Cultivating an Ecosystem: A Qualitative Exploration of Sustainability in Long-Standing Community-Based Participatory Research Partnerships

P. Paul Chandanabhumma, PhD, MPH, ORCID 0000-0002-3697-2456, Adena Gabrysiak, MPH, MURP, ORCID 0000-0002-3697-2456, Barbara L. Brush, PhD, ORCID 0000-0003-1273-6341, Chris M. Coombe, PhD, MPH, ORCID 0000-0002-3697-2456, Eugenia Eng, DrPH, ORCID 0000-0001-8243-1944, Megan Jensen, MPH, ORCID 0000-0002-3697-2456, Laurie Lachance, PhD, MPH, ORCID 0000-0002-3697-2456, Peggy Shepard, BA, ORCID 0000-0002-1969-0799, Nina B. Wallerstein, DrPH, MPH, ORCID 0000-0002-1969-0799, and Barbara A. Israel, DrPh, MPH

What Is the Purpose of this Study/Review?

• To explore the definition of sustainability from the viewpoints of academic and community experts of long-standing community-based participatory research (CBPR) partnerships.

• To identify practices that promote sustainability from the viewpoints of academic and community experts of long-standing CBPR partnerships.

What Is the Problem?

• Sustainability is important to the long-standing success of CBPR partnerships.

• The definition of sustainability and the practices that promote sustainability in long-standing (6 years or longer) CBPR partnerships are unclear.

What Are the Findings?

• The key defining aspects of sustainability include distinguishing between sustaining the work of the partnership and ongoing relationships among partners, working towards a common goal over time, and enduring changes that impact the partnership.

• Several strengthening and capacity building practices at multiple levels of the partnership could promote the sustainability of partnership’s work and of ongoing relationships among partners.

Who Should Care Most?

• Academic and community members who seek to promote the sustainability and long-standing success of CBPR partnerships.

Recommendations for Action

• Partners should discuss and agree upon what sustainability means to them and what practices help promote sustainability throughout different stages of each partnership.

• Evaluating and applying practices that help sustain the partnership’s activities and relationships could promote the long-standing success of CBPR partnerships.