but it was more of we need somebody to do this work and you can do it, so start doing it.”

The “start doing it” often referenced developmental opportunities. These opportunities included being assigned a stretch project, making a presentation to the community or to the Board of Health, being on a committee, or talking with the press. These developmental plans were informal and individualized to an employee and were tied into the work the organization needed done.

Building upon organizational needs, the top LPHO strongly encouraged staff to advance their formal education, whether that was completing their bachelor’s degree or obtaining an advanced graduate degree. It was part of the conversations the top LPHO had with the HP-HP. While there was insufficient budget to support any of this education, the agency readily flexed work schedules to accommodate school schedules.

Intentional learning was also built into the worksite through the formation of a journal club. One of the articles the group read sparked such anger that the group wrote a letter to the journal, and the letter was published. This process of group discussion and debate, considering the interface between academia and practice, and constructing a letter to the editor developed critical thinking and writing skills. Trainings were also encouraged, and with the advent of webinar technology, trainings became more affordable, both in terms of staff time and financial outlay.

Coaching and mentoring was an element in many of the above activities, and again, much of the coaching and mentoring was done by the top LPHO and was encouraged in the supervisors. In addition, the top LPHO intentionally built opportunities for staff to develop their mentoring skills. This was specifically done through the engagement of interns and AmeriCorps
members. As the top LPHO said, “by taking those AmeriCorps kids it really helps the leads or
team members start thinking about mentoring and why do I do what I do, ‘cause they’re
explaining it or they’re working with somebody . . . So that’s another piece, they do do
mentoring.”

When it came to retaining employees, one SP&M best practice, rotating staff through jobs, was used as a retention tool. Employees were given opportunities to laterally transfer outside their usual discipline, such as a public health nurse transferring into solid waste enforcement. There was a mutual benefit; employees stay engaged in the organization and learned new skills while the organization retained experience and history as well as benefited from cross-discipline thinking and continued program development in ways it would not otherwise have done.

In this agency, one learned of job openings both through conversations with other employees, “it’s such a small agency it was usually pretty clear when somebody was gonna leave or some new program was starting up,” as well as through written announcements via e-mail. If someone wanted to move into management, it was most likely that they would have to volunteer that information, unless they were seen as a HP-HP and were being sought out for additional opportunities.

**Barriers**

Barriers to SP&M were money, time, and thoughtfulness. Money was a barrier when it came to sending people to trainings, helping pay for school, and paying higher wages for management positions.

Time was a barrier in terms of balancing usual workloads with the time for developmental opportunities that are not directly related to working on a project or doing one’s
daily work. One desire was to send staff to a couple of other LPHAs to see how visions and work are done at other places, but again was limited by the time available.

Thoughtfulness was a barrier in terms of being intentional and making time. SP&M required thought; it required one to be intentional—to think about it, to lay it out, and to plan it. And to act on the intention, one must make the thinking, planning, and implementation a priority, i.e., make the time to do the work. Those were hard to come by.

**Facilitators**

Facilitators to SP&M for this agency were location, schools, and relationships. The community in which the agency was located was seen as a desirable place for many as it provided a good work/life balance, a rich diversity of population, and easy access to outdoor experiences and arts. Those facilitated employee retention, but as mentioned earlier, not necessarily to people moving into management positions.

Access to higher educational institutions was also a facilitator. It was reasonable for persons to seek out undergraduate and graduate programs, both on campus and through distance education. This facilitated personal and professional development plans, which allowed staff to stay in place while pursing a degree, and given the agency’s flexibility in work schedules, this combination aided retention.

Relationships, internal and external to the agency, also facilitated retention. Internally, working with people who were passionate about public health provided a supportive environment. Externally, having relationships with other agencies and higher education institutions was seen as counteracting what might be considered an isolated area.

**Lessons Learned and Changes One Would Make**

Lessons learned for this group of interviewees were rather individualized and included:
• A recognition that when individual employees improved their knowledge and skill, it positively impacted team performance.

• Committing resources to those staff indicating an intention of wanting to develop and move up the career ladder is cost-effective because if one does not, one will incur the costs to replace them.

There were a couple of recommended changes. One was to invest in more skill specific trainings, such as grant writing or specific computer software applications, to assist with practical, job skills. The second was to identify a deliberate and transparent process to formalize SP&M so that it can survive a change in leadership.

Case Agency Description – Medium-Sized LPHA

Overview

I interviewed five persons at this LPHA in May 2012. Of these five, one was the top LPHO, two were SP&M champions (one of whom has lead responsibility for the team implementing SP&M), and two were HP-HP.

This LPHA developed and implemented a formal Program Manager Assessment and Learning Plan in 2006. The explicitly stated goals were to: conduct a confidential assessment of the managers’ skills, have those inform the development of personalized learning plans acceptable to the individual program managers, and give performance feedback to the managers. Implementation used standardized skill assessment forms that were completed by the manager’s supervisor, the manager’s direct reports, and the manager her or himself. The manager’s individualized learning plans were separated from the personnel evaluation process and from disciplinary action.
The 2006 Learning Plan also identified specific methods for change. Those noted methods were: exposure to different ideas and different cultures, experience/practice, self-reflection (e.g., logs, journals), mentoring/coaching, and peer support.

The agency implemented the manager assessments, created the individualized learning plans, and tracked progress towards completing the learning plans, as called for in the Learning Plan. The one component not completed was the follow-up assessment of each manager. Repeat implementation of the Learning Plan had not occurred.

The agency was, at the time of my interview, developing a policy and procedures document to define and support workforce development as they prepared for national accreditation. It was drafting implementation tools, including training self-assessment forms based on the Council on Linkages' core competencies materials and a professional development plan form.

The agency had plans to submit their application for national accreditation in the first quarter of 2013.

**Impetus for SP&M**

The initial champion for SP&M was the top LPHO. That official sprung into action when the official realized that several senior management team members might soon be retiring. In discussions between the official and senior management team members, the top LPHO learned that one person was planning to retire in about a year and a couple of others had plans to do so in less than five years. That prompted the top LPHO to come up with informal succession plans for each senior management team member. The top LPHO and human resources manager then “went through every employee, looked at their age, looked at their retirement potential, and then made a spreadsheet of that to say, where are we gonna lose people over the next five years, and it was shocking. That was the first time I [the top LPHO] really got a good look at how
old our workforce was.” At the time, the agency estimated that 30% of its workforce would enter retirement age within five to ten years.

The agency was further spurred into action by its accreditation preparation as evidenced by one who said, “to be honest, it’s in the standards that we need to have a succession plan.” The workforce development standards motivated them to “be a bit more formalized about this both for accreditation and to really see this five year problem we have of retirement and aging workforce.” Another said they were trying “to figure out a way to carve a better path so that when we need to fill some of our leadership positions we hopefully will not have to go outside and we will be able to promote from within, but we’ve got some work to do.”

The top LPHO official also credited a public health graduate course, entitled “Leadership in Public Health,” for the official’s practical, practice-based management and leadership knowledge and skill. Those influenced that official’s prioritization of this issue. This official was also clear to say, “I think we have a lot further to go . . . we’re starting down this pathway and it works for us now, but I want to keep open minded that there’s other ways to do this. And there’s not a lot of resources . . .”

**SP&M Best Practices**

The agency had semi-formal processes for identifying HP-HP and interviews consistently indicated that managers intentionally considered employees for stretch projects, cross-functional projects, and trainings.

Identifying HP-HP for additional opportunities was done at the agency’s senior management meetings and made use of manager observations of staff, manager discussions with their direct reports, and personnel evaluations. Individuals were not formally identified as HP-HP or notified that they were considered HP-HP. There was no set of objective selection criteria. One champion said that when identifying HP-HP, that person looked for the
ability to work alone and as a team player; ability to identify and resolve personal feelings, personal opinions, from or with the goals and objectives of the agency; willingness to go outside of their comfort zone and take on new projects; ability to, when thrown a curve ball or thrown a new project, the ability to logically think through what, not only where they need to go to start with but where they might want to get at the end and some of the hurdles that they may encounter along the way so that they can have, for a lack of a better word, contingency planning . . .

The agency consciously integrated stretch projects and cross-functional assignments into its usual work as a means for developing its HP-HP. My interviews found that the agency had implemented quality improvement efforts into its business practice and gave managers and other HP-HP opportunities to lead these projects, had implemented formal incident command structures to respond to events or emergencies and gave HP-HP stretch roles in that structure, and had implemented strategic planning and accreditation preparation and placed HP-HP on those projects. These experiences gave managers an opportunity to coach and mentor staff in those situations and simultaneously evaluate the HP-HP’s skill development while assessing their readiness for additional assignments.

The agency invested heavily in training opportunities for its staff. In 2006, it conducted a 360 degree management and leadership skills assessment of its entire program management staff and created individualized learning plans that were implemented in 2006 and 2007. Managers’ learning plans included training that was required of all program managers as well as individualized elements responsive to their assessed needed growth area. While this was a one time implementation, the top LPHO volunteered that it should probably occur every five years but that had not been formalized.

The agency had also invested in other trainings for its employees. Annually the senior management team selected an individual that the agency financially supported to participate in Leadership [county name]. Multiple communities in Washington State have such an organization. This program is typically for newer emerging leaders with the intent of developing
the next generation of community leaders. It is aimed at developing leadership skills, community knowledge, and professional networks. Programs typically last nine months to a year and provide a cohort experience. The format often includes seminars with community leaders across many sectors (e.g., health care, education, small business, industry, government, etc.), leadership retreats, and a community leadership service learning project. Employees were also supported in attending continuing education training to support their certifications and licensure requirements and in attending trainings that developed other skills such as public speaking skills through a local Toastmasters® group. The top LPHO also required the senior managers to take Stephen Covey’s 7 Essential Principles of Highly Effective People™ training and an Evelyn Woods Reading Dynamics® course.

The top LPHO also implemented a rotating program manager slot into the senior management team meeting. This official structured these meetings such that each member, including the top LPHO, had an equal vote on decisions. In 2007, an additional slot was created on the senior management team meeting and a different program manager rotated through that slot on a monthly basis. That intent was threefold: 1) Create transparency in the organization’s executive decision making, 2) Bring in an additional perspective, and 3) Expose program managers to executive level decision making as an expressed intent to develop their leadership and decision making skills.

The agency did not have a formal coaching and mentoring program but I found plenty of evidence for informal coaching and mentoring. That evidence included mentoring support in the manager learning plans, one-on-one coaching and mentoring sessions between program managers and their supervisors, and the mentoring of interns by front line staff. One champion said, “I feel that part of the way I evaluate myself is, have I been able to, can I develop leaders
from within so that when I have these positions of leadership that I need to fill, that I’ve got somebody ready.”

When it came to recruitment, this LPHA demonstrated a strong preference for hiring within. If management believed there was one or more qualified internal applicant(s), the position was most likely posted for internal hiring only. Job vacancy announcements were sent out via e-mail and posted on bulletin boards. Employees also heard about vacancies via word of mouth. Additionally, I found that new lateral positions were developed specifically to give existing employees new experiences to grow their skill sets.

The process of becoming a supervisor or director in this department was somewhat “organic,” as one interviewee noted. It might have started with a conversation between an employee and that person’s manager, which either the employee or manager might initiate. At some point, their director would bring that employee’s interest to the senior management team and indicate an interest to develop and promote the employee. Then the team would discuss developmental opportunities for that employee.

**Barriers**

When it came to barriers to SP&M, interviewees each saw different challenges depending upon their experiences, both within and outside the organization, and their own worldview. One identified that public health’s general fear of bringing business models into public health added to people being resistant to new ideas and ways of doing things.

For another, a barrier was the lack of transparency in the professional development process. The process is not written or openly discussed. This led multiple interviewees to have concerns that the informal process lent itself to personal biases, favoritism, or the passing over of others who had potential, especially those that might be more quiet. In terms of putting
something in writing, one thought that was a great idea but felt a barrier to that was the reluctance to exclude people and for those excluded to know they were being excluded.

Budgets were also a concern in two ways. One was simply not having enough money to implement as many developmental opportunities as one would like. Another was the perceived limitation to one’s developmental opportunities when one’s work was funded solely by categorical grants.

Another barrier was the current static nature of the workforce. Given that there had been very little employee turnover in the past several years and that the workforce had been shrunk due to budget reductions, there simply were not openings to allow for employee promotions into management.

A final perceived barrier was a concern that some employees do not see their transferrable skills. This was compounded by performance evaluations focused on the tasks of one’s job as compared to the underlying skills and the future.

**Facilitators**

Facilitators to SP&M did not have common themes across interviewees. Facilitators mentioned included:

- Staffing discussions at the senior management.
- The hiring of a human resources professional with formal experience and education in human resources.
- Managers with approachable “personalities and the fact that they work next to you on a project, and not just delegate [it]”
- A department where hierarchy does not get in the way of engaging with all levels of management.
Lessons Learned and Changes One Would Make

Like the small sized department, lessons learned were personalized. For these interviewees lessons learned included:

- It is important to take “an honest look at your staff and getting them what they need and being true to using data to guide your direction.”
- It is important to invest in technology to have the capacity to generate data and to invest in epidemiology to have the capabilities to guide your directions.
- It is important to have periodic conversations with HP-HP to let them know they are doing a good job and to encourage them, especially in situations where turnover is low.
- It is important to initially hire the right person and if it is not working out, to terminate the working relationship during the probationary period.

Similarly, changes interviewees would make to the S&P were individualized and included:

- Consider opportunities for in-house trainings to expand the reach.
- Increase the awareness of external training opportunities by having a central area or other means that all employees can have access to the training opportunities.
- Increase the opportunities for internal projects to expose people to different leadership skills and make sure those are open to non-managers.
- Give additional coaching attention to those employees that are in the middle, that is, the employees who fall between those in management and the newest, youngest staff. There was concern that this middle group was beaten down by the many organizational changes and job changes. One specific suggestion was to consider using the book StrengthsFinder to help employees reconnect with their strengths.
and value to the organization and for the organization to recognize and utilize those strengths.

- Consider ways to make sure the organization values those who are not nurses or environmental staff.
- Formalize the development of employees and implement a formalized, transparent mentoring program. This should include the development of a workforce development policy.
- Revamp the annual review process to focus more on the future and one’s development, rather than just what tasks or projects were completed.

**Case Agency Description – Large-Sized LPHA**

**Overview**

I interviewed five persons at this LPHA in May 2012. Of these five, one was the top LPHO, two were SP&M champions (one of whom has lead responsibility for the team implementing SP&M), and two were HP-HP.

This LPHA developed a formal, written Management Succession Plan in 2008 that was researched and authored by a training team. The plan was comprehensive in nature describing the need for management succession planning, how leadership gaps are created, the purpose of the plan, how HP-HP would be identified, strategies for staff development, implementation plan, and recruitment and retention activities. The plan noted that within five years, 60% of the agency’s senior management team and 40% of its mid-managers would be eligible to retire. The plan was formally adopted by the senior management team and presented to all of management. The plan called for the agency’s training team to maintain responsibility for implementing and monitoring the SP&M activities and was added to the new managers orientation checklist.
In 2010, the agency contracted with a consultant who worked with graduate students from a local university to develop and implement a staff development and mentoring program for employees interested in management. Interested employees submitted an application. Seventeen mentors were available, which limited the number of mentee slots to 17 as well. One of the senior managers selected the 17 mentees from the applicant pool. The program consisted of three components: 1) A few days of formal trainings that covered career development and SP&M, 2) A dialogue with a panel of internal managers that discussed perspectives on leadership, management, and handling difficult situations, and 3) A formal mentoring program in which mentees identified a preference for a topic or competency focus area and were paired up by the consultants with a mentor outside their program area, after which the pair had individual meetings for up to a couple of hours a month. That program was not sustained in the long run.

In the spring/summer of 2010, several training team members participated in a pilot training from the Buckeye Bluegrass Regional Leadership Academy’s Succession Planning training through The Ohio State University Center for Public Health Practice program. That program was a combined self-study and webinar series that consisted of four modules. The team found the model detailed and comprehensive but more than they felt their organization could successfully implement and sustain. So they opted for a smaller, simpler approach that could be added to over time.

In the fall of 2010, the agency implemented an all employee competency self-assessment. The assessment was modified from the Council of Linkages competencies to fit the agency’s needs. The senior managers received the results for their group and were to use those in developing training/learning plans for their staff.
The agency was working on tools at the time of my interview that they believed would be less burdensome and could be practically integrated into managers’ work. They were developing forms for a learning and development plan that could mesh with the performance evaluation form. The intent was for the information from the competency self-assessment, especially the leadership and management competencies, to identify knowledge, skills, and abilities that could be tied into the learning and development plan. In addition, the team decided to review the classification specifications for each management position and level in the LPHA and build a common, as well as unique, list of competencies for each position. Following that, they planned to identify resources assisting in developing the competencies and then incorporate those into a SP&M toolkit.

The agency has applied for national accreditation and is scheduled for a site visit review.

**Impetus for SP&M**

This agency’s SP&M effort began with the leadership of an interim top LPHO. That person was taking the organization through an unplanned leadership transition and a desired culture change. That person said,

my hope had always been to create an environment where there was no fear, there were expectations about the kind of work you should do, the quality of your work, [and] your commitment. And if you’re doing that, by God, you ought to be spending time making sure that people know how to replace you should you get hit by the bus. And, we began by talking through how all that was going on.

Concurrently, Washington State was implementing public health standards and this agency was examining its most recent performance on those and its needed improvements. It recognized its shortcomings and the senior management team strategized what it needed to do. That team began by, “putting a training team in place, putting our quality council in place, [and] putting in opportunities for employees to receive additional training.” That led to the training team developing the 2008 Management Succession Plan.
Since that time, the agency filled the top LPHO with a regular appointment and the new top LPHO held a similar importance for and leadership view of SP&M saying, “it does have to start at the executive level . . . you just really have to value the future of your agency to have this as a major goal.”

**SP&M Best Practices**

Identifying HP-HP employees in this agency occurred in both formal and informal ways. The 2008 Management Succession Plan called for “a process that every employee with leadership potential is fairly and thoroughly considered for participation . . . “ It outlined the following considerations when identifying employees: education, job classification level, years of employment with the LPHA, current or prior supervisory experience, staff indicating an interest in management, and supervisor identifying management potential as it pertained to demonstrated leadership skills, decision making skills, communication skills, and initiative to take on projects and complete by set deadlines. The plan also noted that “[i]t is important to remember that you are basing your criteria on the future potential of the employee, rather than their current capacity” and that “. . . it is important to include only those who have real potential for leadership positions.”

The 2010 development effort gave all employees the opportunity to identify their interest. Similarly, all employees were annually invited to submit a letter of interest to compete for one agency sponsored position in Leadership [county name]. The senior management group made the selection.

Other opportunities were less formal. Some managers considering retirement looked within their staff to determine potential successors. They had succession conversations at staff meetings and asked that employees interested in being mentored and developed into the manager’s position make it known to the manager. One interviewee indicated that the
identification of HP-HP was “mainly performance based on the way they handled their daily
duties, you know, the high performers” and that “[my manager is] always talking about
succession planning . . . getting individuals ready to make that next step . . . He gets people
thinking about the future.” Another said, “the managers see the skill sets, people might share
their interest and really, that’s how it’s done.”

The 2008 plan identified staff development options as: mentoring/coaching programs,
project experience (time limited, not a regular part of one’s job), formal trainings, and action
learning project teams. There was clear evidence these options were used.

Formal, structured mentoring with the pairing of someone outside one’s usual program
was a main component of the 2010 staff development program. In addition, most interviewees
also identified persons they had as mentors outside of the staff development program, some of
whom they had specifically chosen and others that naturally formed within in their work
relationships.

I found evidence for cross-functional and stretch projects. Those projects included
business process analyses as part of quality improvement efforts, a committee overseeing the
implementation of Share Point®—a collaboration software product, and internal committees
such as training, program standards, and wellness. For some employees those were intentional
developmental opportunities, while for others they were part of their usual work assignment.

Formal trainings were also supported. This agency, like the medium-sized agency,
annually financially sponsored one employee to attend Leadership [county name]. One
interviewee said about this opportunity, “the real advantage of Leadership [county name] is
exposure to other boards and people in organizations to which public health could be connected
and that sometimes we get connected to those on a personal level by serving on their
board . . .” National and regional public health institutes and a supervisor training series
sponsored by the county were also mentioned. The agency also provided tuition reimbursement, although it was noted that not many people make use of it.

In my interviews, no interviewees identified a project that I would have categorized as an action-learning project, defined in the 2008 plan as “assigning participants to an action-learning team where they tackle strategic issues and make recommendations to management.” Since I did not specifically inquire about those, it does not mean they did not exist, just that nobody mentioned any.

Development plans were another best practice for which I found evidence of use. The 2010 program had mentees identify 3 developmental goals and an implementation plan. Additionally, the performance review process included a section on work goals for the next year, which needed to link to the agency’s strategic goals, and a learning/training plan. One interviewee said of this process,

part of our performance evaluation process on an annual basis includes what I think is the, one of the, most important parts of our whole evaluation process and that’s the section at the end that’s about professional goals . . . that’s where I’ve always taken the opportunity, and if I haven’t willingly given it, it has been sought, to talk about short term and long term professional goals [in terms of moving up the career ladder].

I was particularly impressed that this agency’s performance review forms included a page that noted and diagramed the LPHA’s vision, mission, values, and strategic plan goals and referenced the public health standards, customer service standards, and public health competencies as leading to and informing one’s annual goals. This systems approach is one that is highly supported by this agency. The performance review process itself created a development plan.

The agency supported internal applicants by sometimes posting job announcements for internal only recruitment. This was more likely to occur when a manager believed they had several internal candidates that were mentored and ready for the position. For most program
manager positions or higher, it was standard practice to simultaneously recruit internally and externally.

Employees who might be interested in promotion formally indicated their interest when they submitted their names for the 2010 development program. After the conclusion of that program, the interest was noted more informally, most likely through conversation with their manager or through the performance evaluation process. Some employees had, over years, specifically sought out mentors to assist them in their career development or initiated conversations with those in positions they would be interested. It also worked in the reverse where managers openly discussed SP&M and sought out employees interested in advancing within the organization. And as noted earlier, one interviewee said that likely candidates are generally known as they are high performers and many take notice.

Staff formally learned about job openings through department wide e-mails, intranet postings, and bulletin board postings. Not surprisingly, staff also learned of pending openings from their colleagues as they discussed plans for retirement or otherwise leaving the agency.

**Barriers and Changes**

Barriers identified by multiple interviewees were time and union contracts. In terms of time, people were very busy, especially as they took on more work with downsizing, and SP&M takes time to think about and time to implement. Time to implement included both the time to implement the SP&M process itself and also the time for the development activities in which one might want to participate.

The union contract was viewed as a barrier when the desire was to give employees extended periods of time to work on projects and developmental activities that were outside their job classification. Doing so would trigger out of class work and out of class pay, which in these economic times meant cuts elsewhere. Multiple interviewees believed that union
employees who were interested in these opportunities were willing to take on those assignments without additional pay, as they would be obtaining free training and experience.

One interviewee found the economy to be an indirect barrier. Specifically, the Great Recession\textsuperscript{28} was noted as causing employees to work more years than anticipated, which was delaying opportunities for other employees to promote. This thwarted some succession plans. The impact was that talented persons who were ready to promote became frustrated, which posed a risk for their leaving the organization if opportunities arose outside the agency. This was compounded when managers did retire, and senior management reorganized responsibilities to not refill a management position in an effort to capture the budget savings that could be achieved by reorganization, further delaying somebody’s potential promotion and increasing frustrations.

One interviewee expressed some concern that interoffice politics and favoritism might be a barrier for some people’s opportunities for promotion. Another saw fee-based revenue as a barrier to developmental opportunities because one cannot generate fee revenue when doing non-revenue generating work, which limited developmental opportunities. And yet another recognized that the 2008 plan was not widely disseminated or communicated and therefore the plan had not taken hold throughout the agency. Multiple interviewees indicated they did not believe the 2008 plan was implemented.

**Facilitators**

The facilitators for SP&M in the agency were that retirement data was reviewed and that the most senior leaders embraced and encouraged SP&M. The senior management team was periodically given retirement profile data showing the percent of persons in management able to retire. This made the situation real for them and reinforced the importance of SP&M. It helped management face the level of knowledge that was going to be walking out the door and
that SP&M was a proactive way to capture and transfer that knowledge before people left. That prompted discussions with persons approaching retirement age, which spurred actual succession plans for those positions and gave time to develop replacements.

The senior management team’s concern and interest in SP&M then created an environment that promoted succession planning discussions and activities. One interviewee said that SP&M was

looked at in a positive light . . . the atmosphere that’s put forth by [manager’s name] within our division, it’s very open, you know, that anybody who’s interested in this can come and talk to [manager’s name] at any time. And I think they would be considered . . . succession planning is a positive thing, and the individuals who are interested in it, they’re going to make opportunities for you to receive extra training and extra experience and exposure to these different roles.

Another interviewee put it this way,

we as an agency, are interested in figuring it out. I mean that there was a lot of energy that went into a succession plan, whether it was flawless or had some flaws didn’t really matter. It was out to all the staff about this effort going forward, invitations to identify to your leadership that you’re interested potentially with no commitments. Just that freedom of genuine interest and energy on behalf of the agency saying this matters to us, we’re not quite sure how it’s all gonna play out, but we want to keep this energy and conversation going around succession planning I think has helped propel it.

**Lessons Learned and Changes One Would Make**

The one common lesson learned from these interviewees was that mentor/mentee pairings are critical. For the interviewee’s who participated in the 2010 mentoring process, the intentional pairing of mentors/mentees outside the mentee’s division or focus area proved problematic. Mentees were looking more for discipline specific mentoring than general leadership/management. While some of the general management or leadership mentoring was appreciated and useful, it was not the primary thing these interviewees most desired. And thus mentors were not able to provide the desired mentoring, which resulted in short-term mentoring pairings and few sustained mentor/mentee relationships.
Other lessons learned were more individually described and included the following:

- That SP&M is more likely to take hold and be sustained if an agency starts out with an iterative implementation process and one in which practical tools are developed that could be integrated into existing systems and annual processes. In other words, a rolling out of components rather than a larger, comprehensive implementation from the very beginning. This is especially true when staff feel so crunched for time.

- These initiatives take leadership from the top executives to set expectations and culture change. And that for sustainability, sustained communication of the importance of SP&M is required from those executives as is ensuring follow-through from the organization.

- While formalized trainings are useful, the on-the-job development components are critical and more important to developing management and leadership skills that become internalized.

- The agency must be prepared for situations in which the agency invests resources in developing an employee, and then when the opportunity arises, that employee may not take the opportunity. Similarly, the agency may not select and employee that has been developed for a job when the opening arises. Viewing the SP&M efforts as giving the best advantage to the HP-HP candidates to compete with external folks is probably a wise approach, especially for public sector employment.

- It is good SP&M practice to not only consider who you want to develop to promote into an anticipated opening, but to consider who you will develop into the opening that will be created by the promotion.
Some specific changes interviewees offered included:

- Examining ways to ensure the culture of support for career development and SP&M is fully embraced across the entire organization is important, as it is not universally supported.

- Using agency wide management team meetings as developmental opportunities for less senior managers. This might take the form of robust conversations about emerging leadership, public policy, and public health practice issues as a means to foster the development of executive and senior management thinking, knowledge, and decision making skills in less senior managers.

- Consider rotating formal mentoring relationships on some regular interval to increase exposure to different perspectives and increase the depth of relationships across the agency.

**KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

I was very encouraged to learn that the top LPHOs believe strongly in the importance of SP&M with almost two-thirds (73%) indicating it was either very important or important to the future of their agency and nobody responded that it was not important. This is strength on which to capitalize in a plan for action.

**Top LPHO Turnover Potential**

| Key Finding 1: | With the potential for 50% turnover of the top LPHOs within the next five years, there is an urgent need to address SP&M in Washington State’s LPHAs. |
Like national data, my survey found there is likely to be significant turnover of top LPHO positions in Washington State and that we must prepare the future leadership now. Half of the 34 responding top LPHOs were 57 years of age or older, indicating that 17 of us would be eligible to retire within ten years. But the situation is even more urgent. Exactly half of us (17/34) reported that it was highly likely (18%), likely (20%), or possible (12%) that we would voluntarily leave our current positions sometime within the next 5 years. While I suspect some are considering a move into the top LPHO position of another Washington LPHA or some other governmental public health job in Washington State, this amount of movement risks institutional memory loss and lost relationships if we do not act quickly. Without a strong SP&M plan within and across our agencies, we risk the publics’ health by losing the knowledge, skill base, and professional and personal relationships that are foundational to public policy making, strategic direction influence, and emergency planning and response.

The survey also found that as a collective, the local public health system experienced 100 people retire and an additional 230 people leave their positions for reasons other than a reduction in force in the 12 months prior to the survey administration. This combined total of 330 people was 10.3% of the local public health workforce (330/3,194). I suspect that turnover percentage is down from the pre-recession figures as the workforce seems less mobile when one excludes reduction in force actions. Like turnover with top LPHOs, this turnover represents lost knowledge and professional networks that need to be captured for the good of the agency.

Estimating future retirements within five years, I used the midpoint of the estimated percentages of retirements that the top LPHOs supplied (see page 56) and calculated estimated retirements for each LPHA’s workforce. The summed calculations produced an estimate of 344 additional retirements within the next five years. If last year’s retirements were typical and if
retirements escalate by those who have delayed retirement due to the Great Recession, this number may be significantly underestimated.

Research Question 2

Question 2a: What elements of SP&M are being implemented in LPHAs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Finding 2:</th>
<th>Every one of the twenty-five SP&amp;M best practices was implemented by at least 14% of Washington State’s LPHAs and the 11 best practices implemented by at least 50% of the LPHAs forms a solid core of SP&amp;M best practices.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Key Finding 3:</th>
<th>The vast majority of LPHAs was identifying HP-HP employees and the most frequently used methods to develop those employees were trainings and some on-the-job developmental experiences.</th>
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</table>

For any single one of the 25 SP&M best practices, at least 5 LPHAs in Washington reported it was being implemented in their agency. Given that the best practices were derived from literature almost exclusively from the private sector and with very large corporations, this finding suggested that there was transferability to the public sector in general, and to LPHAs in specific. The SP&M best practices that were implemented in at least one-half of Washington’s LPHAs are presented in Table 4.1 on page 58. The vast majority of us, 85%, were identifying HP-HP employees in our workforces, and this was the best practice being implemented by the most number of LPHAs. After HP-HP were identified, 79% of us were having conversations with them about performance goals specific to their development for new roles/job, 76% of us were providing them with technical and/or management/leadership trainings, as well as on-the-job
developmental opportunities, 70% of us assigning them to cross-functional project teams and 67% of us giving them stretch projects to grow their skills, knowledge, and experience base.

As I consider the 11 best practices implemented by at least 50% of us, they form a reasonable minimum set of SP&M activities to which LPHAs could add. These 11 practices address pre-employment opportunities to identify quality future employees, encompass the initial steps of assessing and selecting HP-HP, and provide a solid core of goal setting and developmental best practices.

### Key Finding 4: Private sector based SP&M best practices for retaining employees were some of the least used best practices in these public sector LPHAs.

The SP&M best practices that are implemented in less than one-half of the LPHAs are listed in Table 4.2 on page 59. Two of the 5 least used best practices are intended to retain HP-HP. It is not surprising that in the public sector with a workforce that is heavily unionized that best practices such as increasing pay, used by 21% of us, and creating new lateral level positions, used by 24% of us, would not be widely used across LPHAs even within an agency that does allow the practice. The most frequent retention best practice used by 47% of us is posting jobs for internal recruitment only. This is something that unions generally support, although, depending upon how transparent that selection process is, equity concerns may arise.

**Question 2b: Do LPHAs have a comprehensive SP&M program?**

### Key Finding 5: Washington’s LPHAs had a solid core of SP&M activities to which other components can be added but fell short of having comprehensive SP&M programs.
The most comprehensive SP&M program would have all 25 best practices implemented across an agency and for that, the agency would achieve a perfect composite succession score of 100. “Perfection” is certainly an unreasonable standard. So what might otherwise define a comprehensive program and what would be the corresponding composite succession score total? Looking at the 25 best practices grouped by their sub-categories (refer to Appendix E beginning on page 134), it is my professional opinion that it would be reasonable to have the 1 pre-employment best practice, at least 3 of the 5 activities for selection of HP-HP, at least 5 of the 10 activities for competency/leadership development, at least 1 of the 2 coaching/mentoring activities, at least 2 of the 3 goal setting activities, and just 1 of the 4 retention activities define a comprehensive SP&M program. If that were the case, that would be 13 best practice elements, which when implemented agency-wide would result in a score of 52. By this measure 7 of the 34 LHJs (20%) that answered the best practice survey questions might have qualified as having a comprehensive program, as they had scores of 53 or above. In reviewing the data for those 7 LPHAs, none would have been considered comprehensive because they did not meet the minimums for agency-wide implementation, but if the standard was relaxed to at least implementing in part of the agency, 3 of the 7 would have been considered comprehensive.

Research Question 3

Question 3a: How is SP&M being implemented?

**Key Finding 6:** Most LPHAs are informally implementing SP&M activities, leading to a lack of transparency

Only 3 LPHAs indicated they had written SP&M plans. One was from the small-sized case agency, and their plan was a concept mapping project focused on capturing the internal
knowledge and capabilities of its staff to protect and improve the community’s health. The purpose of this plan was to facilitate knowledge transfer to the processes and people that would hire, orient, and train new staff as well as directly to the new staff. In that sense it is indeed tied to SP&M, and based on my interviews there, something I would recommend other LPHAs consider using. The plan does not, however, define a SP&M program, set of activities, or roles and responsibilities. The second was the large-sized case agency, and their plan was its 2008 Management Succession Plan that indeed was a comprehensive SP&M plan. Unfortunately, the plan was not well communicated or resourced and was never implemented. The third plan, by an agency I did not interview but for which I obtained the plan, was an agency policy and procedure entitled “Hiring and Certification Process” that supported the hiring of internal candidates and supported employee self-development. It specifically noted training programs for technical and managerial skills, and it supported the annual sponsoring of one staff member to attend the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice Leadership Institute. But its primary purpose was to be a hiring policy, and it did not include most elements of a comprehensive SP&M plan. In my interviews with the medium-sized case agency, I learned they had a formal Program Manager Assessment and Learning plan that covered some elements of a SP&M plan, but it was not intended to be a SP&M plan. Thus, my research did not find a single comprehensive SP&M plan that was in use at the time of this study that would give formal guidance and structure to an agency’s SP&M program or activities.

Further evidence that the systems are informal was supported by noting that a larger percent of the agencies implemented 16 of the 25 best practices (64%) in just “parts of the agency” rather than “agency-wide,” which suggests informal systems (refer to Appendix E on page 134).
The informal nature of the systems was confirmed in each of the 3 case agency descriptions and is further detailed in the next key finding.

**Key Finding 7:**

HP-HP employee selection was primarily done without the use of any written assessments or standards and without linkage to the LPHA’s strategic directions creating an unacceptable risk for “executive cloning” and for bias and inequities.

Central to any SP&M program is selecting HP-HP employees for development and potential promotion. Eighty-five percent of the LPHAs did identify HP-HP employees. However, only 3 LPHAs indicated they had a procedure for identifying succession candidates for management or leadership positions, and only 32% of the LPHAs indicated they created lists of individuals to be developed for higher level positions. This approach lacks transparency and accountability and leaves an important component open to subjective selection. These are the very conditions that promote executive cloning and promote the danger that one will select future leaders like us, rather than the leaders that are needed for tomorrow’s strategic challenges.

The subjective nature of this selection was also a consistent finding across all three of the case agency descriptions. In these agencies managers described making HP-HP selections based on their own ideas of what future managers or leaders should possess, rather than on stated standards the agency identified or against an agency vision of where the organization must be led in the future. To their credit the medium-sized and large-sized case agencies do have conversations about HP-HP at their senior management team meetings, which should help increase consistency.
The large-sized LPHA case agency did, to their credit, in 2010 make an agency-wide invitation to those who wished to undertake development and mentoring. This “open call” gave equal access into the process. The final selection was, however, done by a single manager, and it is unclear what criteria, if any, were used to make the selections. That process has not been repeated.

**Key Finding 8:** LPHAs that had an agency-wide SP&M program or a written summary profile of its workforce by length of time to being eligible for retirement were likely to have a more comprehensive SP&M program.

The final linear regression model found two variables that were significant predictors of an increased composite succession score and thus a more comprehensive SP&M program. Those two were: 1) Having an agency-wide SP&M program, and 2) Having a written summary profile of the workforce by length of time to being eligible for retirement. The written summary profile will be an important element for the plan for change.

**Key Finding 9:** Sustaining SP&M support seems to be a challenge in this environment as LPHAs are struggling to maintain their core work while responding to other demands.

The medium-sized case agency and the large-sized case agency both had exemplary pieces of SP&M in place. The medium-sized agency had a comprehensive Program Manager Assessment and Learning Plan that was mostly implemented with the exception of some of the trainings and the follow-up 360 degree assessment. Unfortunately, the follow-up assessment was not completed, as it would have provided some evaluation data. The large-sized case
agency had a comprehensive Management Succession Plan, which could easily serve as a model plan, but it was never implemented, seeming to fall prey to lack of communication, lack of resources, and the enormity of implementation.

**Question 3b: What are the barriers to implementation?**

**Key Finding 10:** The most frequently cited barriers to implementing SP&M programs and activities were: not a priority with competing demands/lack of time, small staff size, and union contract language.

LPHAs, like many other organizations, have been fighting to survive during the Great Recession. During this time they have been figuring out how to downsize and end programs, advocating for funding, and undergoing laborious processes to implement reductions in force. They were also challenged for about a year with H1N1 response activities. All this to say that it is not a surprise SP&M would not be the highest priority for the limited time available.

The second barrier of the top LPHOs believing their staff was too small in number to make this a worthwhile effort is not a surprise but it is a major concern. Remember that the median FTE in Washington’s LPHAs was 26.7 FTE. Certainly SP&M systems for the smallest departments versus the largest departments in our state will need to look different in terms of resources. This will be addressed in the plan for change.

Union issues were also perceived as a barrier. The case agencies suggest the largest barriers are contract language that would interfere with the development activities. Specifically, for staff given additional duties, such as stretch projects, contract language might call for additional pay for out of class work if it exceeded a certain portion of the duties or continued for significant period of time. The challenge with those is that if contract language does indeed
interfere with SP&M development activities, the language must be renegotiated, or in some cases additional pay may need to be given, which in the current economic environment is a barrier.

**Question 3c: What are the facilitators to implementation?**

**Key Finding 11:** Having a top LPHO who is fully engaged in promoting SP&M and ensuring it is implemented is absolutely critical to success.

**Key Finding 12:** Top LPHOs were moved to action when they had retirement forecasts of their agency’s workforce.

**Key Finding 13:** Washington State’s Public Health Standards and the national accreditation process were motivating LPHAs to implement activities associated with SP&M practices.

The most significant findings from the case agency descriptions were the impetus for the case agencies to engage in SP&M. Probably the most critical was that all three had strong leadership from the top LPHO who made SP&M a personal and agency priority. All three of these leaders were greatly influenced to make SP&M a priority when they looked at retirement forecasts of their workforce. This was for most a real eye-opener and spurred the passion and the action. The importance of forecasting retirement of the workforce was greatly reinforced by the multivariate regression model finding that agencies that had a written summary profile of their workforce by length of time to which they would be eligible for retirement was a predictor
of more comprehensive SP&M programs. Focusing on retirement forecasting will need to be an essential component of the plan for change.

Finally, for the two case agencies that have or will be applying for national accreditation, the requirement for a workforce development plan was also a main motivator to implement at least the workforce development components of SP&M. This would suggest a role for PHAB and national public health agencies, which will be addressed in the plan for action. The case agency findings were also supported by the survey. For the 10 LPHAs that indicated they were implementing agency-wide SP&M, 5 said meeting state standards and/or national accreditation facilitated their SP&M work. Washington State began development of its own set of public health standards in 1998. Baseline measurement occurred in 2002 and there have been three evaluation/reviews since that time.

From that same group of 10 LPHOs, 8 responded that identifying workforce development as a strategic need led to an investment in SP&M. My hunch is that there is a relationship between this and standards/accreditation.

**Question 3d: What are the lessons learned?**

**Key Finding 14:** Lessons learned were individualized to each of the case agencies and often to the individuals interviewed.

There were no interviewee identified lessons learned that crossed the case agencies. While I was initially surprised, it reinforces that these agencies had independent experiences with SP&M as there was no “single intervention” across case agencies. And within agencies, there was almost no common theme to the lessons learned. Interviewee’s work and life experiences as well as their particular role in the organization seemed to lead to unique lessons learned.
Key Finding 15: In the large-sized case agency, there was agreement that the pairing of mentor with mentee would have been more successful if they were paired from within like work areas.

The mentoring component of the 2010 staff development and mentoring program in the large-sized case agency did not work very well. Mentees identified their preference for a topic or competency focus area and were then paired with a mentor from outside their usual work group and division. An outside contractor made the pairings. The mentor/mentee relationships were for the most part short-lived. Most indicated that they would have preferred to be paired with someone in their program content area. It is difficult to fully assess this situation. It is possible the outside contractor did not have enough information to predict good pairings, that the intended work of the mentoring relationship was unclear, that the participants wanted something other than what the pairings were intended to produce, or some other explanation. Best I can tell, there was not an evaluation of the effort to understand what worked and what needed changing.
IMPORTANCE OF FINDINGS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

I found just one published article, by Schmalzried and Fallon, reporting on succession planning specific to public health agencies. These researchers studied succession planning for the top LPHO position in all of Ohio’s LPHAs to assess the degree to which LPHAs were preparing to replace their top LPHOs. Thus, it was truly a replacement planning study, not a SP&M study. It too was a survey, but much shorter with just 7 questions. Their study found that 43.7% of the top LPHOs expected to serve in their current position for 6 years or less. That figure is close to my finding that one-half of the LPHOs say it is possible to highly likely they will voluntarily leave their position within 5 years.

The Schmalzried and Fallon study amazingly found that 46.7% of top LPHOs did not believe that succession planning was important for their position. Recognizing that my study asked about the importance of SP&M for their agency, all said it was important.

Perhaps of most interest was their finding that time remaining before the top LPHO’s retirement did not seem to be a compelling factor to create a succession plan. That seems different from my finding that retirement profiles were predictive of having a more comprehensive SP&M program. Perhaps their finding is because the top LPHO is not ultimately responsible for hiring their own replacement, their boards of health are, but one would like to believe top LPHOs are invested in the future success of their agency after they leave. Similar to my findings, Schmalzried and Fallon found that size, whether that is examined by size of budgets, number of employees, or population size served, was not predictive of having a succession plan for the top LPHO.

The strength of my study was that with 100% participation and just missing a data point or two for key variables, it gave a complete picture of SP&M as it was practiced by LPHAs in Washington State in the spring of 2012. In brief, the picture was that:
• All top LPHOs believed SP&M was important to the future of their agency.

• Having a profile of the retirement forecast for one’s LPHA was a significant motivator to implementing SP&M, as was applying for national accreditation.

• Much of the SP&M activities were informal in nature and practiced in parts of an agency rather than agency-wide.

• Much of the SP&M activities lacked transparency and was vulnerable to bias and inequities.

• There was a reasonable core of SP&M activities by more than half of the LPHAs that included selecting HP-HP and providing them with formal training and on-the-job development experiences.

My dissertation study examining SP&M practice in LPHAs may be the first of its kind to so comprehensively look at best practice implementation. As such, it was designed to be mostly descriptive and exploratory. Future studies should be conducted with larger sample sizes and increased power to learn if there are additional predictors of more comprehensive SP&M programs. Such studies would also have more power to see if individual best practices vary by things such as governance structure, size of workforce, workforce unionization, or a host of other factors, which would give insight into designing SP&M programs.

The field of SP&M would, however, be greatly enhanced by implementing controlled randomized clinical trials in which specific SP&M programs are implemented and studied to see if they make a difference. The outcomes for study would need to be carefully defined. That simple act alone would advance the field to define just what it is we are trying to accomplish and measure with SP&M programs. While this would be an expensive and time consuming undertaking, the large multinational corporations currently implementing SP&M could
undertake these studies within their own organizations. They are clearly spending many millions of dollars on these programs, and it would be nice to know if they make a difference.

**STUDY LIMITATIONS**

My study had several limitations. The small sample of 35 LPHAs limited the power for most of my binary variables to detect a statistically significant difference in composite succession scores. That posed a risk of missing statistically significant predictors that were not, therefore, included in my plan for change, making that plan less effective. It may be that those missed variables would be amenable to change or, if not, they would alter how other interventions are designed and delivered.

Another study limitation was that the data were self-reported and these were my colleagues. It is possible that responders were more generous in their responses than the actual situation, both because when reporting on our own agencies/work we are generally more positive but also that my colleagues may have wanted to present their agencies in the best light to another one of their peers.

External validity may also have been a limitation. Given that Washington State has been implementing public health standards since 1998 and that standards/accreditation were a motivator for top LPHOs to undertake SP&M, it is possible that the frequency in which we implemented the 25 best practices may be greater than places that were more recently responding to standards and accreditation. Similarly, it is possible there would be differences from these findings as compared to states in which local public health is directly governed or delivered by a state agency or in which LPHAs must be led by physician leaders.
CHAPTER 5: PLAN FOR ACTION

My plan for change is a personalized one, reflective of the advocacy and participatory worldview that I have taken in this research and written about in the methods section. In this plan I describe actions I have already taken, actions I plan to take, and actions I hope to influence others to take. Those actions make use of my legitimate power (power stemming from formal authority) as a local director of health and as the NACCHO president, my referent power (power derived from the desire of others to please an agent toward whom they have strong feelings of affection, admiration, and loyalty) as a leader who has built goodwill by forming solid relationships, and my expert power (power derived from knowledge and skill that others need) gained from my studies. I look forward to implementing this plan.

My purpose is to influence through national networks the uptake of SP&M practice in LPHAs using a leadership pipeline conceptual framework with an initial goal of having SP&M a component of the recognized workforce development standard in local public health.

LEADERSHIP MODEL

My plan reflects Kotter’s change leadership that describes 8 steps to transformational change. His model outlined actions leaders must sequentially undertake to implement transformational change. They were derived from his observation of the big errors leaders made when implementing transformational change. The 8 steps are to: 1) Establish a sense of urgency, 2) Form a powerful guiding coalition, 3) Create a vision, 4) Communicate the vision, 5) Empower others to act on the vision, 6) Plan for and create short-term wins, 7) Consolidate improvements
and produce still more changes, and 8) Institutionalize new approaches. While Kotter described these for organizational change, they are just as relevant to changing larger systems, for in practice, organizations are systems.

THE PLAYERS, RESOURCES, AND PARAMETERS

The players in this plan are people and organizations across the country. Among the stakeholders are our employees, the ones who will be stepping into management and leadership roles and the ones who already have and who will continue their journey up the career ladder making those passages from one level to another. The decision-makers are those responsible for workforce development practice, funding, and research including, but not limited to, the top LPHOs, local boards of health, county and city councils, and the staff and members of NACCHO, ASTHO, NALBOH, PHAB, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and others.

The resources that I rely on are mostly already in the system, which I believe is one of this plan’s strengths. I rely on my own ability to take leadership as part of my professional duties as a local health official and in my NACCHO president’s role. I count on the people and financial resources already invested in the national associations charged with and funded to provide technical assistance to those LPHAs applying for national accreditation and on the resources already invested in the public health training centers. Certainly additional funding will likely be needed for some of the projects. That will need to be determined as the players identify necessary priority projects.

The policy parameters include: having LPHAs and governing boards that support accreditation applications, having civil service rules and union contracts that support SP&M activities, having the continued existence of the public health training centers and priorities that
support SP&M activities, and having federal, state, and local resources available to support LPHA workforce development.

This plan, like any other, is about how one brings together the players, the resources, and parameters to create action in and among many systems and many competing needs. It looks for opportunities. The single greatest opportunity to transform LPHA SP&M practice is linking to the national accreditation process and the systems and resources that support workforce development. I am choosing to focus this plan on national level change, even though my research was at the state level. I do that because of my national connections at this moment in time. It is my personal window of opportunity.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS AND PLANS FOR CHANGE

1. Establishing a Sense of Urgency

   Recommendation 1: A sense of urgency should be instilled by a) encouraging top LPHOs to develop a summary profile of their workforce by length of time to which employees will be eligible for retirement, b) highlighting that national accreditation standards 8.1.1.T/L, 8.2.1A, and 8.2.2A that can be met with SP&M programs and activities, and c) impress upon us Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials that 50% of us top LPHOs are thinking we may leave our positions within 5 years.

While we leaders have seen the national data and we have known for some time that the baby boomers are about to retire, it really seems to hit home when one puts names and faces to those retirements and looks at the impact to one’s organization. This was certainly true for the case agencies and was supported by the regression analysis.
I also heard from those LPHAs applying for accreditation that accreditation was a motivator, and I shared that with the Public Health Accreditation Board President and CEO, Kaye Bender, in a phone conversation on September 5, 2012.

Action I have already taken to raise awareness of this issue and create urgency was to include in a section on succession planning in which I specifically called out the importance of creating retirement profiles of our workforces in my President’s Remarks at the NACCHO Annual meeting in July 2012 (see Appendix I on page 166). I also addressed the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) at their annual conference in Austin, Tx on September 13th and raised this issue with them and did the same at the Missouri Public Health Conference on September 27th. I will continue to do that with other organizations at which I have the opportunity to speak during my year as NACCHO president.

Additional actions I will be taking to increase this sense of urgency are:

- I will devote my Fall President’s Column in the NACCHO quarterly newsletter, *NACCHO Exchange*, to this topic. In that, I will discuss how we as leaders have a responsibility to ensure the future of our organizations and that SP&M is critical to that. That article will link to a NACCHO web site that will contain a retirement profiling tool in Microsoft® Excel® that members can plug their agency data into and get a retirement profile.

- I will be requesting time on an upcoming NACCHO workforce committee agenda to share my dissertation findings and I will work with the chair of that committee, who is my health officer, to see how that committee can incorporate SP&M issues into its work.

- I will be presenting my dissertation findings to my LPHA colleagues at our in-person Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials meeting in November
of this year and strategizing how we might move forward. In doing so, I will be seeking the Board of Directors’ approval to create a workgroup of top LPHOs to guide an association effort to address SP&M and I will volunteer to chair the group.

• I will also submit abstracts to present my research findings at the next Keeneland Conference, NACCHO conference, and NALBOH Conference. I intend to propose a pre-conference session on creating SP&M plans at the NACCHO and the NALBOH meetings.

• It is also my intent to prepare journal articles with my dissertation committee members to share these findings.

2. Forming a Powerful Guiding Coalition

Recommendation 2: Organizations that already receive funding to provide technical assistance to LPHAs applying for accreditation AND the public health training institutes already receiving funding by the HRSA for workforce training should be engaged to develop a cross-organization coalition to guide SP&M development in LPHAs.

The NACCHO, ASTHO, National Indian Health Board, NALBOH, and the Public Health Foundation all provide technical assistance to LPHAs applying for accreditation. I will be in contact with those agencies this fall to share my research findings, see what they might already be doing with SP&M in their technical assistance work on workforce development plans, and seek out their interest in forming a coalition/work group. That group could come together to promote a vision for SP&M and develop practical tools and resources on SP&M that could easily be incorporated into their technical assistance. In addition, I will reach out to the public health training centers, starting with the Ohio public health training center which piloted a succession
planning webinar-based cohort training, to see what trainings are being offered in workforce development and SP&M and ascertain interest in joining a coalition. A draft purpose statement for a coalition could be: “The purpose of this coalition is to create a common vision and practical tools for public health workforce development that takes a leadership pipeline approach and incorporates succession planning and management. The intent is for us together to transform public health workforce development in a manner that is sustainable and that recognizes each of our organization’s independence, strengths, and unique places in the market.” The goal would be to have one or more of the already funded organizations take on a coordinating role using funds they already receive, and use any collaboration structures they may already have in place.

This coalition, and future financial resources, would be strengthened by NACCHO, ASTHO, and NALBOH taking the lead in enlisting membership from, or at the least informing and influencing, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and from the public health training centers taking the lead in working with HRSA. Exploring representation from other organizations such as the Trust for America’s Health may also be warranted. Strength would also be added to this coalition if the list of national associations recruited included the National Association of Counties and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, as those members have policy responsibility for many LPHAs.

3. Creating a Vision

**Recommendation 3:** Workforce development should emphasize the importance of creating a leadership pipeline in LPHAs, and incorporate that needed sense of urgency through the creation of an agency retirement profile.
**Recommendation 4:** A core set of SP&M best practices that can be added to over time should be established as part of the vision. That core set should have best practices from each of the best practice groupings: pre-employment, selecting HP-HP, developing HP-HP, coaching and mentoring, goal setting for and performance measurement of HP-HP, and retaining HP-HP.

Many still understand succession planning from the outdated model of replacement planning where one grooms a specific person for a specific job, and those jobs are usually the ones highest in agency hierarchy. This fails to best serve our employees and our agencies in at least two ways. First, it does not ensure that the employees who have the greatest impact to the staff on the front lines, the supervisors, are ready for one of the most difficult passages in the leadership pipeline—going from managing self to managing others (see Figure 2.4 on page 35 and Table 2.6 on page 36). When this transition fails, the employees who are delivering the services are not well supported in their day-to-day jobs and top leadership is not well supported in having strategy implemented, both of which can negatively impact service delivery and organizational effectiveness. Second, it fails to recognize that there are critical positions at all levels of the hierarchy. These argue for a leadership pipeline approach.

The vision must also appreciate that going for fully comprehensive programs from the outset is likely to lead to failure. I listened to the struggles of the medium-sized and large-sized case agencies when they took on more than they could implement or sustain. Creating a minimum core for a SP&M program that has selected activities from pre-employment through retention will implement a complete system and will do so in a way that other activities can be added when the initial activities have taken root and are being sustained. Flexibility could be easily be accommodated by having menus of activities within the SP&M components.
4. Communicating the Vision

**Recommendation 5:** The vision should be communicated through the technical assistance work the national partner agencies bring to the accreditation process and through the service offerings of the public health training centers.

**Recommendation 6:** As the Public Health Accreditation Board revises its standards, it should specifically call out succession planning and management as a component of a required workforce development plan.

**Recommendation 7:** LPHAs and national organizations should support the Institute of Medicine’s recent report advocating for a minimum package of public health services and advocate for adequate workforce development resources as part of the foundational capabilities.

The most economical way to promote SP&M is to do it through existing infrastructure. Assuming a coalition of national partners can come together, having them carry forth the vision through their usual funded work is the best systems approach.

In my personal communications with Kaye Bender, I know that the PHAB is beginning work on revising the accreditation standards. The workforce development standards were initially conservative given the wide variation in practice, understanding, and resources available. As the standards are revised, I propose that SP&M be specifically called out. Some draft measure language might be: “Develop and implement an agency-wide succession planning and management plan.” Required documentation could be: 1) An approved agency plan and policy that identifies the organization’s SP&M philosophy and its linkage to workforce
development, the role of the top LPHO, who has primary responsibility for implementing the plan, a process for identifying and selecting HP-HP, activities to develop future and existing supervisors/managers/leaders, activities to set goals and measure performance, and efforts to retain HP-HP individuals, 2) A retirement profile of the workforce, 3) Tools and resources that support the agency plan and policy, and 4) A copy of actual completed tools for a HP-HP from front line staff being developed for a supervisory role and for an existing supervisor being developed for a higher level of management (with flexibility here for workforces that are too small for this).

Finally, it is important that the vision include adequate funding mechanisms for LPHAs to undertake this work. Workforce development resources should be considered a fundamental capability that should be part of the core funding to support an agency as proposed by the Institute of Medicine report. Thus, all partners should advocate for that funding and for the inclusion of workforce development in the fundamental capabilities.

5. Empowering Others to Act on the Vision

Recommendation 8: Exemplary strategies to negotiate developmental opportunities for unionized workforces and exemplary contract language should be researched and made widely available to address one of the barriers to implementing SP&M developmental opportunities.

One of the systems that can seriously undermine the vision is union contract language that has seniority, measured in years of employment, trump performance, potential, and employee interest in developmental opportunities and promotion. Research on win-win solutions should be undertaken by the public health training centers so that exemplary practices can be shared.
6. Planning for and Creating Short-Term Wins

**Recommendation 9:** The public health training centers and national and state public health associations should develop practical SP&M trainings and tools that promote a core SP&M program that can be easily implemented into everyday work and that can be added to in a phased manner to achieve comprehensive SP&M programs.

**Recommendation 10:** Special consideration must be given to the needs, capacities, and resources of smaller LPHAs. In those communities, pairing with other non-profits to implement developmental opportunities through cross-functional projects, shared stretch projects, action-learning projects and the pooling of training resources should be considered. Instead of developing talent pools within one’s small LPHA, consideration should be given to developing talent pools across health and human service agencies—governmental, non-profit, and private or across LPHA jurisdictions.

**Recommendation 11:** Initial tools should be created that base HP-HP selection on objective standards with transparent processes that minimize bias and promote equal opportunity.

**Recommendation 12:** Coaching and mentoring efforts need to be more formalized in many LPHAs, and specific training for those in management positions should be developed and provided by the national public health training centers.
Critical to creating short-term wins are having practical, simple implementation resources. The training centers and national associations should bring the best of the best to LPHAs and be very cognizant that the infrastructure to support most of this work is slim to none at all. Based on my research findings, it was clear that more support and effort is needed in the areas of HP-HP selection processes and tools, as well in coaching and mentoring skills and programs. These should be prioritized for development and implementation.

7. Consolidating Improvements and Producing Still More Change

**Recommendation 13:** The public health training centers should develop materials and workshops on forecasting the priority leadership roles an organization will need in its future leaders to advance that LPHA (see page 28 for those roles).

One of the important elements to avoiding executive cloning is for LPHAs to be able to assess their current situation and forecast the primary leadership roles that will be needed for the next leader. It is very likely that those roles will be different from the ones currently needed. Thus, as leaders who are developing future leaders, we need to have a framework to understand this issue and assess what will be needed in the future so we can grow those leaders, rather than a carbon copy of ourselves.
8. Institutionalizing New Approaches

**Recommendation 14:** The public health training centers and the public health services and systems research community should take the lead in developing formative evaluation studies to guide implementation and develop outcome evaluation studies to determine the impact of workforce development plans that include SP&M as a major component.

While this recommendation is placed at the end, clearly evaluation studies need to be designed from the early stages to be most useful. I strongly suspect this is an area where additional funding will need to be sought in order to support this work.

**CONCLUDING REMARK**

My dissertation research derived from my gradual understanding that I was not as prepared for my own leadership passages as I might have been and my observations, leading to my belief, that too many of my colleagues were having similar journeys. It is my hope and desire that we, as leaders, will embrace SP&M to better prepare our managers, current and future, for their leadership passages. I am committed to influencing this change, for I believe that if we can accomplish this, we will become more effective as a discipline and, thereby, will directly improve population health.
APPENDIX A: JOHN’S FIRST ALL STAFF MEETING

The following e-mail was sent to all staff in my department on Monday, July 19, 2004 at 10:38am, the first day of the job.

Greetings:

Earlier this morning, I had the opportunity to introduce myself to some of you. This e-mail is intended to share the essence of my initial remarks with those of you who were not able to be in attendance and to invite your participation in a quick survey.

Earlier Kay Koontz shared with you my resume, so I’ll only briefly touch on my professional background and will focus more on my personal background as part of my introduction to you all.

Professionally I have over 13 years of experience in local public health. This has included working at three local health departments, all of varying sizes. I have worked in:

- a small town health department (Greenwich, CT) which had about 50 employees,
- a medium sized city/county health department (Tacoma-Pierce County) which had about 300 employees, and
- a large city/county health department (Seattle/King County) which had about 2,000 employees.

In all of these departments, I was on the Director's senior management team. I have had the opportunity to be mentored by each of these directors and to observe and learn from their work. Now I look forward to applying that as your new director.

I have also worked in academic public health as an administrator on a project that conducted research into the treatments for low back pain, a very common health problem, and developed ways to translate those finding into patients’ decision-making on their treatment options.

For more details on my professional experiences, I am again attaching my resume.

All of us are much more than our professional work, and thus I want to take some time to more personally introduce myself to you all.

I was born and raised in a small city in Wisconsin (Horicon). It was here that I learned the value of community and neighbors.

I come from a family of 7 children. It is from this living experience that I have learned patience, sharing and working together.

The people I most admire are my parents. They provided me with a stable foundation to learn and grow. They set boundaries for us children but also let us make our own decisions, some of which were mistakes. And they made many sacrifices so that we could be provided for. I realize that not everyone has had this, and one of my passions in public health is to help parents and other caretakers to provide the best nurturing of their children as possible.
In my high school and college years, I was active in forensics, debate, student government and residence hall leadership. These experiences helped me gain confidence in my public speaking and helped me develop my listening skills.

I first fell in love with Washington when I moved here for my first job out of college. I worked in Bellingham at Western Washington University as a residence hall director. The first thing I came to appreciate is that my hay fever immediately disappeared! No more constant sneezing and watery eyes every fall. Wow! The second thing I came to appreciate is the mountains, water, snow (usually only if you want it) and the people. One of the ways I rejuvenate myself is to take in a sunrise over a mountain or spend some time near water. So, the Pacific Northwest is my home.

After moving to New Haven to get my masters in public health degree and completing my first job in local public health, my partner and I moved back to the Northwest. On Saturday, we celebrated our 17th anniversary of being together. He is a mental health counselor by training and, with our move to Vancouver, is looking for a new job.

Six days ago we arrived to live in Vancouver and are settling in the downtown area (I still have a hard time calling downtowns city centers, even after 15 years of living here). We are very much enjoying Esther Short Park, the farmers market, local restaurants and our walks and bike rides.

Choosing to live in downtown is important to me from a public health perspective, as well as a personal one. Some of you may know that a focus of growth for public health is land use planning. Elements of that are creating built environments where people can increase their physical activity, reduce their reliance upon cars and create healthy, diverse communities and people. Now that should sound familiar to all of us. My partner and I are very much looking forward to being a part of this movement and the renaissance of downtown.

That brings me to today, my new job as your Director of Health. To give you an idea of what you can expect, let me tell you my big picture plans for the next 3 months. I plan to spend most of my first month internally to the Department listening and learning from you all about our history, our culture, our values and our programs and services. An important part of this will be learning from Kay all I can before she really leaves us for her retirement; this is a wonderful opportunity to have overlap, which doesn't often happen. I plan to my listening and learning by:

- joining you on your field work,
- sitting in on client visits where appropriate,
- attending community meetings,
- joining you at staff meetings, and
- inviting a cross-section of you for some 1-on-1 and group listening and learning sessions.

The first program I will start with will be environmental health and then I move on from there. I look forward to meeting each of you and learning about your work and passions.

My second month will primarily be spent listening and learning from folks outside the Department. This will include our:

- county colleagues,
• community partners, and
• customers.

My third month will be spent evaluating all I have heard and learned and looking toward our future. As I move through this process, I will share my observations with you.

To begin my learning, I invite you to take about 10 minutes of your time to share your observations of our values and your expectations of me. You can do so by completing the attached introductory survey and returning it to my office by the end of this week.

In closing, I am very pleased to have been offered this opportunity to lead this health department. I look forward to working with you all for a safer and healthier community.
APPENDIX B: PUBLIC HEALTH ACCREDITATION BOARD STANDARDS AND MEASURES RELATED TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

This appendix contains three standards from Module 8 of the PHAB Standards and Measures, Version 1.0, approved May 2011

Standard 8.1.1 Tribal/Local Health Departments

Standard 8.2.1 All Health Departments (State/Local/Tribal)

Standard 8.2.2. All
**Standard 8.1: Encourage the development of a sufficient number of qualified public health workers.**

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<th>Measure</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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<tr>
<td>8.1.1 T/L Establish relationships and/or collaborations that promote the development of future public health workers</td>
<td>The purpose of this measure is to assess the health department’s activities to encourage public health as a career choice.</td>
<td>Working with schools, academic programs or other organizations is a means to promote public health as an attractive career choice. Collaborations can create paths for exposing students or new graduates to public health practice.</td>
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**Required Documentation**

1. Documentation of relationships or collaborations that promote public health as a career

**Guidance**

1. The health department must provide one example of a partnership or collaboration that promotes public health as a career choice.

Examples of partnerships or collaborations include: coordinating with a high school to make presentations to students about public health and public careers, working with a vocational training school to promote public health, partnering with a 4H club to provide information about public health to members, guest lecturing at a community college, or providing after school experiences for high school students.
Standard 8.2: Assess staff competencies and address gaps by enabling organizational and individual training and development opportunities.

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<td>8.2.1 A</td>
<td>Maintain, implement and assess the health department workforce development plan that addresses the training needs of the staff and the development of core competencies</td>
<td>The purpose of this measure is to assess the health department’s planning for employee training, implementation of those plans, and the development of core competencies.</td>
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**Required Documentation**

1. Health department workforce development plan that includes:
   a. Nationally adopted core competencies
   b. Curricula and training schedules

2. Documentation of implementation of the health department workforce development plan

**Guidance**

1. The health department must provide a health department-specific workforce development plan, updated annually. The plan must include:
   a. Plans to develop nationally adopted public health core competencies among staff. An example of nationally adopted core competencies is the “Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals” from the Council on Linkages. The plan may also use another set of competencies, such as those authorized by the health department's governing entity.
   b. Training schedules and a description of the material or topics to be addressed in the training curricula.

2. The health department must provide two examples of implementing the workforce development plan. Documentation could include training curricula to address an identified gap, staff attendance at state or national conferences, and staff attendance at training/educational sessions provided by other organizations related to their area of work.
**Standard 8.2:** Assess staff competencies and address gaps by enabling organizational and individual training and development opportunities.

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<td>8.2.2 A Provide leadership and management development activities</td>
<td>The purpose of this measure is to assess the health department’s development of leadership and management staff, including efforts to build leadership skills.</td>
<td>In addition to their specific public health activities, leaders and managers must oversee the health department, interact with stakeholders and constituencies, seek resources, interact with governance, and inspire employees and the community to engage in healthful public health activities. Development activities can assist leadership and management staff to employ state-of-the-art thinking, management processes, and management techniques.</td>
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<th>Required Documentation</th>
<th>Guidance</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Documented training/development activities in the past two years</td>
<td>1. The health department must provide two examples of its training or development programs for leadership and/or management staff. Activities could include: education assistance, continuing education, support for membership in professional organizations, and training opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Documented participation in courses</td>
<td>2. The health department must provide two examples of leaders and/or managers attending a leadership and/or management development course. Examples include: National Public Health Leadership Institute; Environmental Public Health Leadership Institute; Tribal, regional, state, or local public health leadership institutes; executive management seminars or programs; graduate programs in leadership/management, and related meetings and conferences.</td>
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APPENDIX C: WEB SURVEY PROTOCOL

The following protocol was used to implement the web survey.

1. Support was obtained for this study from the WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS Public Health Executive Leadership Forum (the forum to which all top LPHOs are a member) executive committee and they endorsed the research project. Similarly, the Washington State Secretary of Health, Mary Selecky, endorsed the study.

2. The top LPHO for each of the 35 LPHAs was sent a “heads up” letter via U.S. mail one week prior to the actual survey invitation informing them of the study and to watch for an e-mail invitation the following week inviting their participation (see Appendix D page 130). The letter included a $2 bill to capture the attention of any assistant or top LPHO opening the mail to the message inside. The purpose of the letter was to raise awareness and anticipation of the study.

3. The top LPHO for each of the 35 LPHAs was sent an invitation via e-mail on March 7, 2012 from my UNC e-mail account inviting them to complete an on-line survey (See Appendix D for the e-mail invitation). That e-mail included a .pdf of the survey to help them facilitate getting their answers prior to taking the on-line survey.

4. The WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS Public Health Executive Leadership Forum and the Washington State Secretary of Health each endorsed the research study and co-signed an endorsement e-mail, which was sent to the top LPHOs on March 14, 2012 to encourage their participation (see Appendix D).

5. I personally called the LPHOs on March 20th if they had not yet returned their survey to remind them of the survey and see if they had any questions. Some also received
an e-mail with the same message when their administrative assistants indicated they were out of the office and would likely see e-mail. Those who did not respond by the time they indicated they would, were contacted by phone and/or e-mail for further prompting.

6. I wrote a personal, handwritten thank you note to each respondent thanking him/her for his/her participation.
Initial “head ups” letter

February 29, 2012

Inside Address

Dear Ms. XXX:

You may know that I am completing my DrPH degree at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. I am now at the dissertation phase of my program and want to give you a “heads up” about an e-mail invitation you will receive from me the week of March 5th.

My study is examining succession planning in local public health agencies here in Washington State. As part of that, I will be sending out an on-line survey to all local public health directors here in Washington. I would appreciate your watching out for that e-mail and giving serious consideration to participating.

My dissertation chair is Dr. Ed Baker, Research Professor in Health Policy and Management at UNC-Chapel Hill. In addition, Pat Libbey, the former Director of Thurston County Health and Human Services and past Executive Director of NACCHO, is also on my committee.

The survey will be an on-line SurveyMonkey™ survey and should take between 20 to 30 minutes of your time to complete. I will be including a .pdf of the survey so you can prepare ahead of time any answers you may wish.

Please keep the enclosed $2 bill regardless of whether or not you complete the survey. Its purpose was to help make sure you saw this letter and to have you watch your e-mail next week.

Thank you for your consideration. I do hope you will be able to help me out and advance this practice-based local public health research. If you have questions, please contact me at Wiesman@live.unc.edu or 360.921.2453.

Sincerely,

John Wiesman, MPH
Student, Doctoral Program in Health Leadership (DrPH)
University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill
Hi (insert first name of LPHO),

Here is this e-mail I promised you would receive from me!

Today I invite your participation in an on-line survey for my doctoral research examining succession planning in local public health agencies here in Washington State. My intent is to:

- understand what our organizations are doing to prepare our staff for management and leadership positions, and
- evaluate variables that may influence the degree to which our organizations are undertaking succession planning efforts.

My study will make recommendations on how we can better improve our succession planning efforts here in Washington State and assist agencies in meeting domain 8, maintaining a competent public health workforce, of the National Public Health Accreditation standards. My findings will be shared with WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS and with you directly, if you so choose. My research should be completed no later than November 2012.

The survey is an online survey (SurveyMonkey™) and should take between 20 to 30 minutes to complete. To make it most convenient, I am attaching a pdf file of the survey so you can have your answers ready to go and perhaps have staff help you get answers that you may not have readily at your fingertips. Most of us will need data assistance with questions 31 through 35, which asks about FTEs in your organization. (Note: when you take the actual survey, it uses skip patterns based on your answers so that you don’t get questions that don’t make sense for your situation. When this happens, the next question is numbered sequentially, thus the question number online will not match the question number in the .pdf file attached.)

Your participation in this research is totally voluntary. Whether you participate or not, it will have no bearing on any professional or personal relationships we may have.

I have shared my research project with the PHELF executive committee. They are encouraging your participation and will soon be sending you an e-mail asking that you participate.

This research has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of North Carolina. If you have questions about this research, you may contact me at Wiesman@email.unc.edu or 360.921.2453. Dr. Ed Baker, Research Professor in Health Policy and Management at UNC-Chapel Hill, is chairing my dissertation committee and Pat Libbey, the former Director of Thurston County Health and Human Services and NACCHO Executive Director is on my dissertation committee.

I would ask that you complete the survey within two weeks. To participate in this study, click on this link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FINALSPM.
Thanks for your consideration. If you have questions, please contact me at Wiesman@live.unc.edu or 360.921.2453.

John Wiesman, MPH  
Student, Doctoral Program in Health Leadership (DrPH)  
University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill  
Gillings School of Global Public Health

E-mail sent by WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS with the endorsement of the PHELF Executive Committee and the Washington State Secretary of Health

This e-mail is being sent on behalf of Mary Selecky and the WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS PHELF Executive Committee.

Dear Colleagues-

How many people in your agency are eligible for retirement soon? If your staff is like most of ours, it’s probably a lot more than we’re ready to replace.

Well, one of our colleagues, John Wiesman, is completing a doctoral research project looking at succession planning right here in our own health departments. His research will give us all insights into what’s working and what we can do better. We want to have the best information possible, and we need your help.

Last week John sent you all a survey. If you haven’t filled it out, please take the time now. Not quite half of the local health department directors have completed it. That’s good, but we can do better. Every survey helps, so we encourage YOU to take a few moments to make sure your voice is heard.

For your convenience, the link to the survey is: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FINALSPM

Thanks, in advance, for supporting practical research on our local public health system.

David Windom, Chair  
Joel McCullough, Chair-Elect  
Gary Goldbaum, Treasurer  
Danette York, Secretary  
Alan Melnick, Chair, Health Officer Sub-forum  
Joan Brewster, Immediate Past Chair  
PHELF Executive Committee

Phone call reminder

Basic script:
“Hi (insert top LPHO’s name) it’s John Wiesman calling. I am calling to make sure you got my letter and saw my e-mail I sent on March 7th asking you to participate in my doctoral study questionnaire on succession planning in local public health agencies here in Washington State. I am hopeful that you will want to complete the survey and I am checking in with you to see if you have any questions about the survey or the research?”

(Answer questions and engage in dialogue about the research.)

If they say the don’t want to participate:
“I understand. It would help me with reporting on my research if you would be willing to share with me why you are declining to complete the survey. Would you be willing to share that information with me?”
  • If they answer yes, ask “why is it that you are declining to complete the survey?”
  • If they answer no or they would rather not, say “I certainly understand and I appreciate your time.”

If they say the do want to participate:
“I am pleased to hear that. By when do you think you will be able to complete the on-line survey?” After getting an answer, ask them if they would like a reminder call and if so, when.

“Thanks for your help with this research project.”
APPENDIX E: WEB SURVEY INSTRUMENT (AND ASSOCIATED DATA TABLES)

The following pages contain the web survey instrument, and for the 25 best practice questions identified from the literature, the associated data tables.
NOTES:
1. This survey is not in its actual format; it was formatted using SurveyMonkey™ and delivered via the web.
2. A .pdf of the SurveyMonkey™ survey was attached to the e-mail invitation so respondents could prepare for the survey and obtain any data they need to complete the survey.
3. This copy of the survey inserts the summarized data and thus also serves as the data tables with the raw data.

Local Public Health Agency Succession Planning Survey

Welcome to the survey! This first page is the informed consent, which is followed by the survey. Here we go.

Title of Study: Succession Planning and Management Practice in Washington State Local Public Health Agencies: The Current Situation and Recommendations for Better Practice
IRB #: 12-0342
Principal Investigator: John Wiesman
Faculty Advisory: Dr. Edward Baker

The purpose of this research study is to understand the systems and procedures local public health agencies in Washington State are implementing to identify, develop, and retain high performing-high potential individuals for future management and leadership roles and how high performing-high potentials are placed into those roles. This is generally referred to as succession planning.

This research project is being conducted by John Wiesman as part of his doctoral dissertation at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill. You are being invited to participate in this research project because you are the agency director for one of Washington State’s local public health agencies and you have important knowledge about your agency’s succession planning work. All 35 local public health directors are being invited to participate.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary.
• You may choose not to answer any question(s) by simply leaving it blank.
• You may also choose not to participate by clicking on the “I disagree and do not wish to participate” button coming up.

You will not be penalized if you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from participating in this study at any time.
The study involves completing an online survey that will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes. Your responses will be confidential. The survey questions will be about your agency’s succession planning activities and your relationship to succession planning.

You will receive no monetary reward for participating in this study. There are no costs associated with being in the study.

Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. You may not benefit personally from being in this study.

We anticipate few risks in this study.

We will do our best to keep your information confidential. All data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. Data linking this survey to you will be parsed into a separate database with a unique password. That database will be deleted two years after the acceptance of this dissertation research.

You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have any questions, please contact John Wiesman by phone at 360.921.2453 or at his university e-mail address – Wiesman@live.unc.edu . You may also contact the Faculty Advisory, Dr. Edward Baker at 919.357.7213 or elbaker@email.unc.edu .

All research on human subjects is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, please contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by e-mail to IRB_subjects@unc.edu .

**ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.**

- Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:
  - you have read the above information
  - you voluntarily agree to participate in this study

- Clicking on the “disagree” button indicates that you do not wish to participate in the research study.

  ____ AGREE to participate

  ____ DISAGREE and do not wish to participate.
This begins the survey

When completing this survey, consider succession planning to mean the systems and procedures used to identify, develop, and retain high performing-high potential individuals (HP-HP) for future management and leadership roles and how HP-HP are placed into those roles. This could mean developing field staff for their first supervisory job all the way up to preparing staff for the top job in your agency.

In addition, consider high performing-high potential individuals (HP-HP) to mean persons who are performing very successfully in their current role and for whom the organization deems as having strong potential for promoting within the organization.

Finally, throughout the survey, if you have a combined public health and human services agency, please consider your entire agency as you answer the questions.

The first set of questions asks about specific systems and activities your agency may or may not undertake in support of succession planning. Please check the column that best describes your agency’s situation for each question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Our agency does this agency-wide</th>
<th>Our agency does this in parts of the agency, but not agency-wide</th>
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<th>Not sure of the extent to which my agency does this</th>
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<td><strong>Pre-employment activities:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q1 Our agency uses student internships and/or practicums as a means of identifying HP-HP for entry-level positions in our agency</td>
<td>29% (10)</td>
<td>31% (11)</td>
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<td>37% (13)</td>
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<td><strong>Activities for selecting HP-HP</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q2 Our agency identifies HP-HP from our workforce</td>
<td>47% (16)</td>
<td>38% (13)</td>
<td>12% (4)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>85% (29)</td>
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<td>Q3 Our agency assesses individuals for job competencies that are a level or more above their current position to help identify HP-HP</td>
<td>21% (7)</td>
<td>35% (12)</td>
<td>41% (14)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56% (19)</td>
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<td>Q4 Our agency assesses individuals for learning agility (an individual’s readiness and ability to learn from experiences and be adaptive to changing environments)</td>
<td>24% (8)</td>
<td>29% (10)</td>
<td>44% (15)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
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<td>53% (18)</td>
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<td>Q5 Our agency assesses individuals for problematic behaviors that may derail their career</td>
<td>41% (14)</td>
<td>29% (10)</td>
<td>26% (9)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70% (24)</td>
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<td>Q6 Our agency creates lists of individuals to be developed for higher level positions</td>
<td>18% (6)</td>
<td>15% (5)</td>
<td>62% (21)</td>
<td>6% (2)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32% (11)</td>
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<td>This next set of questions apply to persons your agency has already identified as high performing-high potential (HP-HP)</td>
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<td><strong>Activities for competency/leadership development in individuals identified as high potentials:</strong></td>
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<td>Q7 Our agency rotates HP-HP through jobs in various parts of the agency or encourages lateral moves specifically to develop the employee</td>
<td>9% (3)</td>
<td>20% (7)</td>
<td>70% (24)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q8 Our agency identifies cross-functional projects, task forces, or teams for HP-HP employees to serve specifically to develop their knowledge, skills, and ability</td>
<td>41% (14)</td>
<td>29% (10)</td>
<td>29% (10)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q9 Our agency sends HP-HP employees to technical and/or management/leadership trainings</td>
<td>44% (15)</td>
<td>32% (11)</td>
<td>24% (8)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q10 Our agency conducts 360 degree feedback assessments for HP-HP employees as a tool to help them identify areas of growth</td>
<td>12% (4)</td>
<td>15% (5)</td>
<td>70% (24)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q11 Our agency develops individualized development plans with HP-HP employees specific to their preparation for new positions in the agency</td>
<td>12% (4)</td>
<td>18% (6)</td>
<td>70% (24)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
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<td>Q12 Our agency gives HP-HP employees exposure to general organizational management (as opposed to program specific management)</td>
<td>26% (9)</td>
<td>41% (14)</td>
<td>32% (11)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
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<td>Q13 Our agency purposively assigns HP-HP employees stretch projects/assignments to develop their knowledge, skills, and/or ability</td>
<td>23% (8)</td>
<td>44% (15)</td>
<td>29% (10)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
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<td>Q14 Our agency creates action-learning projects for HP-HP employees in which teams of people work on a project strategic to the agency’s development and then has them formally report on the project to the highest levels of management</td>
<td>24% (8)</td>
<td>20% (7)</td>
<td>53% (18)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
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<td>Q15 Our agency creates and delivers internal workshops and courses specifically for HP-HP employees</td>
<td>9% (3)</td>
<td>6% (2)</td>
<td>82% (27)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
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<td>Q16 Our agency encourages development by having HP-HP lead training sessions</td>
<td>9% (3)</td>
<td>38% (13)</td>
<td>50% (17)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
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<td><strong>Activities for coaching and mentoring</strong></td>
<td><strong>3% (1)</strong></td>
<td><strong>32% (11)</strong></td>
<td><strong>65% (22)</strong></td>
<td><strong>0% (0)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(1)</strong></td>
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<td>Q17 Our agency assigns new employees a mentor or coach</td>
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<td>Q18 Our agency offers HP-HP employees mentoring and coaching opportunities by someone other than their supervisor</td>
<td>9% (3)</td>
<td>35% (12)</td>
<td>56% (19)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<td><strong>Activities for individual HP-HP goal setting &amp; performance measurement</strong></td>
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<td>Q19 Our agency uses formal meetings with HP-HP employees to define and further develop their job descriptions specifically to create developmental opportunities to help them prepare for new positions in the agency</td>
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<td>6% (2)</td>
<td>29% (10)</td>
<td>65% (22)</td>
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<td>Q20 Our agency uses HP-HP employee and supervisor dialogues to set performance goals specific to their development for new roles/jobs</td>
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<td>35% (12)</td>
<td>44% (15)</td>
<td>20% (7)</td>
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<td>Q21 Our agency evaluates a HP-HP employee’s performance against their development plan and that evaluation is put in writing and verbally discussed with the HP-HP employee</td>
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<td>32% (11)</td>
<td>26% (9)</td>
<td>35% (12)</td>
<td>6% (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Retaining HP-HP Employees by Placing them into New Positions</strong></td>
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<td>Q22 Our agency limits some or all recruitments to internal applicants only, specifically to help retain HP-HP employees, and then may or may not open the recruitment to external applicants</td>
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<td>35% (12)</td>
<td>12% (4)</td>
<td>50% (17)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
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<td>Q23 Our agency sometimes creates new lateral-level positions specifically to give HP-HP employees the opportunity to gain new experience within the agency or to retain HP-HP</td>
<td>6% (2)</td>
<td>18% (6)</td>
<td>76% (26)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
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<td>24% (8)</td>
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<td>Q24 Our agency sometimes creates new higher-level positions specifically to give HP-HP employees the opportunity to promote within the agency or as a tool to retain a HP-HP employee</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
<td>29% (10)</td>
<td>68% (23)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
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<td>32% (11)</td>
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<td>Q25 Our agency increases a HP-HP employee’s pay specifically to retain the employee in the agency (either to prevent the employee from looking elsewhere or to retain the employee when the employee has been offered a position elsewhere)</td>
<td>3% (1)</td>
<td>18% (6)</td>
<td>79% (27)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
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<td>20% (7)</td>
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</table>

Q26 Does your agency have a written succession planning plan?
   a. Yes
   b. No (SKIP to Q30)
   c. I don’t know (SKIP to Q30)

Q27. Does your agency review the succession planning plan and evaluate its effectiveness at least once every 24 months?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. I don’t know
Q28. Does your agency’s succession planning plan specifically call for identifying and developing employees who can lead in the areas where your agency needs to strategically move towards as compared to lead for where your agency is today?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. I don’t know

Q29. Does your agency’s succession planning plan identify a leadership role for you (the director/health officer)?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. I don’t know

Q30. How would you describe your agency’s succession planning activities? (select the closest descriptor)
   a. Our agency has an agency-wide succession planning program that is comprehensive - it identifies, develops, and retains HP-HP individuals for future management and leadership roles and identifies how HP-HP are placed into those roles (SKIP to Q32)
   b. Our agency has an agency-wide succession planning program but it is not comprehensive (SKIP to Q32)
   c. Our agency does not currently undertake specific agency-wide succession planning activities (SKIP to Q31)

Q31. Why does your agency not undertake succession planning (check all that apply)
   __ We are a department in a larger organization and I don’t have the authority to implement this on my own
   __ Our staff is too small in number to make this a worthwhile effort
   __ We are intentionally seeking new staff from outside the agency to bring in new ideas and/or new skill sets
   __ We don’t have the expertise on staff and we don’t have the resources to hire a consultant to lead this for us
   __ Given all we need to do, this has not been a high enough priority
   __ We tried it and it failed
   __ We have plenty of people applying for our jobs when they open up and don’t need to put limited resources towards this
   __ I believe that union issues would prevent it from working here but I have not raised the issue with the union yet
   __ I have raised succession planning with the union and we could not negotiate a workable solution
   __ I don’t think succession planning can be effectively and/or legally implemented in the government sector
   __ Other (specify) ____________________
   (Now SKIP to Q37)
Q32. What benefits has your agency realized as a result of its succession planning activities (check all that apply)

- It has developed our staff to their full potential
- It has retained staff that would have otherwise left the agency
- It increased our supervisors’ and managers’ performance
- It has increased the effectiveness of our public health programs
- It has identified people who were not ready for a promotion
- It has prepared supervisors and managers to lead the agency where it strategically needs to go rather than staying where the agency is today
- It had improved the morale of the workforce
- Other (specify) __________

33. Who has primary responsibility for leading the succession planning program or activities in your agency? (select only one)
   - Someone outside our immediate agency (e.g., County HR director, another department head)
   - The top executive in your agency (e.g., Director/Health Officer)
   - The Administrator/Administrative Services Manager/Chief Operating Officer
   - A human resources director/staff person
   - Another senior manager
   - A mid- or entry-level supervisor/manager
   - A line staff member
   - I don’t know
   - Other (specify) ____________

Q34. Do you have a committee/work group/task force responsible for developing and implementing the program?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I don’t know

Q35. How long has your agency been undertaking agency-wide succession planning activities?
   - less than 12 months
   - one through four years
   - five through nine years
   - ten years or longer
   - I don’t know
Q36. What has facilitated your agency’s succession planning work? (check all that apply)

__ We are part of a larger organization and the larger organization provides human leadership for this work
__ We are part of a larger organization and the larger organization provides tools for this work (e.g., trainings, forms to support the process, computer software, etc.)
__ Staff asked for developmental opportunities to grow their knowledge and competencies
__ I was personally motivated to develop and retain HP-HP employees and made it an agency priority
__ We had an employee or multiple employees who wanted to develop and lead a succession planning effort
__ We had internal expertise already on staff
__ We identified workforce development as a strategic need for our agency and decided to invest in succession planning
__ We see succession planning as a way to help us meet the Washington State public health standards or national accreditation
__ Other (specify): ____________________

Q37 If your agency identifies employees to be part of a HP-HP pool of employees for development, who does the identification/nomination of the employees to be part of the high potential pool (check all that apply)?

__ Our agency does not do this
__ The top executive in your agency (e.g., Director/Health Officer)
__ The Administrator/Administrative Services Manager/Chief Operating Officer
__ A human resources director/staff person
__ Another senior manager
__ An entry or mid-level supervisor/manager
__ A line staff member
__ Staff can self-nominate
__ Board of Health
__ External partners
__ Other; Specify ____________________

Q38 Does your agency have a procedure for identifying succession candidates for management/leadership positions?

a. Yes
b. No (SKIP to Q41)
c. I don’t know (SKIP to Q41)
Q39 When identifying succession candidates, does your agency usually identify a specific person to fill a specific position (e.g., Jane Smith is being groomed to be the next director and nobody else is being considered)?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. I don’t know

Q40 When identifying succession candidates, does your agency usually identify a pool of persons who could either fill a specific position or a variety of positions in the agency?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. I don’t know

Q41 When filling supervisory or management positions, does your agency usually make people compete for the position?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. I don’t know

Q42 Does your agency have a written, summary profile of your workforce by the length of time to which they will be eligible for retirement?
   a. Yes
   b. No, but we have sufficient data systems that we could get it (SKIP to Q45)
   c. No, and I don’t believe we have sufficient data systems to get it (SKIP to Q45)
   d. I do not know (SKIP to Q45)

Q43 Would you be willing to share that profile with me (devoid of individual’s identifying information)?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not sure

Q44 Do you personally review this data at least an annually?
   a. Yes
   b. No
Q45 Does your agency have a written, summary profile of your workforce by the length of time they have been employed at your agency?
   a. Yes
   b. No, but we have sufficient data systems that we could get it (SKIP to Q48)
   c. No, and I don’t believe we have sufficient data systems to get it (SKIP to Q48)
   d. I do not know (SKIP to Q48)

Q46 Would you be willing to share that profile with me (devoid of individual’s identifying information)?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not sure

Q47 Do you personally review this data at least annually?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Demographics
Please remember that if you have a combined public health and human services agency, you are to count all employees.

Q48 What is the total full-time equivalents (FTE) workforce at your agency, including yourself (use currently funded positions whether filled or not)?

Q49 How many individuals currently work for your agency? (must be whole number)

Q50 How many agency employees retired in the last year? (must be whole number)

Q51 How many agency employees resigned (other than retirement) and/or were terminated in the last year? (must a be whole number)
Q52 What percent of your workforce would you estimate are eligible to retire within five years?
   a. Up to 5%
   b. 6% through 10%
   c. 11% through 25%
   d. 25% or more
   e. I do not have an educated guess

Q53 Does your agency have any unionized workers?
   a. Yes
   b. No (SKIP to Q55)

Q54 Are any of your agency’s supervisors/managers unionized?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Q55 In what month and year did you start your current position (include any time you may have been in an acting or interim role)? Month _____ Year _____

Q56 Were you a local public health director/health officer prior to your current position?
   a. Yes
   b. No (SKIP to Q59)

Q57 How many other local public health director/health officer jobs did you hold? ____

Q58 How many years in total have you been a local public health director/health officer? (round to the nearest year)?_____

Q59 Looking back, how prepared do you feel you were for your FIRST public health director/health officer job when you began that job?
   a. Very prepared
   b. Prepared
   c. Somewhat prepared
   d. Not prepared
Q60 How important do you feel succession planning is to the future of your agency?
   a. Very important  
   b. Important  
   c. Somewhat important  
   d. Not important  

Q61 What is your age (enter whole numbers only)? _____

Q62 How likely is it that you will retire or voluntarily leave your current agency sometime within the next five years?
   a. highly unlikely  
   b. unlikely  
   c. possible  
   d. likely  
   e. highly likely  

Q63 Indicate all degrees that you hold

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<th>Associates Degree</th>
<th>Bachelors Degree</th>
<th>Masters Degree</th>
<th>Doctoral Degree</th>
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Q64 How much full-time equivalent (FTE) is your position? (e.g. full-time = 1.0, ¾ time = 0.75) __.__
Q65 Have you, or anyone you know of on your staff, taken training specific to succession planning (e.g., workshop, course, etc.)?
   a. Yes
   b. No (SKIP to Q68)
   c. I don’t know (SKIP to Q68)

Q66 To the best of your knowledge, please specify the general job position of these people and their role in the agency. If you don’t know, enter “DK“. (text entry box)

Q67 To the best of your knowledge, what training did they take? If you don’t know, enter “DK“. (text entry box)

Q68 What type of governance structure is your agency?
   a. County department
   b. City/county agreement
   c. Health district (SKIP to Q70)

Q69 Does the CEO (e.g., county administrator/executive, county board/council) of your organization discuss the importance of succession planning and/or provide leadership for succession planning.
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. No sure

Q70 What type of organization is your agency?
   a. A “single department” public health agency
   b. A “combined department” of public health, human services, and/or other functions.

Q71 What else, if anything, do you want this research project to know about your agency’s succession planning work? (text entry box)

Q72 If you would like a summary of my research results sent to you, indicate either an e-mail address or physical mailing address to which you would like me to send it. (text entry box)
If you answered the survey questions, you are done. Please click the button on the bottom of the page at this time.
If you are declining to complete the survey, please answer the following question and then click done.
Thank you for your participation in this research project. You have now completed the survey.

**Disagree Button Question**
Q73. If you would be willing to share with me why you do not wish to participate in this study, it will help me identify any bias that I may have to account for in my analysis. Please enter in the text box your reason(s) for not participating. If you don’t wish to share that information, click the “done” button at the bottom of the page. Thank you.
APPENDIX F: LPHA INVITATION TO BECOME CASE AGENCY ORGANIZATION AND INVITE TO POTENTIAL INTERVIEWEES

Standard script used when calling the top LPHOs to invite his/her participation in the case agency portion of this research.

Hello (name of top LPHO), this is John Wiesman calling.

A few weeks ago, you participated in a web-administered survey on succession planning for my doctoral program. I am very grateful for your participation in that survey.

Today I am calling because I have a second, and last, component to my dissertation project on succession planning. This component will examine more deeply how local public health agencies are implementing succession planning, the barriers and facilitators to implementing it, the lessons learned, and what system and policy supports are needed to be successful.

For this part of my study, I am looking to have two to three health departments participate as case agency organizations and I am hopeful that you will consider participating. Your agency was selected for inclusion because your agency has a more comprehensive succession planning program than most others in Washington State.

Participation in this study would include my coming to your department for a day or two. I would want to:
  • interview you and up to four others, and
  • collect documents your organization uses in succession planning.

Conducting case agency research allows us to better understand the nuances of succession planning and how it occurs in local public health agencies. This is important because much of the research to date has been conducted with organizations much larger than our agencies and in the for profit sector.

The time commitment from your organization would be some record gathering time in advance of my visit, one to two days of my on site visit, and perhaps some follow-up phone calls and/or e-mails.

Is there anything else you would need to know in order to make a decision on whether or not to participate? (If so, answer his/her questions).

Would you be willing to serve as one of my case agency sites? (Document answer).

Standard script that I will use when calling referred individuals to invite their participation in the case agency portion of this research.

Hello (insert name), this is John Wiesman calling.
I am the director of health at Clark County Public Health and I am calling because I am also a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill and I am conducting a research project that involves local public health agencies. You were referred to me by (insert name). Specifically, I want to tell you about the research project I am working on and see if you might be interested in participating. Is that OK with you?

If no, thank him/her for his/her time.

If yes, thank him/her for his/her time. It will take me about 5 to 10 minutes to talk about this. Do you have the time for us to do that now?

If no, ask when would be a good time to talk.
If yes, continue.

The purpose of my research study is to understand the systems and procedures local public health agencies in Washington State are implementing to identify, develop, and retain high performing-high potential individuals for future management and leadership roles and how high performing-high potentials are placed into those roles. This is generally referred to as succession planning.

You are being invited to participate in this research project because you are (see the checked item):

_____ The lead for your agency’s succession planning program/activities
_____ One of the champions for your agency’s succession planning program/activities as identified by either the agency director or the lead person for your agency’s succession planning activities
_____ You are someone participating in the succession planning program/activities.

If you participate, the study involves an interview/dialogue with me and is anticipated to last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. I am scheduled to come to your department on (insert dates). Your responses will be confidential. The survey questions will be about your agency’s succession planning activities and your relationship to succession planning.

Your participation would be completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time or choose not to answer any question(s). You may also choose not to participate. You will not be penalized if you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from participating in this study at any time.

Your interview would be recorded, if you give permission for that. Those recordings will be transcribed word for word. The transcribed document will be sent to you within a week or two of your interview for you to correct any inaccuracies. Electronic recordings and written transcriptions will be destroyed two years after the study is completed.

Information that you provide will be released only as group summaries and any quotes used will not be connected to you personally or in any manner that would allow someone to identify them as coming from you.
This research has been reviewed and approved according to the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures for research involving human subjects.

Let me stop here and see if you have any questions at this time?

Answer any questions. When all questions are asked and answered, do you think you would like to participate?

If no, ask if he/she would be willing to let me know why so I can understand why people don’t want to participate. If he/she gives me an answer, document that and that him/her for his/her time. If he/she does not wish to answer the question, thank him/her for his/her time and end the call.

If he/she is interested, ask if there is an e-mail or U.S. mail address that I could send a consent form. Let him/her know that we would go over the consent form in person when I am at the department. Then schedule a time for the interview. Let the person know that if he/she changes his/her mind about participating before my on-site visit, to please call me at 360.921.2453 or e-mail me at Wiesman@live.unc.edu in advance.

Double check to see if there are any outstanding questions. If so, answer them. If not, thank his/her for his/her time and let them know that I will be sending the consent form.
APPENDIX G: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Adult Participants

Consent Form Version Date: ______________
IRB Study # [IRB NO WILL BE INSERTED]
Title of Study: Succession planning and management practice in Washington State local public health agencies: The current situation and recommendations for better practice
Principal Investigator: John Wiesman
Principal Investigator Department: Health Policy and Management
Principal Investigator Phone number: 360.921.2453
Principal Investigator E-mail Address: wiesman@live.unc.edu
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Edward Baker
Faculty Advisor Contact Information: 919.357.7213 or elbaker@email.unc.edu

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this research study is to understand the systems and procedures local public health agencies in Washington State are implementing to identify, develop, and retain high performing-high potential individuals for future management and leadership roles and how high performing-high potentials are placed into those roles. This is generally referred to as succession planning.

You are being asked to be in the study because you are (see the checked item):

_____ The agency director
_____ The lead for your agency's succession planning program/activities
_____ One of the champions for your agency's succession planning program/activities as identified by either the agency director or the lead person for your agency's succession planning activities
_____ You are someone participating in the succession planning program/activities as identified by either the agency director or the lead person for your agency's succession planning activities.

Are there any reasons you should not be in this study?
You should not be in this study if you do not fit into one of the categories above.

How many people will take part in this study?
A total of approximately 15 people at up to three local public health agencies will take part in this part of the study, including up to 5 people from this agency.

**How long will your part in this study last?**
Your part in this study will take approximately two hours. One hour will be an interview today and another hour will be the time for you to make any corrections to the transcript or notes of your interview.

**What will happen if you take part in the study?**
The study involves a one-time interview/dialogue with the principal investigator and is anticipated to last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The interview questions will be about your agency’s succession planning activities and your relationship to succession planning.

Approximately one to two weeks after your interview, you will receive a copy of the transcript or the interview notes for you to correct any inaccuracies and return to the principal investigator. It is expected that editing this may take up to one hour of your time.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time or choose not to answer any question(s). You may also choose not to participate. You will not be penalized if you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from participating in this study at any time.

**What are the possible benefits from being in this study?**
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. There is little chance you will benefit from being in this research study.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?**
There are no known risks to your participation in this study. There may be uncommon or previously unknown risks. You should report any problems to the researcher.

**How will your privacy be protected?**
We will do our best to keep your information confidential. All data will be stored in a password protected electronic format. A code will be used to identify your interview data. The file linking your code with your name will be stored in a separately password protected file only accessible to the principal investigator.

If you give your permission, your interview will be audio recorded on two devices, in case one should fail. If you give permission, you may request to stop the recordings at any time. Your interview will be transcribed word for word. Electronic recordings will be destroyed within one month of receiving your edited transcript. If you do not give permission for your interview to be audio recorded, written notes will be taken during the interview. Those notes will be transcribed and sent to you to correct any inaccuracies.

Check the line that best matches your choice:

_____ OK to record me during the study

_____ Not OK to record me during the study

Information that you provide in your interview will be released only as group summaries and any quotes used will not be connected to you personally or written in any manner that would allow someone to identify them as coming from you.

Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study and a pseudonym will be used for your health department. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University or government agencies for purposes...
such as quality control or safety.

**What if you want to stop before your part in the study is complete?**
You can withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty.

**Will you receive anything for being in this study?**
You will not receive anything for taking part in this study.

**Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**
It will not cost you anything to be in this study.

**What if you have questions about this study?**
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions about the study, complaints, concerns, or if a research-related injury occurs, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at 919.966.3113 or by e-mail to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

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**Participant’s Agreement:**
I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

____________________________________________________
Signature of Research Participant

____________________________________________________
Printed Name of Research Participant

Date
APPENDIX H: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below are the two scripts for the semi-structured interviews.

Script #1 - To be used with:
- department director,
- primary department person responsible for leading SP&M in the agency, and
- departmental champions for SP&M.

Q = Question
P = Possible Probe questions
F/U = Follow-up question

AFTER CONSENT IS OBTAINED

Welcome
Hi (insert name), I’m John Wiesman. Thanks so much for making time to meet with me today. (Get acquainted conversation as appropriate to the situation and setting.)

Introduction
The purpose of our interview today is for me to learn how your health agency plans and prepares its staff for future management and leadership positions. In management jargon, we call this succession planning. I am studying succession planning efforts at three local public health agencies in Washington State as part of my doctoral program at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. I plan to publish the research findings so that public health agencies can do a better job in supporting and preparing our future managers and leaders.

As a reminder, our interview should take about 45 to 60 minutes. The interview will be completely confidential. Information that you provide will be released only as group summaries and any quotes used will not be connected to you personally or in any manner that would allow someone to identify them as coming from you.

Q: Before we start the interview, do you have any questions about the research study or the interview?

If the person indicated that I may record the interview then, I will start the recorder now. I am using two recorders just in case one fails. I will also be taking handwritten notes as we go and will summarize our conversation at the end to make sure I have captured and understood your main points.

Opening Definitions
Throughout the interview, I will use two important terms that I have on an index card for you. The first is succession planning. When I use that term, I will use it to mean the systems and
procedures used to identify, develop, and retain high performing-high potential individuals for future management and leadership roles and how they are placed into those roles. This could mean developing field staff for their first supervisory job all the way up to preparing people for the top job in your agency.

The second term is **high performing-high potential individuals**. When I use that term, I will use it to mean persons who are performing very successfully in their current role and for whom the organization deems as having strong potential for promoting within the organization.

Do you have any questions about these two terms?

**Opening Background Question**

Q: How long have you been with (insert name of the LPHA) and what involvement do or did you have with succession planning here?

P: As the **director**, what is your primary role with succession planning? Do you informally or formally communicate with staff about succession planning, and if you do, how do you do that?

P: As (the **lead for SP&M activities or a champion for SP&M**), how did you get involved? What is your role? How do you divide up the responsibilities and work? What role does the director take in this effort?

**Overview of Succession Planning**

Q: Tell me about your department’s succession planning efforts?

P: Why did the department start the work? Was there a champion for the effort? If so, who? When did the department start the work?

**NOTE:** If the following questions have been answered already, I may go to probe questions or move to the next section.

**Identification of High performers - high potential individuals**

Q: Does your agency identify high performers - high potential individuals for supervisory, management, or leadership positions? If so, how does it do that?

P: Who identifies these people? Is there any screening/acceptance process? Do they go through any assessment of their skills, either to “get into” the high potential pool or to identify areas they need to develop?

**Staff Development – Line Staff**

Q: What specific things, if any, does your agency do to help front line staff become prepared for supervisory jobs?

P: Does the department have anything like career development plans, classes or training programs, mentoring programs, out of class job assignments, or opportunities to lead projects?

Q: How long have these been in place?

Q: What was the process to put these things in place?

Q: Have you personally participated in any of these?

If Yes:
Q: Which things have you participated in? Were they useful/effective? Why or why not?

Staff Development – Supervisor/Management Staff
Q: What specific things, if any, does your department do to help staff already in supervisory, management, or leadership positions move into a higher-level job?
P: Does the department have anything like a training program, mentoring programs, hired coaches, or special projects or teams? Please describe them.

Q: How long have these been in place?
Q: What was the process to put these things in place?
Q: Have you personally participated in any of these?
If Yes:
Q: Which things have you participated in? Were they useful/effective? Why or why not?

Department Director
Q: If someone wanted to become the director of this department, how would he or she go about making that happen here?

Filling Vacancies
Q: How does staff become aware of job openings within your department?
Q: When there is a job opening, is there anything your department does to support internal candidates applying for and be successful in competing for the job? If so, please describe.
P: Does your department make specific outreach efforts? If so, please describe.
P: Does the department encourage the development of personal portfolios of staff’s work; does it first post jobs internally? If so, please describe.

Lessons Learned
Q: What lessons have been learned in implementing the succession planning efforts here?
P: What advice would you give others who are looking to begin a succession planning effort?
P: Think about your department’s succession planning; what lessons have you learned from this?
Q: Were there any policies, labor union issues, or system issues you had to address in implementing succession planning here?
Q: Did you have to change any succession planning best practices to make them work in your department? If so, tell me about them?

Barriers
Q: What barriers, if any, do you see to implementing succession planning in your agency?
P: Have there been any turf or organizational barriers?
P: Have there been any policy or systems barriers?
P: Have there been any human or financial barriers?
Facilitators
Q: What things, if any, have helped the agency implement succession planning?
P: Have there been any organizational things that have made it easier?
P: Have there been any policy or systems issues that have made it easier?
P: Have there been any human or financial resources that have made it easier?

Other Important Info
Q: What else do you think I should know about succession planning here?

Closing
Q: While I need to transcribe my notes for all the details, here are the main themes I am taking away from our interview: (insert themes)? Are these correct? Am I missing anything or is there anything you want to add that we have not talked about?

Thank you for your time today. I will be sharing a high level summary with your director of my research findings when they are complete. If you want, I can also send that to you.

Q: Is that something you think you would want me to do?
Q: If Yes, where would you like me to e-mail or send that?

I will be sending you a copy of your transcript in about two weeks for you to review and make any corrections.

Q: Where would you like me to e-mail or send it?

END
Welcome
Hi (insert name), I’m John Wiesman. Thanks so much for making time to meet with me today. (Get acquainted conversation as appropriate to the situation and setting.)

Introduction
The purpose of our interview today is for me to learn how your health agency plans and prepares its staff for future management and leadership positions. In management jargon, we call this succession planning. I am studying succession planning efforts at (two or three?) local public health agencies in Washington State as part of my doctoral program at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. I plan to publish the research findings so that public health agencies can do a better job in supporting and preparing our future managers and leaders.

As a reminder, our interview should take about 45 to 60 minutes. The interview will be completely confidential. Information that you provide will be released only as group summaries and any quotes used will not be connected to you personally or in any manner that would allow someone to identify them as coming from you.

Q: Before we start the interview, do you have any questions about the research study or the interview?

If the person indicated that I may record the interview, I will start the recorder now. I am using two recorders just in case one fails. I will also be taking handwritten notes as we go and will summarize our conversation at the end to make sure I have captured and understood your main points.

Opening Definition
Throughout the interview, I will use two important terms that I have on an index card for you. The first is succession planning. When I use that term, I will use it to mean the systems and procedures used to identify, develop, and retain high performing-high potential individuals for future management and leadership roles and how they are placed into those roles. This could mean developing field staff for their first supervisory job all the way up to preparing people for the top job in your agency.

The second term is high performing-high potential individuals. When I use that term, I will use it to mean persons who are performing very successfully in their current role and for whom the organization deems as having strong potential for promoting within the organization.

Do you have any questions about these two terms?

Opening Background Question
Q: How long have you been with (insert name of the LPHA) and what involvement do or did you have with succession planning here?

Q: What has been your experience with succession planning activities in your department?
P: Tell me about the activities have you participated in. Were they useful/effective? Why or why not?

NOTE: If the following questions have been answered already, I may go to probes questions or move to the next section.

Staff Development – Line Staff
Q: What specific things, if any, does your department do to help front line staff become prepared for supervisory jobs?
P: Does the department have anything like career development plans, classes or training programs, mentoring programs, out of class job assignments, or opportunities to lead projects?

Q: How did you personally become aware of these opportunities and how long have these been in place?

Q: Have you personally participated in any of these?
If Yes:
Q: Which things have you participated in? Were they useful/effective? Why or why not?
P: If you were in charge, what changes, if any, would you make?

Staff Development – Supervisor/Management Staff
Q: What specific things, if any, does your department do to help staff already in supervisory, management, or leadership positions move into a higher-level job?
P: Does the department have anything like a training program, mentoring programs, hired coaches, or special projects or teams?

Q: How did you personally become aware of these opportunities and how long have these been in place?

Q: Have you personally participated in any of these?
If Yes:
Q: Which things have you participated in? Were they useful/effective? Why or why not?
P: If you were in charge, what changes, if any, would you make?

Department Director
Q: If you or someone else wanted to become the director of this department, how would you go about making that happen here?

Filling Vacancies
Q: How do you become aware of job openings within your department?

Q: When there is a job opening, what things, if any, does your department do to support internal candidates applying for and being successful in competing for the job? Are they useful/effective? Why or why not?
P: Does your department make specific outreach efforts, does it encourage the
development of personal portfolios of your work, does it first post jobs internally?

Organizational Culture
Q: Who are, if anyone, champions for succession planning in your department?
F/U: Do any of the following people have a role—department director, HR director, your
manager, board of health, etc. (based upon that department’s organizational structure).

Overall Assessment
Q: If you were in charge of succession planning for your department, what, if any, changes
would you make that we have not already discussed?

Q: What things, if any, have been barriers to your participating in succession planning in your
department?
P: Have there been any turf or organizational barriers?
P: Have there been any policy or systems barriers?
P: Have there been any human or financial barriers?

Q: What things, if any, made it easier for your participation in succession planning in your
department?
P: Have there been any organizational things that have made it easier?
P: Have there been any policy or systems issues that have made it easier?
P: Have there been any human or financial resources that have made it easier?

Q: Is there anything else you think I should know about succession planning in your
department?

Closing
Q: While I need to transcribe my notes for all the details, here are the main themes I am
taking away from our interview: (insert themes)? Are these correct? Am I missing anything or is
there anything you want to add that we have not talked about?

Thank you for your time today. I will be sharing a high level summary with your director of my
research findings when they are complete. If you want, I can also send that to you.

Q: Is that something you think you would want me to do?
Q: If Yes, where would you like me to e-mail or send that?

I will be sending you a copy of your transcript in about two weeks for you to review and make
any corrections.
Q: Where would you like me to e-mail or send it?

END
The following excerpt was from my President’s Remarks entitled: From here to there: Creating our future delivered on July 12, 2012 at the NACCHO Annual 2012 conference in Los Angeles, CA. The conference theme was Navigating the Currents: Positioning Local Health Departments for the Future. The following excerpt was from a section in my speech where I spoke about 6 currents I believed we needed to navigate together to position ourselves for the future. The first 5 currents were: 1) Narrowing the divide between public health and medical care, 2) Rid ourselves from our mantra that, “once you have seen one health department, you have seen one health department,” 3) Ensuring we sustain our past successes and confront our emerging challenges, 4) Knowledge and skill development needed in our future workforce, and 5) Changing technology.

The sixth and final current we must navigate is the retirement of our baby boomers and the development of our management and leadership workforce. To do that, we urgently need to address succession planning in our organizations. If you have not done so yet, I urge all of you to go home and profile your workforce by age and years to retirement. Then consider who you have to replace those workers. And as you identify persons to replace those workers, ask who you will replace those replacements with. Quickly you will find that we need to be developing our future first line supervisors all the way up to the people who will replace us. We need to create a leadership pipeline of competent managers and leaders ready for the extremely challenging environments in which they will need to lead.
REFERENCES


