

Asthma's Future In Utah: How Genomics Will Play a Role

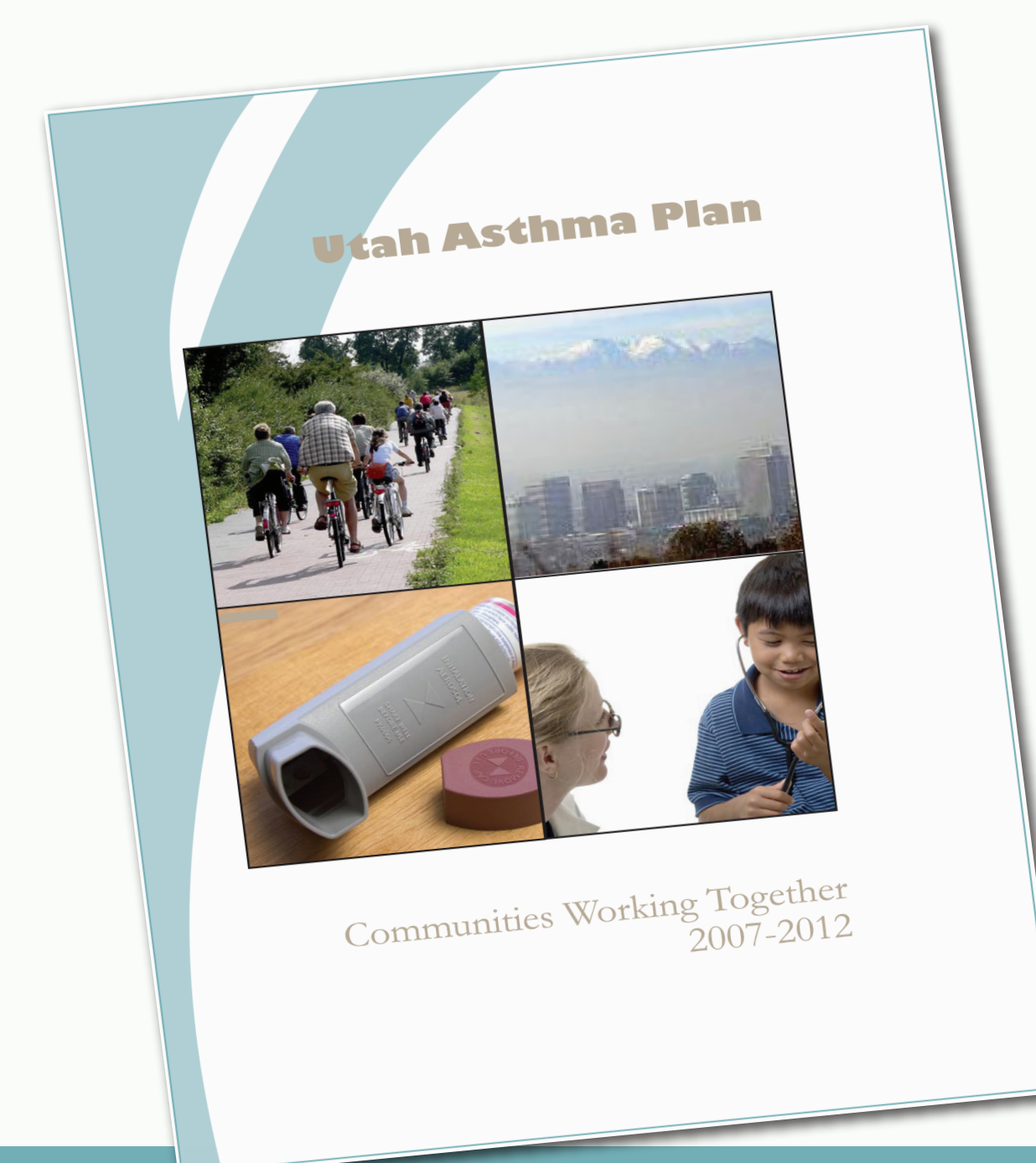
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Background

The Utah Department of Health Asthma and Chronic Disease Genomics Programs have begun to explore how genomics can be used to better understand and treat asthma. The first Utah Asthma Plan, released in September 2003, included one genomics-related objective. However, the Utah Asthma Task Force, a group of stakeholders charged with implementing the plan, was unsure how to proceed in this area.

Methods

- Workshops were held in April 2006 and June 2007.
- Speakers included representatives from the pharmaceutical industry, clinical genetics, academia, and the Utah State Legislature.
- Participants were formed into groups of 8-10 individuals and given three questions to discuss after each presentation.
- Facilitators recorded ideas that were then used in a brainstorming session.



Goals

1. Bring together asthma and genomics stakeholders
2. Educate stakeholders on genomics
3. Develop a list of strategies for using genomics in asthma management.

Focus Areas

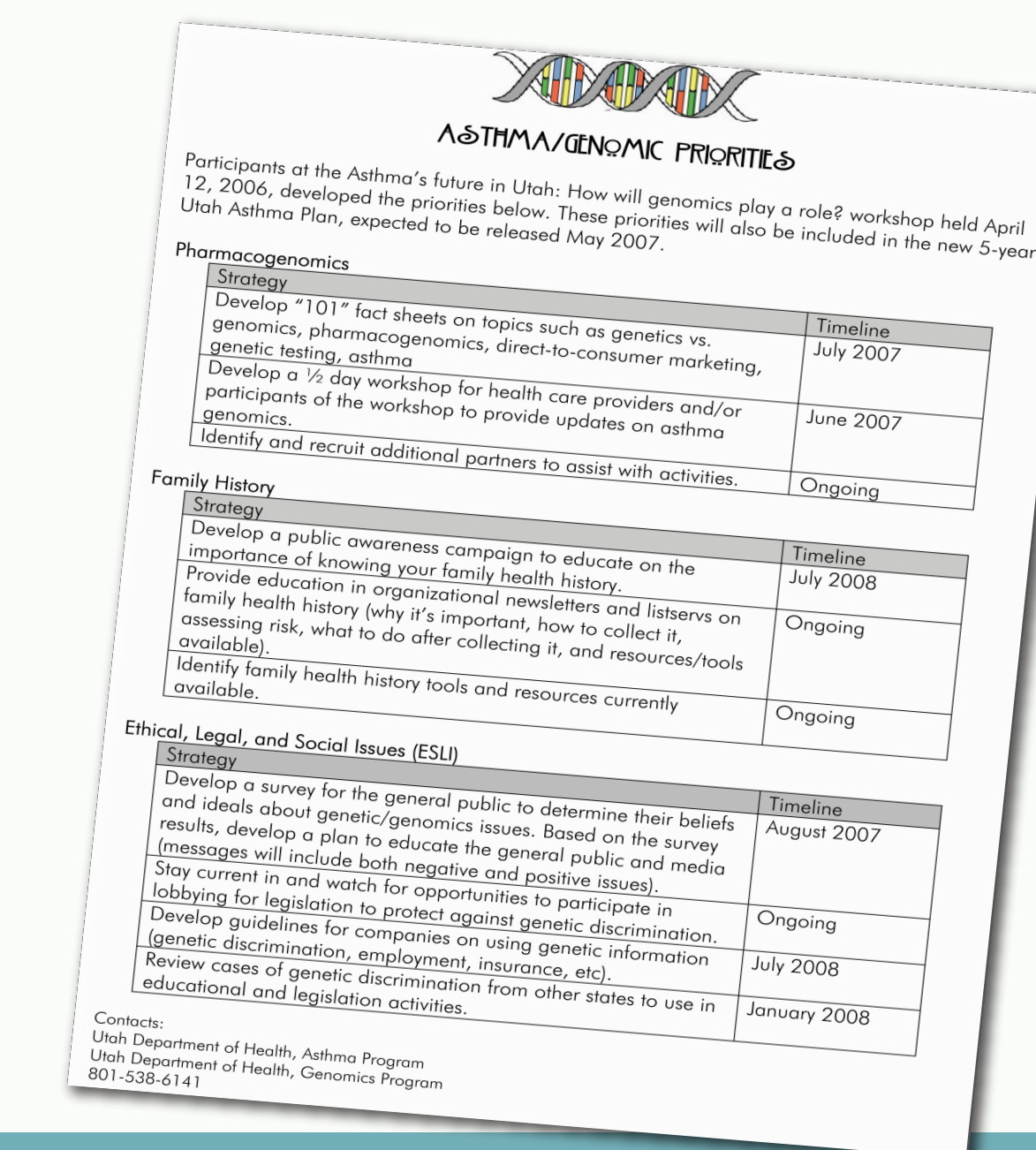
- Pharmacogenomics
- Family health history
- Ethical, legal, and social issues

Results

- More than 65 individuals attended the April 2006 workshop and 45 individuals participated in the June 2007 workshop.
- A work plan and list of priority activities were developed.
- One genomics-related objective and 13 strategies were included in the new 2007-2012 Utah Asthma Plan.
- Evaluations showed that:
 - 54.5% of participants strongly agreed their knowledge of genomics had increased.
 - 72% of participants wanted to help integrate genomics into asthma activities.

Conclusion

- Genomics activities don't need to be complicated in order to be integrated into public health asthma management.
- Stakeholders are interested in genetic advances but need ongoing education.
- Thinking outside the box in terms of stakeholders is essential.
- Adding strategies to state plans can help genomics become a higher priority for the state as a whole.



Visit www.health.utah.gov/genomics/pages/asthma for more information on asthma genomics activities in Utah.