



*Entities in Summit County  
that have been involved*

## *Collaborative Success Stories:* Efficiencies in Cost Savings for Public Health

Summit County and 2 City Health Districts Consolidate Health  
Departments to save money and improve service

Accurate disease data is vital to local health districts' emergency response, public health education, and preventive public health services. Unfortunately, even in neighboring public health districts, data is not always shared. This lack of communication between districts with adjacent and overlapping jurisdictions proves particularly problematic in urban areas because disease transmission rates increase when interactions among individuals in the population increase. These problems have affected many public health organizations, including the three health departments of Summit County, Ohio: Summit County Health District (SCHD), Barberton Health District (BHD), and the City of Akron Health Department (AHD).

In the Spring of 2009, Summit County Health District and the City of Akron Health Department chose to apply for funding through the Efficient Government Now grant program, and progressed to the final round of voting. "Efficiencies and Cost Savings for Public Health" did not receive EGN grant funding, and plans to improve data sharing between the two entities halted. The participants believed, however, that the cost-saving issues which partially drove the original EGN application might be addressed instead by merging health departments.

The partner agencies hired an area nonprofit agency to assess the feasibility of a merger between the two departments. Their study found that consolidation between SCHD, AHD and additionally, BHD, would indeed result in significant cost savings. After considerable discussion, all three health departments chose to merge, creating the Summit County Combined Health District. Although consolidation has only begun, one-time cost savings of \$150,000 have already emerged as a direct result of sharing of facilities and maintenance expenses, with an additional \$206,000 in savings expected annually.