

# Sustainability of Evidence-based Programs Findings from the 2010 PCCD Web Survey



EPISCenter Research Brief

July, 2011

## The State of the Science on Sustainability

The overwhelming majority of prevention efforts in the U.S. are funded by time-limited grants making sustainability a focus for researchers, policy makers and communities. Unless practitioners are able to sustain these programs beyond initial seed funding, they are unlikely to achieve their ultimate goal of broad public health impact. Although limited, sustainability research suggests that organizational capacity and support, characteristics of the implementers or program being implemented, and sustainability planning may be key factors in predicting whether an evidence-based program (EBP) will be sustained.

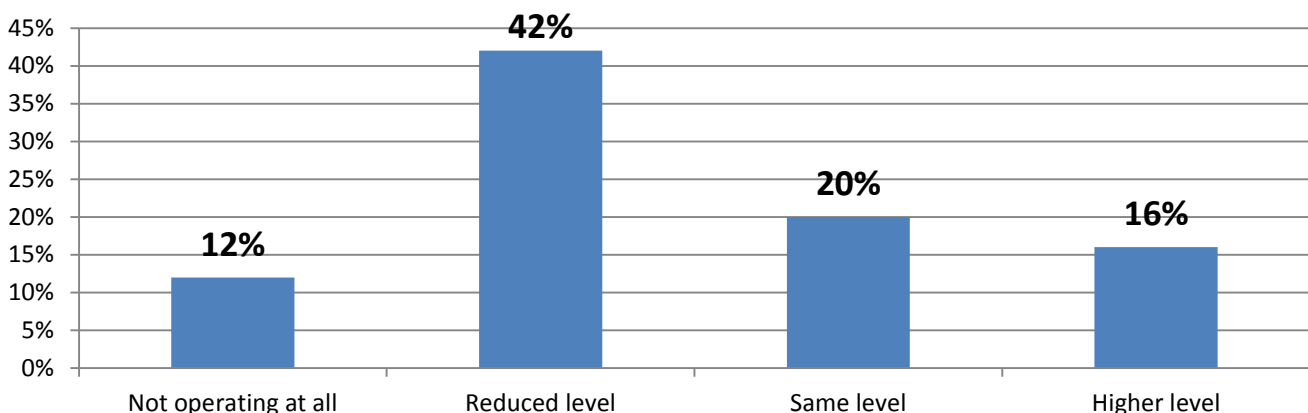
Despite growing knowledge in this area, several significant gaps remain. First, much of the literature on sustainability is theoretical rather than empirical. Those empirical studies that do exist focus on predicting the sustainability of one particular program, often a school-based program.

To address this knowledge gap the EPISCenter used data from the 2010 PCCD Annual Web-based Survey of past and present PCCD-funded EBP grantees to explore sustainability within the context of PA's EBP Initiative, an excellent test-bed for examining translational issues in a large-scale real-world context.

## What Does the 2010 Web-based Survey Tell Us?

- The majority (76%) of programs initially funded by PCCD are still operating after grant end, but only about half are operating at the same or a higher level than the last year of their grant

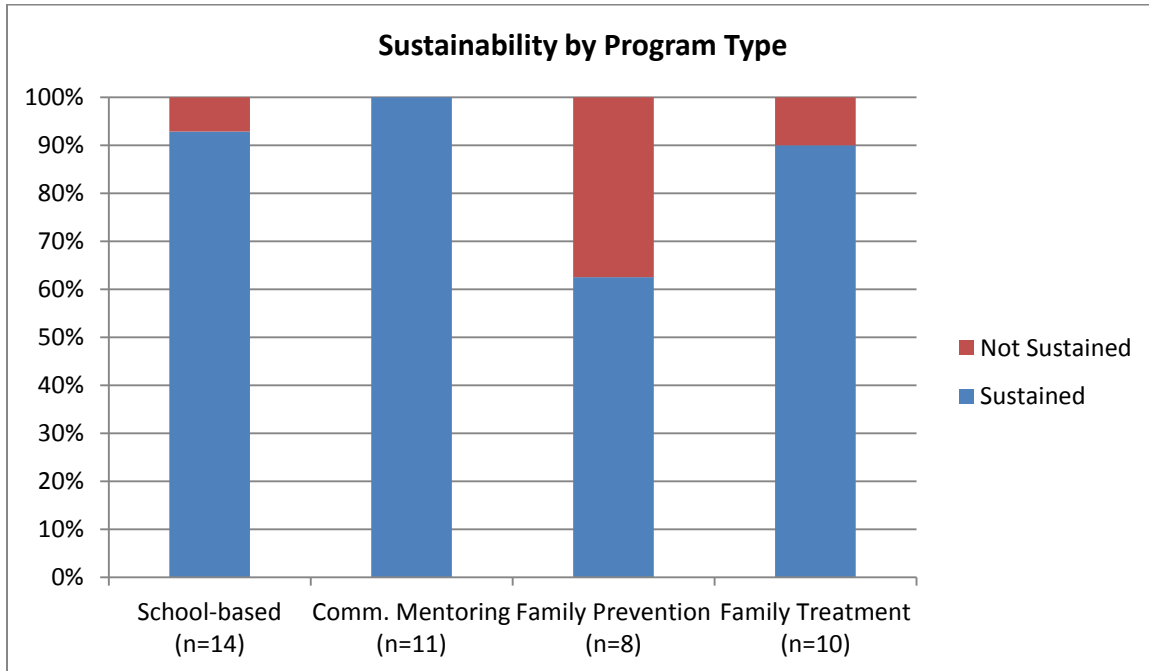
**Are EBPs in Pennsylvania able to sustain after PCCD funding? (N = 43)**



*This EPISCenter Research Brief focuses on program sustainability. It answers the following questions:*

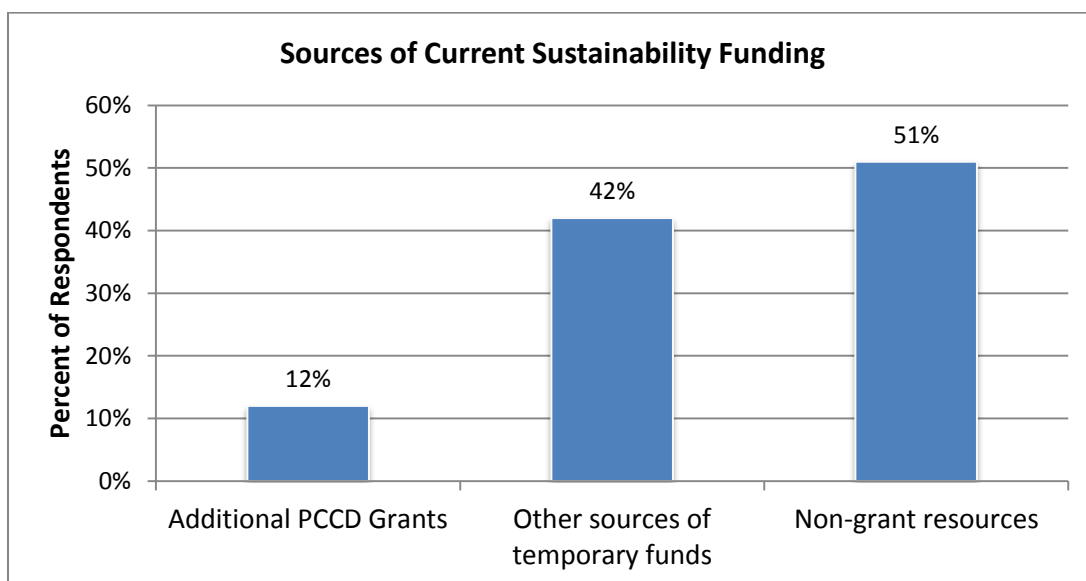
- 1) *Are programs able to sustain functioning after the end of their grant, and at what level?*
- 2) *How are programs sustained?*
- 3) *What factors predict sustainability?*
- 4) *What sustainability resources are available to communities?*

- Family prevention programs had the most difficulty sustaining their program beyond PCCD funding



***How are programs being sustained?***

- About half of all programs have attained non-grant (e.g., school or agency budget line-item) resources to maintain sustainability



### ***What factors predict sustainability?***

According to data collected from grantees from 2005-2009, there are specific factors that distinguish those programs that are able to sustain functioning (2 years or more beyond PCCD funding) vs. those that are not. These factors include:

- ***Organizational Capacity & Support:*** programs that are connected to a high functioning community coalition and programs that present program outcome data to a large number of key community stakeholders are more likely to be sustained.
- ***Program Fit:*** programs that cite problems with participant recruitment, participant engagement, lack of administrator support, and requests for changes from the program participants as reasons for making changes to the program are less likely to be sustained.
- ***Communication with Developer/Trainer:*** programs with implementers who communicate more frequently with the trainer/program developer and programs with implementers who have a greater knowledge of the program's logic model are more likely to be sustained.
- ***Sustainability Planning:*** programs that actively plan for garnering financial support and integrating the program into existing organizations are more likely to be sustained.

### ***Communities are planning for sustainability, but could be doing more.***

- The majority (63%) of programs had developed/revised a sustainability plan in the past year; 27% had developed a sustainability plan but had not revised it in the past year
- Most communities have had a ***discussion with a firm plan or an executed plan*** to develop a fiscal plan outlining the funds needed to sustain, to identify key stakeholders who might support the program, and to present outcome data to potential stakeholders
- However, most had ***limited or no discussion*** about turning ownership of the program to the community, schools or other organization

### **What Does this Mean for Pennsylvania Communities?**

- The majority of programs appear to have some success in achieving sustainability following the end of their PCCD grant and anticipate the program will continue in the future
- However, further support and guidance may be needed in order to increase levels of functioning
- The vast majority of programs have developed a sustainability plan, including a plan to outline the funds needed to sustain the program, to identify key stakeholders who might support the program, and to present outcome data to potential stakeholders, but fewer have discussed turning ownership of the program over to the community, schools or other organizations as a sustainability strategy

## What Sustainability Resources are Available for Pennsylvania Communities?

Programs seeking to develop sustainability plans for their evidenced-based prevention programs can benefit from resource materials created by the EPISCenter. In May 2011 the EPISCenter hosted a free workshop entitled, "Planning Sustainability: Impact Beyond Grant Funding." The presentations and resources from this training are summarized below and can be accessed at:

<http://episcenter.psu.edu/PSIBGF>

- **Developing a Sustainability Plan:** describes research which shows the importance of having a plan and the impact it has on longevity, the key components that should make up the plan and how to choose the right people to bring to the table.
- **Making a Case for Funding:** guides you in sharing with potential funders the impacts your program has on their communities and why it's so important they be sustained. This section also explains how you can effectively share your data to show the strength of your organization, fiscal responsibility and quality of implementation.
- **Branding and Marketing:** guides you through using the principals of social marketing to target your various audiences to successfully gain their support.
- In addition to these presentations you will find many helpful templates including a sample implementation plan, sustainability plan, and worksheets to guide your efforts. Also available is a document focused on evidence-based prevention with links to many data, funding and prevention resources.

This Research Brief summarizes findings from PCCD's Annual Web-based Survey, which since 2005 has collected data from 166 programs (98% of all PCCD-funded EBPs) funded through PCCD's Evidence-based Programs Initiative.

Guided by a multi-agency steering committee, PA's Evidence-based Programs Initiative has: 1) shaped a strategy informed by science to impact delinquency, violence, and youth substance use, and 2) through grants to local communities, purposefully invested in evidence-based (i.e., proven effective) programs with the ultimate goal of improving public health and well-being of PA youth, families, and communities.

If you are interested in learning about future workshops, resources, and trainings by the EPISCenter:

- Sign-up for our listserv by sending a message to [L-EPIS-Center-General-subscribe-request@lists.psu.edu](mailto:L-EPIS-Center-General-subscribe-request@lists.psu.edu). No subject or message text is required.
- Like us on [Facebook](#)
- Follow us on [Twitter](#)
- Visit our website at [www.episcenter.psu.edu](http://www.episcenter.psu.edu)

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