

## REPORT

# Hospitals and schools as hubs for building health communities

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Practitioners and policymakers have become increasingly aware in recent years that achieving good health and economic vitality in neighborhoods requires the close collaboration of a variety of sectors, including housing, education and social services. But collaboration does not occur in a vacuum; institutions often provide a crucial focus for collaboration and are active agents—or “hubs”—in the process.

In “[Hospitals and schools as hubs for building healthy communities \(PDF\)](#),” Stuart Butler and Carmen Diaz feature two such institutions that can play a major role in helping to enhance health and long-term economic mobility in a community: hospitals and schools. They have enormous potential as hubs, but also face obstacles and challenges associated with such things as data sharing, budget and payment issues, and inflexible business plans.

This report, produced with advice from an advisory group of researchers, policy experts, and practitioners in health and education, recommends policy steps and other actions that would create an improved environment in which hospitals and schools could play a much greater role as hubs in communities. These include:

- Improving the collection, use, and sharing of data among sectors to facilitate partnerships.
- Making greater use of intermediaries.
- Widening the skill sets of school and hospital leaders and key staff.
- Making use of the community obligations of nonprofit hospitals and financial institutions, as well as the community focus of the new education statute, to help launch creative, coordinated partnerships.
- Making greater use of waivers, demonstrations, and other steps to foster hubs and other partnerships.
- Taking steps to facilitate the braiding and blending of public and private resources from multiple sectors and sources.

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*Editor’s note: [This piece originally appeared in Inside Sources.](#)*