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- *Four networks of public, private, and not-for-profit organizations in DuPage County provide an excellent example of how government by networking can be used to fight poverty.*
- *The networks provide a spider web of dense and cohesive inter-organizational linkages that promote common public service goals in the provision of health and human services in the county.*
- *The DuPage networking model provides an effective alternative way to address and solve intractable health and human service problems on a regional, multi-county level.*
- *Such networking can also be applied to other regional functions and issues such as economic and community development, the environment, land use, and transportation.*

CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL STUDIES Northern Illinois University

issue: *Building Effective Network Governance in the Chicago Region*

Curtis Wood, Northern Illinois University

Editor's Note: This is the second in a two part series in *Policy Profiles* on the importance of networking in today's public management. Based on the author's study of DuPage County's use of networking to address health and human service problems, this *Profile* offers a model which can be used to mobilize and coordinate resources to attack other urban area problems as well. The first *Policy Profile* on this subject can be found on the web at http://www.cgsniu.org/portfolio/policy_profiles/index.html

The evolution of the use of networking in public management is more than a concept; it is a mode of operation already being used to good advantage. This second part of the Policy Profiles series offers a roadmap for building successful crosscutting networks across the seven-county Chicago region by drawing upon lessons learned from the intersectoral network governance model already being practiced in DuPage County, Illinois.

What is intersectoral networking?

Intersectoral networking refers to a problem-solving approach which blends together the resources of a variety of agencies—governments, not-for-profit agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGO's), for-profit corporations, and sometimes even other private groups – to accomplish public service objectives.¹ Because intersectoral networking involves the coordinated efforts of a cooperating group of public, not-for-profit, and private agencies, executives must redefine their core responsibilities from managing people and programs to coordinating resources from diverse sources in order to deliver public services.

How is intersectoral networking used in DuPage County?

Many examples of intersectoral networking could be cited, but none more important than the effort to use networking to improve the delivery of health and human services in DuPage County, Illinois.

The suburbanization of poverty in the Chicago region and the inaction or deadlock demonstrated by the state and federal governments has placed inordinate pressures on public institutions to provide comprehensive health and human services to an increasingly diverse and vulnerable population. In suburban DuPage County, the county government, non-profits, and for-profits have responded by creating

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illustration one DuPage County Medical and Human Service Networks

The four health and human service networks studied in the research upon which this paper is based are as follows:

- The network working to ensure access to medical care for all uninsured persons in the county. Access DuPage, Inc is the network administrative organization (NAO) responsible for facilitating the overall management of the network.
- The network coordinating access to mental health care in the county. The co-NAO's are Access DuPage, Inc. and the DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform (the Federation).
- The network promoting language access. The Federation serves as the NAO.
- The network coordinating services and care for the homeless. The DuPage County Community Services Department serves as the NAO.

four crosscutting health and human service delivery networks (See Illustration One above).

The organizations operating within the four networks constitute what has been called the “neural” network— a spider web of dense and cohesive inter-organizational linkages that promote common public service goals in the provision of health and human services in DuPage County.²

This research involving the four health and human service networks serving DuPage County found that intra-network and inter-network success can be achieved through 1) a federated network structure, 2) enlightened and transcendent leadership in each network, and 3) the overlap of services and organizations found in the heart of the neural network

How does structure affect networks?

Prior research has found that networks engaged in the provision of services are more likely to achieve success when the efforts of the collaborating agencies are coordinated by an established and recognized structure that balances the tensions inevitably arising between the network needs for centralization and decentralization, coordination and autonomy, and unity and diversity.³ Consistent with prior research, the DuPage study reveals that a federated structure used by the four DuPage County health and human service networks (called the *Mosaic Strategy*) permits sufficient integration through contacts between network partners and centralized coordination through the *Network Administrative Organization* (NAO). The NAOs provide the primordial glue that holds their respective networks together by serving as the convener, advocate, planner,

information provider, network broker, manager, and, in some instances, a direct service provider to clients.

There is also evidence that the Mosaic Strategy approach works effectively over time. In the medical access network— DuPage County's oldest and most established network—the relationships between the network partners, and between the NAO and the network partners, are more cohesive and integrated than those in the younger mental health and language access networks that are still filling gaps in service and developing network rules, norms, and strategic plans.

How does leadership impact network services?

This research has also found that intra and inter network success depends upon a critical mass of enlightened leaders. Enlightened leaders embody the attributes and characteristics found in Illustration Two on the next page.⁴

In addition, some enlightened leaders rise to the status of what might be called transcendent leaders. Transcendent leaders are distinct from enlightened leaders in that transcendent leaders are inordinately connected to the leaders and organizations in the other DuPage County health and human service networks as well as to networks outside the DuPage County neural network (See Endnote 2). The managers of the three NAOs identified a critical mass of 11 transcendent leaders from seven organizations.

illustrationtwo Attributes of an Enlightened Leader

1. Enlightened leaders act as *statespersons* by placing the interests and goals of the community and network above those of an organization when there is a tension between the goals of the organization and the network or community.
2. Enlightened leaders act as *champions* by being committed to achieving social justice and social reform.
3. Enlightened leaders act as *boundary spanners* by building relationships across organizations within the individual networks.
4. Enlightened leaders act as *transformational leaders* who are able to unite the network and community around a common vision, goals, and values through a strategic planning process.
5. Enlightened leaders have earned the respect and admiration of community leaders, other organizational leaders, staff, and clientele because they embody commitment and expertise.
6. As managers, enlightened leaders competently use activation, framing, mobilization, and synthesizing skills.⁵
7. Enlightened leaders possess internalized professional norms that encourage service excellence, coordination, and an overriding commitment to the community, network, and client.

What is the relationship between neural network effectiveness and overlapping networks?

Findings from the DuPage study support what other researchers have found: that individuals and organizations tied closely together in one successful network are more likely to become bound together in other networks.⁶ For instance, hospitals, which historically have been very competitive and avoided each other, realized (with the assistance of a few transcendent leaders) it was in their enlightened self-interest to work together to provide comprehensive access to medical care. The medical access

network incrementally and inextricably grew as more intersectoral partners were brought in who had the resources and capacity to help reduce the gap between supply and demand. The social capital and synergy generated between hospitals created the incentives and mutual trust for the hospitals to collaborate in the creation of the mental health access and the language access programs.

There are about 38 governmental, for-profit, and non-profit organizations that participate in at least three of the four health and human service delivery networks – in

what might be called the heart of the neural network (See Illustration Three on the next page). The network managers report that, within the heart of the neural network, dense patterns of contact occur between organizations, making it possible to deliver comprehensive and seamless health and human services.

Not surprisingly, the 11 transcendent leaders identified by the network managers work in organizations situated in the heart of the neural network. These transcendent leaders are connected to broader networks and thus are well positioned to address complex regional and state issues and challenges.

Can the DuPage networking model be used elsewhere?

The intersectoral network governance model practiced in DuPage County has proven to be effective in addressing complex interconnected problems, and as such can serve as “best practices” for other counties wanting to create or improve their own health and human services programs.

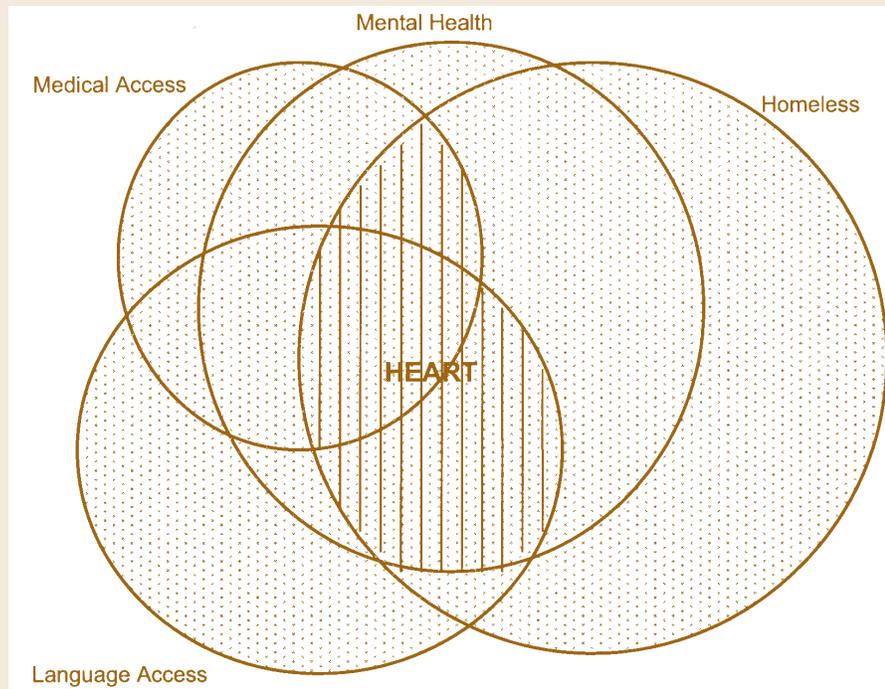
The networking model also provides much promise as a means for addressing and solving intractable health and human services on a regional, multi-county level because these issues do not respect geo-political borders.

How would a regional networking model work?

A bottom-up approach to regional governance through intersectoral networking could include a couple of possibilities.

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illustrationthree Human and Health Service Neural Network



First, the DuPage County networks could be expanded to include clients and network partners in contiguous or nearby counties which are not presently members in a network. For example, the Access DuPage medical access program could be expanded to include network partners and clients in an adjacent or nearby county that does not have but would like to join a medical access program for the uninsured.

Second, the DuPage County network partners and network administrative organizations could network with existing health and human service delivery networks in

the seven county Chicago region. Such interaction would create a spider web of regional networks that could share information, share resources (financial, managerial, technical, and capital), or even consolidate certain program functions. In fact, Access DuPage, Inc. has already engaged in inter-county collaboration with Cook County Access to Care, a non-profit group that manages and operates a low-cost medical program for the uninsured, by sharing a computer database system and a network consultant.

Intersectoral networking across the seven-county Chicago region could eventually

build sufficient social capital and capacity to make it possible for stakeholders to create a regional strategic plan that addresses and solves complex regional health and human service challenges. Under such conditions, a regional council (including an executive director and staff as well as the council) would be necessary to facilitate the implementation of the regional strategic plan.⁷

Can the networking process work for other regional problems?

Networking can be applied to other regional functions and issues as well, such as economic and community development, the environment, land use, and transportation. To achieve success with other issues, there needs to be a critical mass of organizations and enlightened transcendental leaders situated in the heart of the potential regional network working in that issue area.

There is already a precedent for combined bottom-up and top-down regional governance approach, in Chicago land (See Illustration Four on the next page). In 2005 the Illinois State legislature integrated transportation and land use planning in Illinois when it approved the Regional Planning Act to create the Regional Planning Board (RPB)—now known as the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP). According to Randy Blankenhorn, the Executive Director of CMAP, local elected officials, state legislators, business, civic, and community organizations came together to prepare and support the Regional Planning Act because there was a perception the status quo had ceased to work.⁸ In the future, “the [CMAP] Board is expected provide a clear

illustrationfour A Regional Governance Model in the Chicago Area

The Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS), the regional agency responsible for transportation planning, and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, the agency responsible for regional land-use planning, were consolidated, thus integrating regional land use and transportation planning. The CMAP Board is comprised of 15 members appointed by the region's mayors and county board chairs (five members for the five collar counties, five members for suburban Cook County, and five members for the City of Chicago, plus two non-voting members representing the two agencies that have been merged.

and unified vision for the region's future" by developing a comprehensive framework for the region's future through long-range regional plans and strategies, providing high-quality information and analysis through coordinated technical assistance to facilitate regional decision making, and building consensus to identify and advocate for regional priorities.¹⁰

In July 2006, the CMAP Board approved a plan and budget that would enable the agency to serve as the comprehensive regional planning agency responsible for preserving and enhancing the quality of life in the region. As the regional planning agency, it will become involved in crosscutting issues pertaining to not only land use and transportation issues, but also economic and community development, the environment, housing, human services, and regional information. As such, CMAP should be well positioned to serve as the NAO for the regional neural network(s).

Can a regional approach work?

Yes. CMAP and the region's stakeholders can successfully develop an integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative regional strategic plan, including an action plan, and expected performance outcomes, for

each of the functions under its purview if the following strategic planning process can be followed:

- CMAP identifies and appoints transcendent and enlightened leaders across the seven-county region in each functional area who will serve on the task force charged with developing the vision and strategic plan.
- CMAP helps the task forces create the strategic plans by using in-house experts in each functional area, or employ consultants when needed.
- CMAP and the task forces must draw upon the input from all stakeholders (including prospective service delivery partners and clients) using focus groups, surveys, public hearings, and e-government access.
- The CMAP Board approves the vision and strategic plans.
- The vision and strategic plans are disseminated to and shared with all stakeholders, including state legislators and the governor.

Once these comprehensive regional strategic plans are in place, the region will have the capacity to address and solve the complex crosscutting health and human, environmental, physical, and economic challenges facing the Chicago region.

What is the role of intersectoral networking in this process?

Intersectoral networking is essential if the process is to achieve optimal success.

Successful implementation of the action plans in each functional area will be possible through a federated network governance structure that involves dense contacts between the organizations in the network *and* a close partnership between the network organizations and CMAP, the NAO.

CMAP can increase both its success and the networks' success by:

- Utilizing the skills, knowledge, and resources of the network partners and ensuring all interests are included;
- Establishing the roles, rules and culture of the networks;
- Developing and maintaining the commitment and cooperation for network processes from participants and stakeholders; and
- Working through the network partners and stakeholders to implement the strategic plans and evaluate the performance of the networks.

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Endnotes

¹This *Policy Profile* was inspired by three books that collectively won the 2005 Brownlow Award given annually by the National Academy of Public Administration to the best book published in the previous year in the field of public policy and administration. The 2005 winning books were: Stephen Goldsmith and William D. Eggers, *Governing by Network: The New Shape of the Public Sector* (The Brookings Institution, 2004); Donald F. Kettl, *System Under Stress: Homeland Security and American Politics* (CQ Press, 2004); and Lawrence M. Mead, *Government Matters: Welfare Reform in Wisconsin* (Princeton University Press, 2004).

²“Neural” is the adjective used in the County’s Medical Action Plan to describe the intersecting connections between health and human services organizations in DuPage County.

³Provan, Keith G. 1983. “The Federation as an Interorganizational Linkage Network.” *Academy of Management Review*. 8: 79-89.

⁴The concept of an “enlightened leader” was put forth by Dick Endress, the President of Access DuPage, Inc. and Candace King, the executive director of the Federation.

⁵In “Managing Networks: Propositions on What Managers Do and Why They Do It” (*Public Administration Review*, 62, no. 5: 599-621), Michael McGuire describes manager activation skills as assessing the skills, knowledge, and resources of the network partners and ensuring all interests are included; framing skills as establishing the roles, rules and culture of the network; mobilizing skills as developing and maintaining the commitment and cooperation for network processes from participants and stakeholders; and synthesizing skills as working through the network partners and stakeholders to implement the strategic plan and evaluate the performance of the network.

⁶Steven Brent Lackey, David Freshwater, and Anil Rupasingha, “Factors Influencing Local Government Cooperation in Rural Areas: Evidence from the Tennessee Valley,” *Economic Development Quarterly*, 16 (2): 138-154, 2002.

⁷Richard Endress, President of Access DuPage, Inc. has proposed the creation of a DuPage County Access Council with a similar mission at the county level.

⁸Randy Blankenhorn, American Planning Association meeting, November 7, 2006.

⁹Regional Planning Board news release, April 12, 2006.

¹⁰“CMAP Strategic Report on Visioning, Governance, and Funding.” September, 2006.

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About the Author

DR. CURTIS WOOD earned an MPA degree in 1980 and a doctoral degree from the University of Kansas in 2004. He has 20 years experience in municipal government. He teaches public management, ethics, and regional governance courses in the MPA program at Northern Illinois University.

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Director:
Robert E. Gleeson, Ph.D.

Editor:
James M. Banovetz, Ph.D.

For more information contact:
Center for Governmental Studies
815-753-1907
fax 815-753-2305
www.cgsniu.org

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