Because the health status of Arkansans is often ranked near the worst in the nation. The FAITH Network was established in 2016 to combat health inequities and disparities, particularly among vulnerable populations, through partnerships with the faith community, academic institutions, and other organizations. The strong influence of religion within Arkansas coupled with poor health rankings experienced in Arkansas highlights the need for innovative and non-traditional approaches, such as engaging the faith community, to improve access to care and health outcomes among Arkansans. Places of Worship are one of the most trusted institutions in communities, with a long-standing history of shaping values and community norms. Places of Worship have served as community “gateways” or venues through which advances in healthcare have been translated into real world settings.

Arkansas FAITH Network Team Leadership Goals for the Program:

- Engagement of Policy Makers & those from non healthcare sectors, e.g. Law Enforcement
- Sustainability & Growth
- Sharing the vision, getting others to buy into the vision

Project Impact Statement:
To improve the health of under-served communities in Arkansas

APPLIED HEALTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT:

**Challenges in Leadership**
- People committed to the health of people are busy people (Scheduling Challenges)
- Who to invite to the table to ensure the sustainability of the FAITH Network
- Where’s the Money?
- Team members reporting back to the larger FAITH Network team

**What have we learned?**
- Set recurring team meetings
- Divide the work and expect accountability
- Seek advice from others
- Identify multiple funding streams

**Team personality: ESFJ**
The strengths of the team included using consensus as a springboard for united action and being sensitive to the needs of the customers. These strengths also proved to be a weakness with BIG visions, but no time or resources to achieve. In addition, the definition of ‘customer’ has evolved; therefore, the needs vary.

THE FUTURE:
In an effort to maintain the sustainability of the FAITH Network, it is now a new program under the non-profit organization Vine & Village located in Little Rock, Arkansas. Vine & Village is focused on meeting the spiritual, social and material needs for our community members which all impacts their health and well-being. Based upon the lessons learned and the resources obtained from the NLAPH program the work of the network will continue to include three focus areas: research, education and unity. Through these focus areas we aim to increase the participation of communities of faith in Arkansas in health related research, provide training in patient centered research, connect members of the faith community to community resources, and dissemination of health related opportunities. The network will also continue to hold an annual summit and regional events that provide continuous engagement with communities of faith throughout Arkansas, in addition to a listserv with over 500 members in which a FAITH Network eNewsletter is distributed.