

# The What, Why, and How of Public Engagement

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Presentation at the National Immunization Conference

Chicago, Illinois

March 20, 2003



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# Project Purpose

- Special assignment to explore increased public participation in decision making about vaccines starting in October 2001



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# New Realities & Trends

- Perception of decreased benefits
- Risks more prominent
- Public access to info is increased
- Public expects role in decisions
- Perception of conflicts of interest
- Science no longer seen as totally objective and value free



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# Immediate Drivers For The Project

- Cursory public participation mechanisms—no real public voice
- No mechanisms to discuss values before making policy choices
- Wasteful, polarized debates and hearings with no progress or closure on issues



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# Familiar Examples of Public Participation

- Hearings
- Public meetings
- Public comment periods
- Consumer representatives on advisory committees
- Focus groups
- Public opinion surveys
- Workshops



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# Unfamiliar Examples Of Public Participation

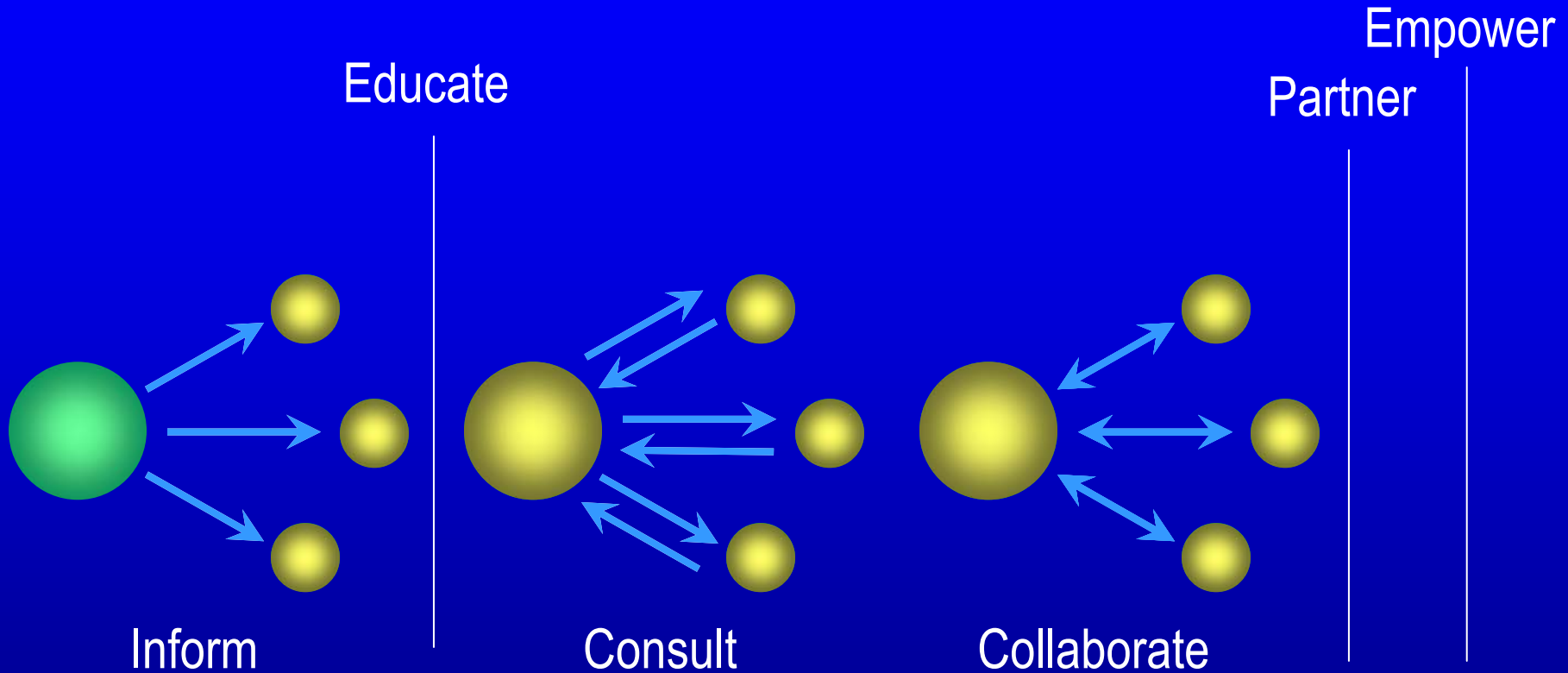
- Deliberative Polling
- Citizens Advisory Committees
- Citizens Juries
- Policy Councils
- Consensus Building Approaches
- Negotiated Settlements



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# Level of Public Participation



Increasing Level of Participation in Decision Making



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# What Public Participation Is Not

It's NOT:

- **Public information**

*one way transfer of information*

- **Public relations**

*selling a policy position*



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# Matching Methods to Purpose

- Different methods exist and can be used to achieve public participation
- No methods are bad methods
- Circumstances dictate which purposes are appropriate
- Matching purpose with method is important to get desired impact—no more, no less



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# Why Engage The Public?

- Right Thing To Do  
(You ought to do it)
- Better Thing To Do  
(You do best when you do it)
- Helpful Thing To Do  
(You are supported)



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# Principles of Good Public Participation

Adapted from the OECD

- Commitment of leaders
- Established rights for citizens
- Proper timing of requests for input
- Clarity of roles and expectations with appropriate methods
- Adequate resources, especially for information
- Equal treatment of participants



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# Principles of Good Public Participation

Adapted from the OECD

- Independence in doing the work of the group
- Transparency in the process used
- Representation of all key interests
- Linkage to decision makers for action
- Responsibility to consider the interests of others is accepted
- Accountability for decisions taken
- Evaluation during and after the process



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# Specific Project Purpose

- To explore/create a type of public engagement in decision making about immunization program issues which involves a greater degree of public collaboration and deliberation than has been the case up to now.



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# Key Objectives and Assumptions

- National not local scope
- Policy analysis work (work= understanding = trust)
- Inclusive of stakeholders + general public
- Useful not irrelevant work products
- Topics for analysis involve values



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# Examples Of Suitable Decision Analyses

- How to best organize to handle the competing interests of vaccine risk assessment and risk management?
- Whether to recommend a uniform approach to philosophical exemptions?
- Whether to reintroduce rotavirus vaccine?



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# Examples Of Suitable Decision Analyses

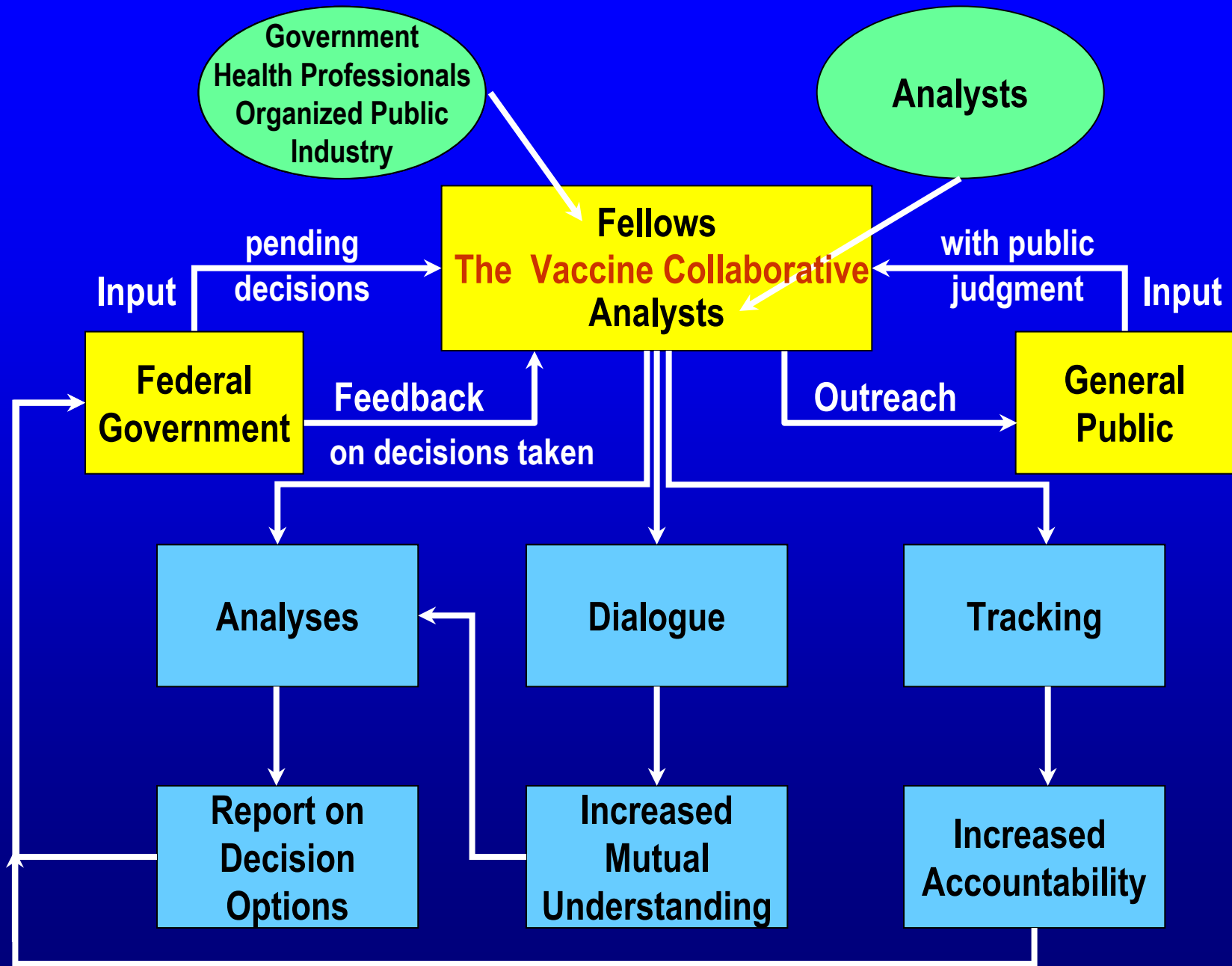
- Which vaccines should be made mandatory for school entry after they have been licensed?
- Whether to support or oppose doctors who oust patients from their practice for refusing vaccines?
- Whether to conduct safety studies of smallpox vaccine to be given to children?



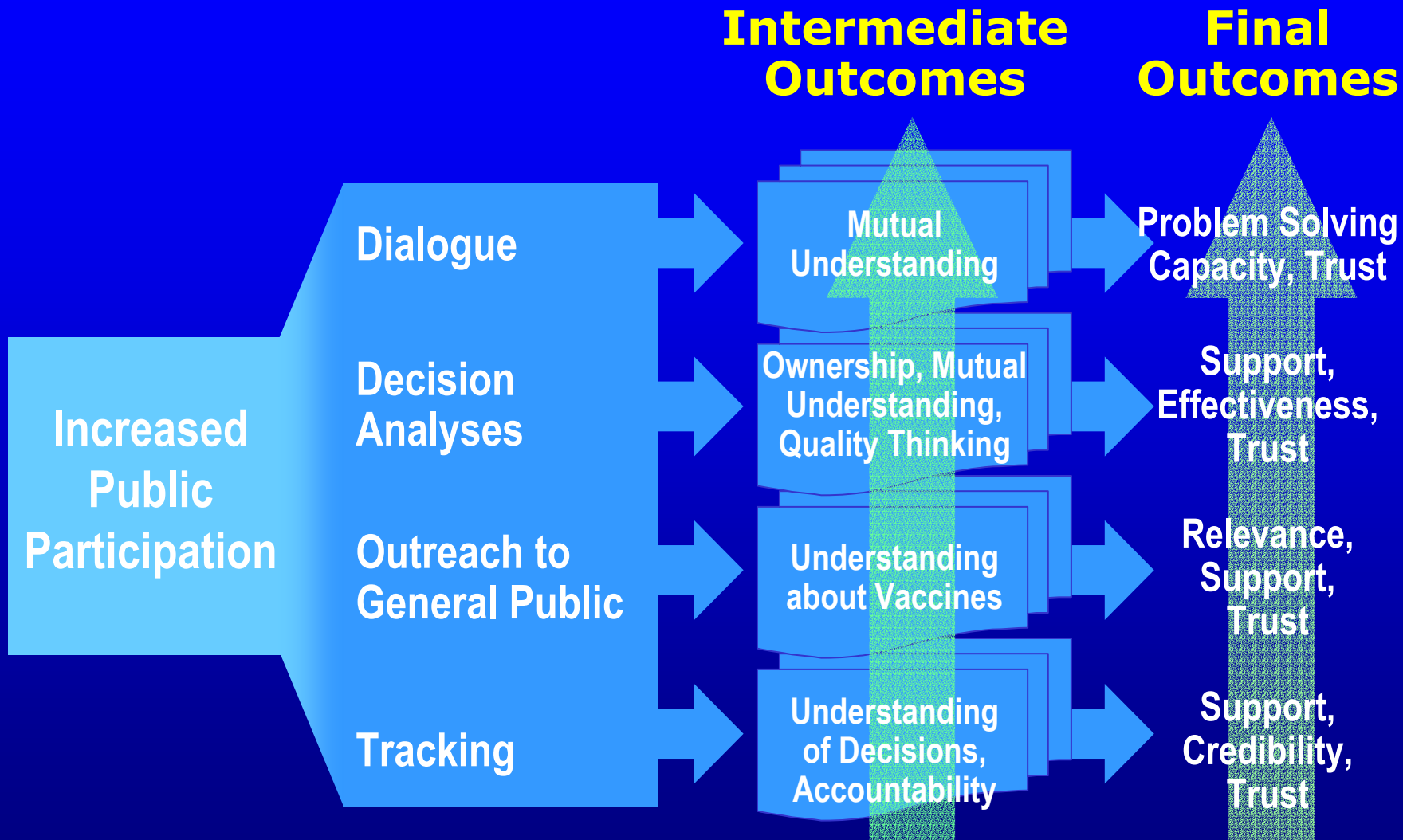
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# Logic Model



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# Status of Public Engagement Project I

- Funded by an interagency group
- Facilitated by the Keystone Center
- Supported by Johnson Fdn for stakeholder summit at Wingspread
- Steering Committee mtgs to create blueprint



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# Status of Public Engagement Project II

- Seeking consensus on a model that adheres to principles of good practice of public engagement
- Steering Committee's preliminary model has features in common with The Vaccine Collaborative process described here
- Second Plenary meeting in May 2003 to finalize model
- Funding and implementation date ???



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# Conclusion

- The current realities promote doubts and concerns about vaccines.
- Because we are operating in a society where trust is already low, the public wants a role in decisions affecting their lives, and science now recognizes the need for this social discourse, creating new opportunities for public engagement in vaccine decision making could help to address these trends, better fulfill public and scientific needs and expectations, and reduce the democracy deficit in immunization.



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“When big things are at stake, the danger of error is great. Therefore, many should discuss and clarify the matter together so the correct way may be found.”

Shotoku Taishi, first Buddhist emperor,  
604 AD



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# The Vision

Citizens and public officials...  
interacting honestly,  
learning from each other, and  
working productively together  
to analyze vaccine policy decisions.



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“We believe that a broad dialogue is essential to sustain the societal consensus that empowered immunization initiatives of the past half century...

From Feudtner and Marcuse, “Ethics and Immunization Policy: Promoting Dialogue To Sustain Consensus”, Pediatrics, 2001



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“ only through such continuing dialogue can we be enabled to take full advantage of new opportunities to enhance public health through immunization in the century ahead.”

From Feudtner and Marcuse, “Ethics and Immunization Policy: Promoting Dialogue To Sustain Consensus”, Pediatrics, 2001



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# What Can You Do?

- Could we simultaneously create and pilot test state versions of The Vaccine Collaborative process?
- To explore and discuss, contact Roger Bernier at [rbernier@cdc.gov](mailto:rbernier@cdc.gov) or call 770-488-2053
- Request and critique the current proposal.



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