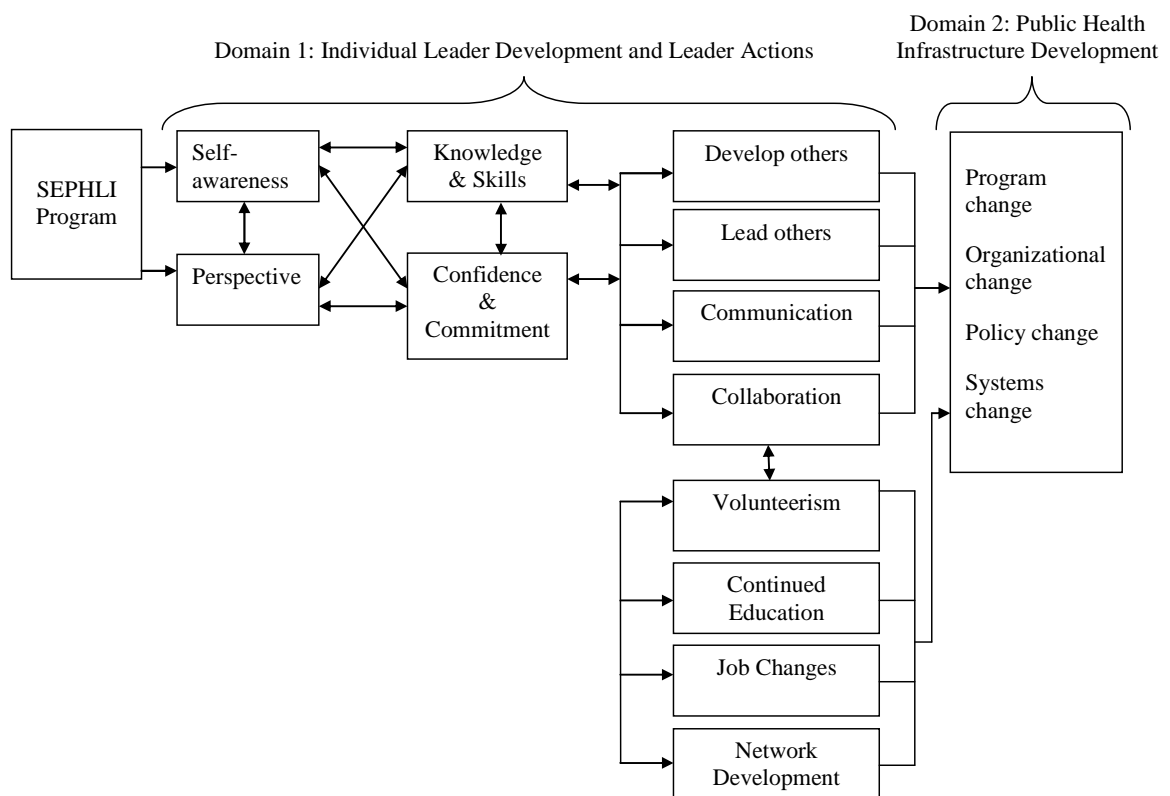


## IV. Results

Figure 4 displays the first two Domains of findings from this evaluation. It shows that SEPHLI impacted graduates on a personal level, influencing their self-awareness, knowledge, skills, perspective, confidence and commitment. Some SEPHLI graduates used their enhanced knowledge and skill in the workplace, while others were influenced to continue their education or to change jobs. Many graduates also described how SEPHLI influenced their actions in ways that contributed to changes in programs, organizations, systems and partnerships, and policies. Some graduates described how these renewed programs, organizations, and partnerships influenced funding or produced cost-savings, improved services and access to care, or helped organizations in other ways.

This section of the report examines these results beginning with Individual Leader Development and moving on to Leader Actions and Systems and Infrastructure Development and outcomes.

**Figure 3: Logic Model of SEPHLI Findings**



## Domain 1: Individual Leader Development and Leader Actions

This section summarizes changes in self-awareness, confidence, interests, commitments, and actions and subsequent use of knowledge and skills learned in SEPHLI.

### Summary of Findings

Graduates were asked to rate SEPHLI's long-term influence on their leadership:

- 28% of respondents chose "large" while 51% chose "moderate"
- 18% chose "small" and 3% chose "no influence"

The majority of respondents reported that SEPHLI had strengthened the following constructs "somewhat" or "to a great extent":

- Self-awareness as a leader (99%)
- Confidence in taking on leadership (98%)
- Interest in involvement in state-wide initiatives (98%)
- Commitment to staying in public health (97%)
- Interest in involvement in local initiatives (97%)

Some described having gained a new perspective on leadership in public health, especially emphasizing the value of a collaborative approach

*My personal leadership skills were assessed and provided me with my strengths and weaknesses. This information allowed me to work on my weaker abilities and enabled me to have confidence to take on my new role as County Director of two local county health departments.*

*The books and lectures that accompany SEPHLI have led me to an understanding about public health and the role we play within our community as leaders. The leadership role is very important in the community, and I have learned to take that more seriously.*

Graduates reported using these skills taught in SEPHLI either "sometimes" or "frequently":

- Leading teams (96%)
- Collaboration and partnership (95%)
- Self-understanding (91%)
- Supervisory skills (88%)
- Systems thinking (88%)
- Crisis leadership (79%)
- Working with the media/risk communication (75%)
- Creating a personal mission statement (59%)

*I recently implemented an organizational change in the way we process referrals and meet the needs of our families. Rather than immediately making my own decision regarding the changes, I was able to form a workgroup who helped me develop the idea and the new process. SEPHLI stressed the importance of team collaboration, involving others and helping them to feel as if their contributions make a difference. This change was important for me because it I was able to function more as a leader than a manager.*

Many graduates describing taking various other actions as a result of SEPHLI, including:

- Leading others
- Developing other leaders
- Continued education
- Developing networks directly through the program, and indirectly through subsequent collaborations

*[I] became so motivated to have a greater impact with the healthcare delivery system, that after 20 years as a Physical Therapist I decided to become a physician. I am now in the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine program, with goals to get an MPH later on.*

As for network development, many graduates reported that they benefited from knowledge shared by other scholars across disciplines and across geographic boundaries during the program. Many graduates also reported staying in touch with other graduates and sharing knowledge over time, though there were not as many comments on that theme.

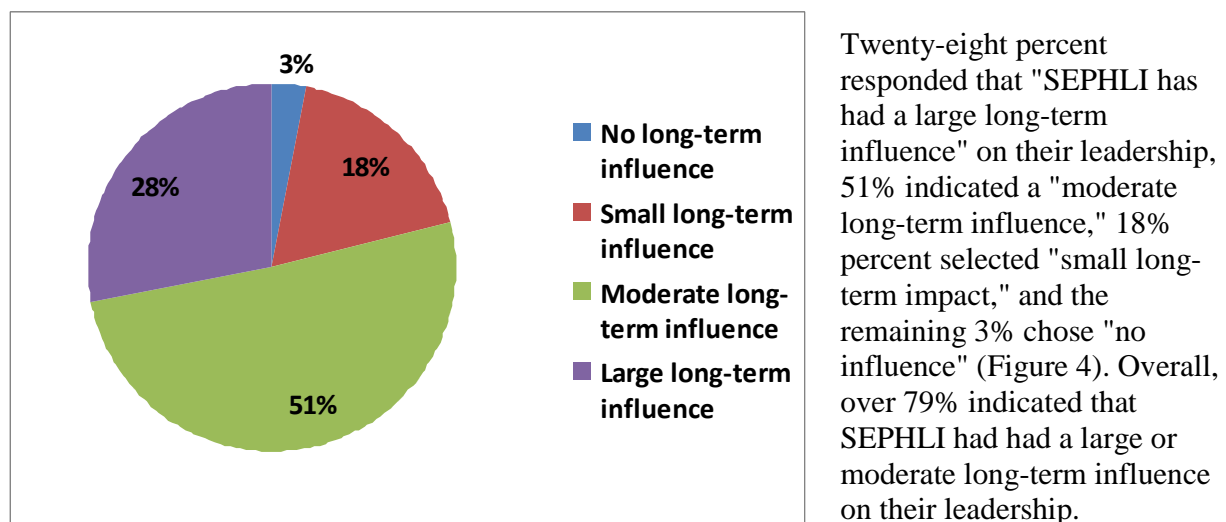
A large number of graduates, however, told stories of a more indirect network building effect, whereby learning to work collaboratively through SEPHLI has led to continuing collaborations with others in their community. This example is from an animal control officer in a local health department who began an annual forum with community veterinarians:

*We had often talked about increasing collaboration with the veterinary community by providing public health forums where we could share animal control information and field any concerns they had with our program. The forum was the primary goal of our SEPHLI project, and we completed it with great success....We can't provide our services without good communication with the veterinarians in our area. This has opened up an avenue where we are giving back to them, honoring them, and creating value for our view of them and all they assist us with in our daily activities. I'm sure we all know how much it means to know you are appreciated. This forum yields an annual time of sharing and thanks to a group that is often overlooked by the public for their part in public health.*

### Question 1.1 How do graduates rate SEPHLI's long-term, overall influence on their leadership?

Graduates were asked to rate SEPHLI's long-term, overall influence on their leadership. The survey asked graduates: "Overall, how much long-term influence did SEPHLI have on your leadership?" Scholars were presented with the options: "No influence," "Small long-term influence," "Moderate long-term influence," and "Large long-term influence."

**Figure 4: SEPHLI's Long-Term Influence on Graduates' Leadership**



That question was followed by two questions. One asked, "If you responded that SEPHLI had 'no' or a 'small' influence on your leadership, explain some of the factors that limited the influence of SEPHLI." Results from the 27 respondents who answered that question are presented in Domain 3.

The other question asked, "If you responded that SEPHLI had a 'moderate' or a 'large' influence on your leadership, explain in some detail one of the most important influences that SEPHLI has had on your leadership, or cite an example of how you used what you learned in SEPHLI in your public health practice." In response to that question, 128 scholars described varied results (Table 3). The most prominent types of influences described related to enhanced understanding of personal leadership styles, acquisition of new skills, increased knowledge, and a new perspective on public health or leadership. Others described heightened confidence, and both a renewed interest in continued education and commitment to public health. In the sections below, additional examples of these comments will be provided.

Since Table 3 shows responses to an open-ended question, the table merely summarizes what came to graduates' minds as one major benefit from the program. Thus, it does not represent a count of the number of scholars who believe they gained each benefit. It is simply a way to show the relative number of responses in each category to the open-ended question. The relative numbers of responses may be a clue to which kinds of benefits were experienced most strongly or prominently by the most scholars, but the relative numbers must be interpreted with caution.

**Table 3: Summary of Responses of SEPHLI’s influence on graduates’ leadership or examples of how that influence has been applied (Open-ended survey question)**

Type of Influence Described	% of question respondents who cited this influence or action (n=129)
Awareness of self and others: personal leadership styles, strengths, areas for growth	45
Skills (respondents listed specific topics from the curriculum)	26
Knowledge from the learning materials and presentations (respondents cited either a presentation topic, learning material or generally indicated that their level of knowledge had increased)	22
Perspective: broad views about career development, public health, organizational mission or leadership	19
Confidence	15
Develop other leaders	7
Job change	5
Attitude: commitment to public health	5
Collaboration	5
Lead Others	5
Volunteer	4
Continued education	3
Attitude: interest in continuing their education	2

<sup>a</sup>Several respondents provided multiple examples of SEPHLI’s influence and subsequent actions taken. Therefore, these percentages total greater than 100.

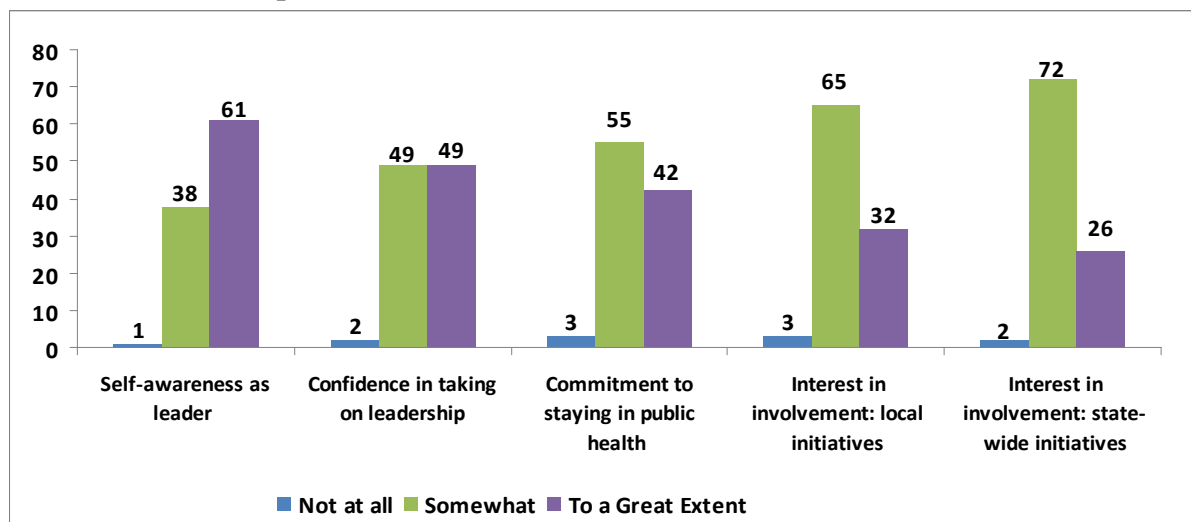
**Question 1.2. What gains in self-awareness, confidence, interest in leadership, and perspective do graduates report, resulting from participation in SEPHLI?**

Graduates rated the extent to which participating in SEPHLI strengthened certain attitudes and interests that have been explicit or implicit goals of the program.

The great majority of respondents indicated that SEPHLI had strengthened the constructs shown in Figure 5 “to a great extent” or “somewhat.” From the greatest percentage to the least, graduates rated SEPHLI as having strengthened “to a great extent” their:

- Self-awareness as a leader: my strengths, liabilities, and how others view and receive my leadership (61%)
- Confidence to take on public health leadership responsibilities (49%)
- Sense of belonging to a network of public health leaders (49%)
- Commitment to staying in public health in my work (42%)
- Interest in deepening their involvement with local (32%) and statewide (26%) public health leadership initiatives

**Figure 5: Scholars’ Ratings of the Extent to Which SEPHLI Strengthened Constructs Related to Leadership**



Survey comments revealed more about aspects of these constructs that were improved, and are summarized below.

### Self-Awareness as a Leader

Leader self-awareness is widely regarded to be important so that leaders can adapt to fit the context and people they work with (Kilduff, 1994, Sosik, 2002). As described above, in recent years SEPHLI has used multi-rater leadership assessment tools, such as the “360 degree” assessment.

Sixty-one percent of graduates responded that SEPHLI had strengthened their self-awareness as a leader “to a great extent,” and 38% “somewhat” (Figure 5). In response to the open-ended survey question asking graduates to describe one important SEPHLI influence on their leadership, 58 graduates (45 percent of respondents to that question) referred to greater self-awareness and self-understanding as a major benefit (Table 3).

Comments on self-awareness took several forms. Many scholars simply expressed an appreciation of their enhanced personal knowledge:

*The perspective on leadership styles, decision making styles, focusing on your strengths and areas to improve was invaluable. The ability to learn about myself and ways to build upon “me” was probably the best learning opportunity I have ever had.*

*I thought the 360 feedback and other related tests and feedback we completed were extremely beneficial in self-awareness of leadership styles, conflict, and change.*

*The 360 degree feedback was invaluable. I had it done again, 7 years after SEPHLI, and it was interesting to see what changes may have occurred. I also refer to the textbook, Leadership Challenge.*

*I feel that it changed my thinking on how I approach my job and how I lead the public health workers in my department. I feel I have a better understanding of my personal strengths and weaknesses and my own management style as a result of the class.*

*The biggest influence of SEPHLI for me was what I learned about myself, my strengths and weakness[es], how to use the strengths more effectively and how to 'work' on my areas of weakness. I enjoyed completing the self-assessments before the class started, seeing where I was on the charts and then learning about those personality traits and how to work on the negative aspects and build on the positives.*

Others described in more detail how the personal assessments encouraged them to utilize their strengths and improve on their areas of weakness:

*SEPHLI really helped me learn about my personal style of leadership and things I can do to enhance those skills. I keep the book Dangerous Opportunity: Making Change Work right here by my computer and refer to it often. The skills I learned in SEPHLI have helped me become more aware of how I tend to lead, and how sometimes I need to make minor changes to that style to create the most "buy-in."*

*The SEPHLI experience made me not only look at weaknesses and strengths, but form a plan of action to use what strengths I had and to adjust my actions to strengthen my not-so-strong side.*

*SEPHLI exposed me to many different leadership styles through working with my classmates. Observation and interaction are great teachers. This was an opportunity to discover things I wanted to adopt or improve in myself, or not, that I otherwise would not have had. To this day I use the results of the various inventories to remind myself of my shortcomings and to direct my continual efforts at professional and personal self-improvement. The exercises and inventories, especially as we shared them in the large group, also have helped me become better at assessing the strengths and challenges of others and to leverage them in combination with mine.*

Some graduates detailed how their heightened understanding improved working relationships with their colleagues:

*Learning my leadership style helped [me] to better understand my decision making. I now better understand how to communicate changes as well as better interpret the actions of others.*

*The assessments were very important to me. It gave me some self-awareness of where my weak spots are and got me thinking/planning on how to cover them. For instance, FIRO-B [an instrument that examines styles and preferences for workplace interactions] told*

*me I didn't care about being informed or being loved, but that is very important to most of my staff. Just the awareness of the disconnect is important.*

*I understand myself much better now and why I make the choices I do and how I interact with others. This helps me to better understand how others relate to me and how my actions and words may accurately or inaccurately be perceived.*

*The SEPHLI experience showed me the style I am using and the people work with. It helped me view my staff and other employees differently and see how we can work together.*

*SEPHLI was critical in helping me to work with individuals by understanding personality traits and decision making tendencies. I have utilized this knowledge base more broadly in both my personal and professional life. My ability to accomplish projects, even in difficult situations or with those who are not normal partners, has grown exponentially since attending SEPHLI. Developing an understanding of what makes people tick and how they tick, has helped me to recognize that others may have needs that can be met while trying to accomplish my goals.*

*I came to understand that what I do and say as a leader has a profound effect on many, and whether I know them personally or not.*

Several respondents indicated that they are now able to recognize others' leadership styles:

*I am more aware of my leadership style and the style of other managers in our agency. I'm able to also understand personality types of those I supervise and make adjustments in my leadership style when necessary.*

*SEPHLI was critical in helping me to work with individuals by understanding personality traits and decision making tendencies. I have utilized this knowledge base more broadly in both my personal and professional life. My ability to accomplish projects, even in difficult situations or with those who are not normal partners, has grown exponentially since attending SEPHLI. Developing an understanding of what makes people tick and how they tick, has helped me to recognize that others may have needs that can be met while trying to accomplish my goals.*

*My current job consists of me recruiting and, retaining nurses for public health. Since attending SEPHLI I have I have learned how to better do this through self and group introspection, learning how different people respond to situations. How different people respond to change, criticism and accolades allows a supervisor and leader to adjust to the needs of the patient, employee and community to best meet their needs.*

Finally, in an unexpected outcome, two scholars explained that they had changed jobs because of insights into their skills and styles and how they might best apply them in their work. One left a job as a health director, while another left a leadership position in a program:

*Participation in SEPHLI gave me the opportunity to reassess where I was in my professional career and where I wanted to go. It reinforced and enhanced my leadership skills, but helped me to know how and where to best apply them for long-term impact. (e.g. Recognizing my strong desire to improve the health and well-being of disadvantaged communities through advocacy and interaction, I realized that doing so as a local Health Director was politically difficult and threatening to the status quo. By moving to a position below the radar, yet still influential in the community, I have been able to move forward with constructive activities and garnered support for change).*

*SEPHLI helped me to understand that I would never be successful in effectively changing a large program I was then responsible for; every personality/leadership "test" showed that I did not have the needed attention to minutiae. I voluntarily gave up that program; this set the stage for a greater change in responsibilities the following year.*

It is unclear whether to interpret that last comment as a positive gain from the program, or an unintended negative consequence of the assessment instruments. It may be that the scholar identified a developmental opportunity but sadly interpreted it as a permanent weakness, or it could be that the scholar identified that she or he was indeed in a job that was a mismatch. Regardless, this finding shows that feedback can have important consequences for scholars and should be interpreted with professional assistance, as is the case with SEPHLI.



**SEPHLI faculty member Chris Musselwhite presenting concepts to help scholars interpret and make use of their multi-rater (or 360 degree) feedback from peers, direct reports, and supervisors.**

## Confidence to take on public health leadership responsibilities

Many scholars also explained how SEPHLI had increased their confidence. The personal assessment process, being exposed to other leaders and skill-building activities all augmented leaders' confidence to assume leadership responsibilities. Forty-nine percent of graduates responded that SEPHLI had strengthened their confidence as a leader "to a great extent," and 49% "somewhat" (Figure 5). In response to the open-ended survey question asking graduates to describe one important SEPHLI influence on their leadership, 19 graduates (15 percent of respondents to that question) referred to increased confidence in their abilities as a major benefit (Table 3).

Similar to the self-awareness discussion above, some graduates expressed a general appreciation for SEPHLI's role in enhancing their confidence:

*The biggest impact SEPHLI had on my leadership was due the confidence I gained by having participated and completed the program.*

*[SEPHLI] provided me with confidence in my leadership skills and fine tuned my approach to remaining a leader in public health.*

*Where I currently work, we will be establishing a School of Public Health soon and I feel a lot of what I learned with SEPHLI is aiding in our mission statement, vision, commitment, and leadership styles. I feel more confident in my thoughts, recommendations, and discussions as a result of SEPHLI. I better understand how to resolve conflicts due to SEPHLI.*

*I'm more confident in my leadership decisions and less sensitive [to] personal criticism.*

Other graduates explained how their personal assessment brought about greater confidence in their leadership role:

*My personal leadership skills were assessed and provided me with my strengths and weaknesses. This information allowed me to work on my weaker abilities and enabled me to have confidence to take on my new role as County Director of two local county health departments.*

*Critically assessed my leadership skills along with gaps in my knowledge, skills, abilities and work experience that hinder me from applying for/assuming other leadership positions in public health. Since graduating SEPHLI, I submitted an application for a public health position in the agency at a higher level of responsibility and leadership.*

*My team members even remarked that I developed a lot of confidence during the program. I now feel a lot more comfortable in my leadership role and am more willing to make necessary decisions. I am a lot less stressed and find the job more enjoyable. It was a bit disheartening at first to realize that I was a great manager but not a great leader. After learning the difference, I began improving my leadership skills.*

Others attributed the increase in confidence to the skills and knowledge learned in SEPHLI:

*I attribute my increase in confidence in myself and my abilities to the leadership skills that I learned as a part of the institute. It challenged me to look deeper into who I was and how my personality traits, communication skills, and leadership style contributed positively or negatively to my becoming a successful manager. It taught team work and inclusiveness; understanding different perspectives and how to build up your team - this especially has contributed to my success in being able to work with teams.*

*I have more confidence in myself to lead others. I feel I better understand the difference between being in a supervisory role than that of a leadership role.*

*I think the most important influence that SEPHLI gave me was the increased knowledge of different styles of leadership, and how they can be effective, and changed according to the needs of each particular situation. It gave me increased self-confidence in my leadership skills.*

For other graduates, interacting with other public health officials gave them confidence:

*Biggest influence was meeting other county directors in other states and learning about their day to day responsibilities. Exposure to different positions of authority made me realize that I could make a difference in the community. When this job opportunity became available, I feel that I was better prepared for supervision of personnel and involvement in county government.*

*I think the most important thing to me was the professional network. It wasn't so much benefiting from the actual network, but just the support and confidence gained from exposure to others involved in the same field. I thought it was more valuable in some ways that the conferences in public health.*

## **Commitment to staying in public health**

With the challenges facing the public health workforce, such as impending retirement of the baby-boom generation, budget insecurities, and larger salaries in many other industries, confirmed commitment to working in public health is an outcome of interest. Forty-two percent of graduates responded that SEPHLI had strengthened their commitment to staying in public health “to a great extent,” and 55% “somewhat” (Figure 5). In response to the open-ended survey question asking graduates to describe one important SEPHLI influence on their leadership, 6 graduates (5 percent of respondents to that question) made note of their renewed interest in the field (Table 3).

Comments included:

*SEPHLI has given me a shot of much needed adrenaline to keep going.*

*Sharing with public health leaders from other states was a refreshing boost to keep me motivated and validate my love for public health. The materials and classes were informative and took me out of my comfort zone to learn something new.*

*[SEPHLI] inspired my creativity and critical thinking, and kept me on the same path I had walked to find and fill unmet community needs and empower people needing our services.*

*My job went from a job to a career in Public Health since attending SEPHLI. I have discovered this is my calling and I hope to be an effective leader in my community and in Public Health.*

*SEPHLI was a breath of fresh air. It gave me new life and desire to be in public health.*

### **Interest in deepening involvement in state-wide and local public health initiatives**

Many respondents reported that SEPHLI strengthened their interest in deepening their involvement with local (32%) and state-wide (26%) public health initiatives to a great extent. This question was meant to inquire about voluntary work such as serving on boards and task forces to improve public health, but this meaning may not have been clear to respondents.

Only five respondents to the open-ended question on the survey about the most important SEPHLI influence on their leadership discussed volunteering in public health initiatives through boards, associations, or other committees, as in these examples:

*I have been able to become more involved in my state organizations. I also have more confidence in the information that I have to share.*

*My experience has led me to accept more leadership responsibility beyond the requirements and expectations of my position. For example chairing a number of workgroups involved in developing public policy or conducting public health program evaluation. In addition I have changed my approach from one of trying to accomplish objectives that were my own or more single focused to one of trying to build group consensus and facilitate achieving shared objectives or objectives that work across programs.*

This finding – that few described voluntary efforts - must be interpreted with caution, however, because (a) respondents were not explicitly asked if they were more involved in voluntary leadership work after the program than they had been before the program, and (b) in response to other questions on the survey, many respondents described getting involved with local, organizational, or state-wide issues as part of their project or later leadership efforts.

### **Perspective: Understanding and valuing collaborative leadership**

Several graduates commented that participating in SEPHLI had increased their general understanding of public health and how a collaborative leadership style was valuable. One

graduate noted that SEPHLI had a moderate or large long-term influence on her leadership in that they learned about collaboration within the organization:

*Emphasis on the need to focus on the larger organization's overall mission. Often times we tend to forget what the organization is trying to achieve because we are overly focused on our programs. For example - focusing in on environmental health and forgetting the rest of the health departments' programs.*

Others explained learning about collaborative leadership across organizations:

*Communication and coalition building modules from SEPHLI have been extremely useful to me, both the texts and the guest speakers/faculty.... [We have implemented] population based approaches to prevention with our evolving community-based health improvement council. In order for our very small population based health staff to make a difference the coalition offers a multiplier effect. We have an enormous clinic based staff by comparison and will be missing true primary prevention efforts without this. [We received a] new grant from NACCHO/CDC for \$16K to address environmental health issues i.e. air, water and urban sprawl.*

*I have used the leadership trainings to broaden how I look at situations and Public Health. This was instrumental in demonstrating to me how all the levels of community work together.*

*The books and lectures that accompany SEPHLI have led me to an understanding about public health and the role we play within our community as leaders. The leadership role is very important in the community, and I have learned to take that more seriously.*

*Allowed me to have a more global perspective of public health in other areas outside of Virginia and was a great venue for allowing me to network and problem solve with individuals from a variety of backgrounds. This enhanced my abilities to problem solve in a broader sense, enabling me to look beyond the "obvious" or just within my own back yard.*

*I feel the broader understanding of public health has helped me not only have a better appreciation for issues on a local, state and national level, but the knowledge I obtained has helped in strategic planning, decision making, program planning, etc.*

Others explained diverse other changes in perspective:

*It was an excellent opportunity/investment in self to take a hard look at goal building/strategic/intentional actions and planning. The program reminded me of how important it is to look at the long view.*

*SEPHLI instilled in me a quiet calm in the manner I approach situations and issues. I have a deeper understanding of public health by the multi-state representation and a better appreciation for public health as a business industry, as opposed to just*

*vaccination of children ideology. I have many, many times mentioned the differences in public health structure from state to state, centralized, decentralized or mixed, and that was so in live in person at the conferences.*

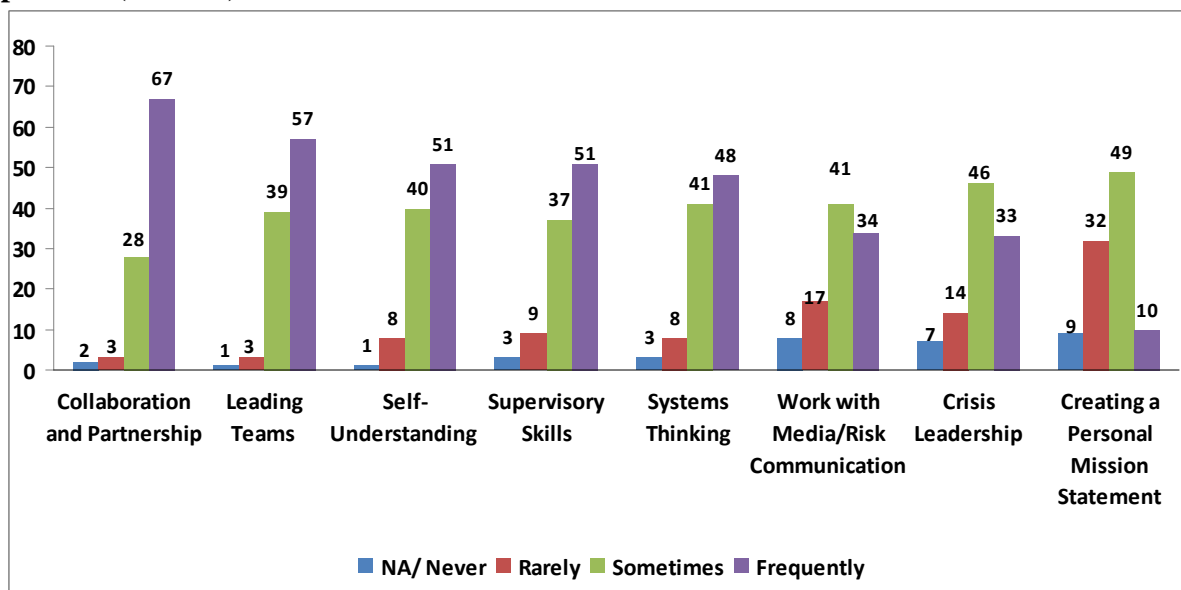
*It helped me to see the whole picture of public health. I have used the information to improve my staff by using a more detailed orientation list for new employees. Also I am more involved with long range planning in my organization and looking at performance excellence with data showing improvements.*

Graduates' reported growth in self-awareness, confidence, commitment, interest, understanding and valuing of collaborative leadership were summarized. The next section discusses how graduates reported using in practice the knowledge and skills they learned in SEPHLI.

### Question 1.3 Actions: What knowledge and skills from the program are scholars using in practice?

Graduates were asked whether they are using skills and topics taught in the program on their jobs (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Skills and Understandings used by SEPHLI graduates in their public health practice (Percent)**



More than half of the respondents continue to “frequently” use skills and understanding gained from SEPHLI, such as collaboration and partnership (67%), leading teams (57%), self-understanding gained from the personal feedback and assessment tool (51%), and supervisory skills (51%), while 28%-40% of scholars used knowledge gained from SEPHLI in those areas “sometimes” (Figure 6). Somewhat smaller numbers used the knowledge and skills from SEPHLI in systems thinking, supervisory skills, crisis leadership, working with the media and risk communication, and creating a personal mission statement.

Many scholar comments increased understanding of how SEPHLI enhanced these skills and how graduates were using them. Examples are presented below.

#### Collaboration, Partnership, and Leading Teams

As for collaboration, partnership, and leading teams, it has already been shown how many scholars reported a new general appreciation for collaborative leadership as an approach to public health leadership. Others remarked:

*Some of the information provided in SEPHLI was extremely helpful in skill development and interaction with multiple providers in strengthening joint planning and implementation.*

*My experience has led me to accept more leadership responsibility beyond the requirements and expectations of my position. For example chairing a number of workgroups involved in developing public policy or conducting public health program evaluation. In addition I have changed my approach from one of trying to accomplish objectives that were my own or more single-focused to one of trying to build group consensus and facilitate achieving shared objectives or objectives that work across programs.*

*I have learned that I should not just depend on myself to accomplish projects. Working as a team pulls in expertise from areas in which I am not familiar providing my project a better outcome. I have established partnerships with the local university and with the DHHR commissioner's office to tap into resources that I thought were previously unavailable to me. It helps me to reach my goals.*

*I recently implemented an organizational change in the way we process referrals and meet the needs of our families. Rather than immediately making my own decision regarding the changes, I was able to form a workgroup who helped me develop the idea and the new process. SEPHLI stressed the importance of team collaboration, involving others and helping them to feel as if their contributions make a difference. This change was important for me because it I was able to function more as a leader than a manager.*

*The most important influence since SEPHLI has been: [instead of] being the support person for the team, stepping up to be the team leader.*

## **Supervisory Skills**

With regard to supervision, scholars noted:

*I use a lot of what I learn in the SEPHLI program, both in my long term and day-to-day activities. I learned to trust my staff and attempt to instill confidence in their ability to complete the task that they are assigned.*

*[SEPHLI] helped me to see my limitations and areas of improvements that were needed. It helped me to let others use their skills to do projects rather than doing them my way.*

*When I entered SEPHLI I was in a leadership position over one employee. My supervisor felt I had the skills and potential needed, but not the confidence to move into a higher position. She realized, if I understood the value of what I did, and how to improve or enhance my abilities, I would become very successful in Public Health. She was correct, after going through SEPHLI, I have gained the awareness needed to move up to where I am now. I am currently over 3 different programs in Community Services and have over 40 employees under my supervision.*

*Through SEPHLI, I really learned how to get through "brick walls" by empowering other people to do what I can't do or shouldn't do. I really love to nurture good people and watch their growth and development. I believe SEPHLI taught me skills to accomplish this.*

Some scholars reported using SEPHLI knowledge in crisis leadership and creating a personal mission statement in a closed-ended question in the survey (Figure 6, above), but no scholars commented on these gains in responses to the open-ended questions.

## Communication and Media Skills

With regard to communication and media skills, scholars reported:

*Sections on risk communication and media relations were helpful in developing knowledge and skills useful for interviews and production of preparedness materials.*

*The ability to understand the importance of risk communication and to put into practice specific communication techniques. The self-assessment tools were particularly useful. I have referred to them frequently.*

*I would say the risk communication skills have helped me the most thus far. I use some of the strategies not only when preparing media messages but also for small group communication or when I have to "confront" someone about a difficult situation.*

## Developing Other Leaders

It should be noted that in response to the closed ended question reported in Figure 6 above, scholars reported using knowledge and skills from SEPHLI in several other areas, including systems thinking, crisis leadership, and creating a personal mission statement. No scholar comments explaining these gains have been provided, however, because almost no scholars described using these skills as an important outcome for them in the open-ended survey questions.

Conversely, in open-ended comments, a few scholars described using another skill that was not directly asked about in the survey: developing other leaders. Several graduates described sharing their newly acquired skills, knowledge, and materials with colleagues, or to encourage colleagues to become SEPHLI scholars themselves. SEPHLI graduates described various activities in developing others:

*I have ... encouraged and supported several other state WIC [Women, Infants, and Children program] staff members in participating in SEPHLI due to my experience.*

*[I] I have encouraged nurses and others to attend [SEPHLI] (including my immediate supervisor). Have insisted that all regional nursing directors and associate state director*

*of nursing attend [SEPHLI]. Am currently promoting nurse consultants to attend [SEPHLI].*

*I took information I learned from SEPHLI back to my leadership team at the health department. The leadership team read some of the books we used for SEPHLI. I also purchased some of the tools we used at SEPHLI for my leadership team. They did some of the personality surveys, Myers-Briggs etc. It helped them as a team to learn more about each other. I really did feel we worked better together as a team after participating in all those activities. I still utilize my SEPHLI notebook. I also did training with the staff on crisis communication based upon materials received at SEPHLI.*

*I had adjusted my leadership style as well as started fostering leadership skills in others as a result of the 360 profile and SEPHLI experience. For example, I have begun the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between all state divisions of public health serving the maternal and child population. My direct reports have been involved with this endeavor by being leaders and co-leaders of working committees. This has grown their leadership skills by working with various office directors from several different agencies.*

#### **Question 1.4 Did participation in SEPHLI influence changes in graduates' jobs?**

Some stakeholders wanted to know if SEPHLI had influenced graduates' broader career patterns. Does SEPHLI help graduates get promotions? Do they continue working for the same organization or move on? Do they pursue further education? The next few questions dealt with those outcomes.

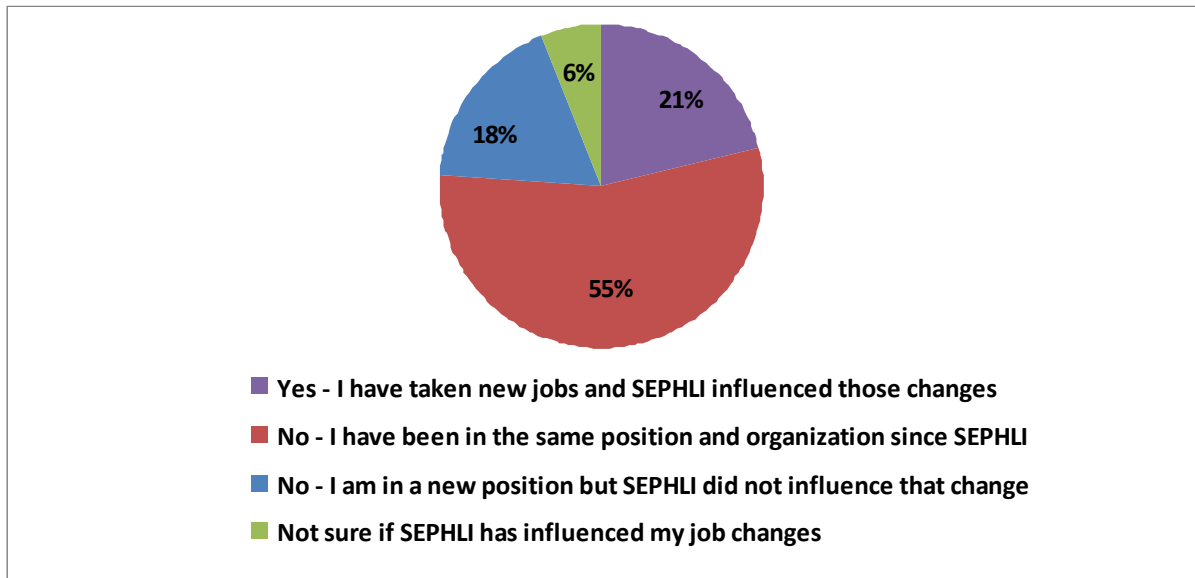
Graduates were asked if participating in SEPHLI had influenced any changes in the jobs they had taken. More than half (55%) had not changed jobs or organizations since SEPHLI (Figure 7), similar to findings with the National PHLI (Umble et al., 2007). As was learned with the National program, this finding does not necessarily indicate "stagnation" in a job or organization, but rather commitment to a place and organization, and possession of the skills needed to hold a leadership position for a many years running. Many do not want to leave to go elsewhere or "up" any chains of leadership but feel that they are using their talents best in a particular place and type of position.

Another 18% are in a new position and/or organization, but report that SEPHLI had not influenced that change. Seven percent were not sure if SEPHLI had influenced their job changes since the program.

The remaining 21% (N = 36) indicated that SEPHLI had influenced job changes they had made. Other survey data submitted by these respondents was examined and determined that at the time of participation in SEPHLI, 12 were working in local level public health, 23 on the state level, and one in an academic setting. Currently, among the same respondents, 11 are working on the local level, 19 on the state level, and 3 in academic settings, and two in "other" settings. No large or discernable trends can be observed, except that three had moved into academic positions.

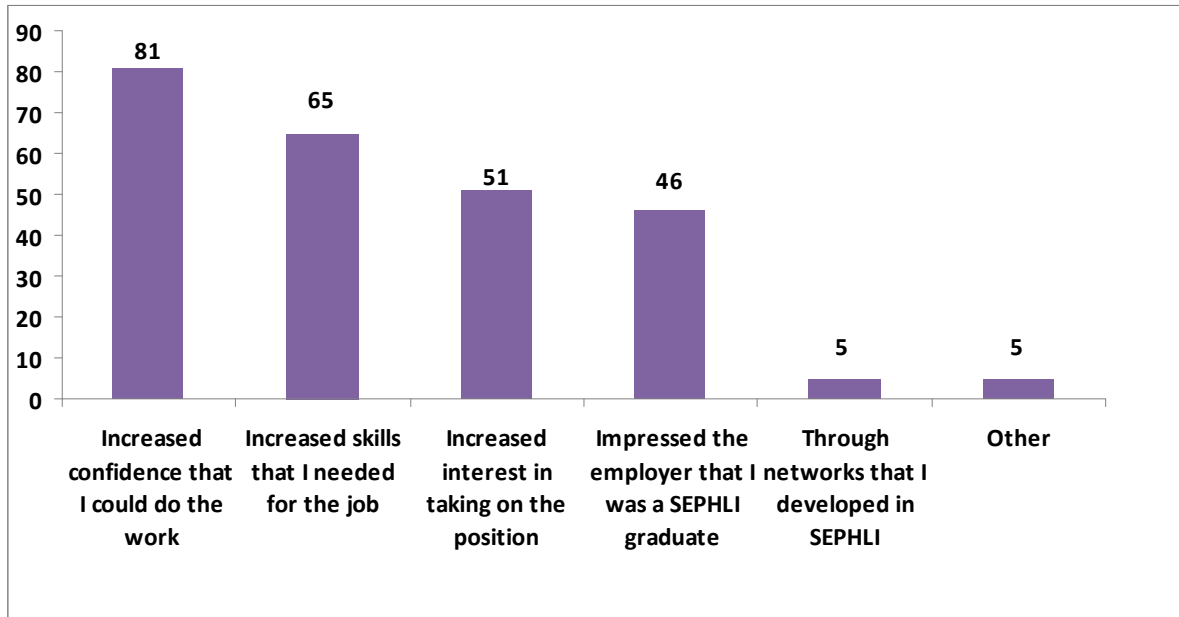
These numbers are too small to draw any particular conclusions, except that there are no large movements after SEPHLI from one level of government or type of organization to another.

**Figure 1: SEPHLI’s influence on changes in graduates’ jobs**



A decision to change positions or to change organizations is complex and multi-layered. Still, these 36 respondents were asked to “check all that apply” from a series of ways that SEPHLI could have influenced their job changes (Figure 8). In response, 81% attributed the change to an increased confidence they could do the work, while 65% credited the program with increasing the skills they need for the job. About 51% checked that the program had increased their interest in the position, while 46% responded that it had impressed the employer that they were a SEPHLI graduate. Only 5% responded that networks developed through SEPHLI had influenced the job change.

**Figure 2: SEPHLI’s influence on graduates’ job changes since graduation (Percent)**



A few scholars explained in the survey how SEPHLI may have influenced changes in their jobs. Often these changes were mediated by increased skills and confidence:

*When I entered SEPHLI I was in a leadership position over 1 employee. My supervisor felt I had the skills and potential needed, but not the confidence to move into a higher position. She realized, if I understood the value of what I did, and how to improve or enhance my abilities, I would become very successful in Public Health. She was correct, after going through SEPHLI, I have gained the awareness needed to move up to where I am now. I am currently over 3 different programs in Community Services and have over 40 employees under my supervision.*

*Became the Army Reserve Company Commander of the only medical unit in [my state]. Additionally appointed to be Commander of four units altogether. Ended up being awarded the Meritorious Service Medal following these assignments. I was ALWAYS complimented on my organization, leadership, & communication skills that I firmly believe were enhanced thru SEPHLI.*

*My personal leadership skills were assessed and provided me with my strengths and weaknesses. This information allowed me to work on my weaker abilities and enabled me to have confidence to take on my new role as County Director of 2 local county health departments.*

**Question 1.5. What were the main sectors of employment and practice disciplines of scholars before and after SEPHLI?**

SEPHLI only influenced job changes of 21% of respondents, and that even when SEPHLI had influenced changes in jobs, there were no apparent patterns to the changes.

Data for *all graduates* – whether or not SEPHLI had influenced any changes in their jobs – follow the same trends. There were no discernable or significant changes in the scholars’ employment or practice disciplines from before the program until the time of this survey.

To show these findings in greater detail, one survey question asked about the sector and level of employment when the scholar enrolled in SEPHLI, and currently. The great majority worked for local or state governmental public health organizations both when they enrolled (97%) and currently (85%) (Table 4). There was a modest net migration of scholars (9 scholars out of 178 respondents) out of governmental public health and into private organizations, academia, and other settings. This seems to be a low number over a 10-year period. These numbers refer only to survey respondents, and it could be that non-respondents had more often left governmental public health.

SEPHLI scholars come from a wide range of disciplines (Table 4). There were no noticeable transitions in these data, except for a very small increase in the number reporting that they were health directors or assistant health directors. While intriguing, the numbers are too small to record a statistically significant trend.

**Dorothy Cilenti, DrPH (c), MPH, MSW, Deputy Director for Operations, North Carolina Institute for Public Health, shares her experiences as a former local health director in North Carolina. Cilenti is a SEPHLI graduate and was formerly director of the departments of health in both Alamance and Chatham counties, in addition to having served at the state level.**



**Table 4: Graduates' Employment During SEPHLI and Now**

	<b>Before SEPHLI N = 176 (Percentage)</b>	<b>After SEPHLI N = 178 (Percentage)</b>
<b>Sector and Level of Employment</b>		
Government Public Health		
Local (city, county, district)	41	37
Regional	1	2
State	56	48
Federal	0	1
Other organizations		
Private organizations (business, non-profits, for-profits, hospital)	0	4
Academic institutions (college, university or high school)	2	4
Non-academic public organizations (e.g. police)	0	1
Other (student, finance department, state education)	0	2
<b>Primary Current Practice Discipline</b>		
General administration other than Health Director or Asst. Health Director (e.g. Accountant, Planner, Researcher, Evaluator)	35	34
Health Director/Asst. Health Director	10	13
Nursing	11	12
Epidemiology	8	6
Preparedness	7	7
Medicine & Labs	5	5
Environmental Health & Sanitation	5	4
Health Education/Health Promotion	5	3
Community services	5	2
Nutrition	2	2
Other (Animal Control, Board of Health, Communication, Consulting, Dentistry, Education, Engineering, Maternal & Child Health, Performance Improvement & Systems, Scientist, Social Work, Statistician, Training)	9	12

### Question 1.6. Did SEPHLI influence the educational plans of scholars?

A few scholars noted that SEPHLI had encouraged or helped them to continue their education:

*[SEPHLI] encouraged me to continue my education and allowed me to see public health as a career not a job.*

*[SEPHLI] made me realize just how energized I am when doing larger leadership activities. It has re-infused me with energy and I go back to the principles I learned to "re-energize" myself. I'm very interested in pursuing more education in public health leadership.*

*SEPHLI definitely helped me to see personal leadership as something that requires work and practice, so I am using that knowledge in my current position, and I'm confident that when I return to public health, my improved skills will be put to good use. I think my participation in SEPHLI also probably helped me to get accepted to graduate school (Epidemiology PhD) which will help me to improve my technical skills and knowledge, so overall, I think it was beneficial personally, and hopefully someday to public health practice.*

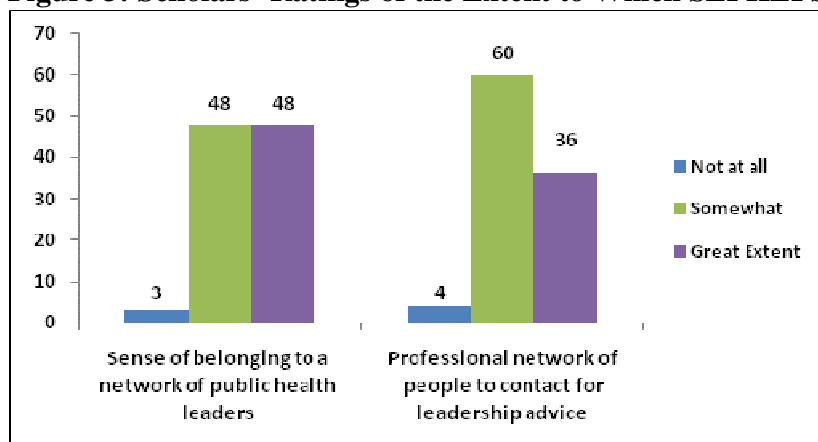
*[I] became so motivated to have a greater impact with the healthcare delivery system, that after 20 years as a Physical Therapist I decided to become a physician. I am now in the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine program, with goals to get an MPH later on.*

### Question 1.7. Did SEPHLI strengthen scholars' networks?

#### Direct Network Development Effects: Knowledge-Sharing

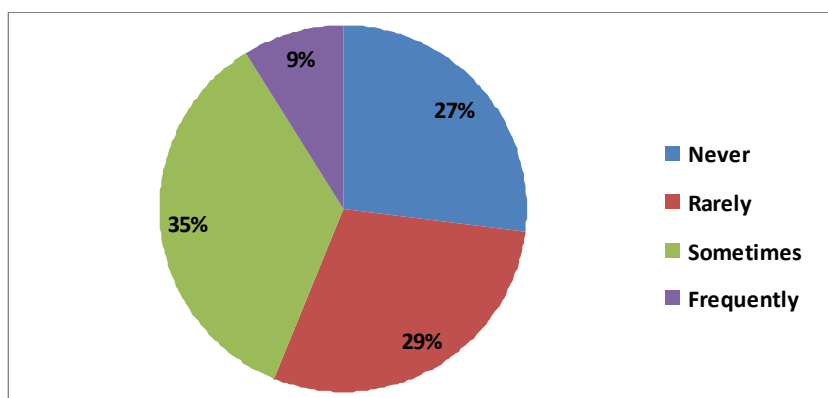
Graduates were asked about network improvements through several kinds of questions. First, they were asked general questions about whether SEPHLI had strengthened knowledge-sharing networks. Almost 97% percent responded that the program moderately or greatly strengthened their sense of belonging to a network of leaders in public health, while 96% percent responded that the program moderately or greatly strengthened the professional network of people they can contact for ideas about how to handle leadership situations (Figure 9).

**Figure 3: Scholars' Ratings of the Extent to Which SEPHLI Strengthened Networks**



Even though in the questions above scholars reported strengthened networks, the majority indicated that they never (27%) or rarely (29%) ask for or give another SEPHLI graduate “wise counsel” about leadership situations they are facing. Only 9% reported frequently doing that, while 35% reported sometimes doing so. Only 5% of the graduates that assumed new jobs after SEPHLI indicated that networks they created through the program influenced their obtaining the new position.

**Figure 4: In the past 24 months, how often have you asked for or given another SEPHLI graduate some "wise counsel"?**



Thus, the quantitative data from the survey indicate that knowledge-sharing networks may be developing both during and after the program, but it was not clear that they were actually contacting one another frequently to share information. When asked for statements of overall SEPHLI benefits in the survey, several graduates remarked about the benefits of getting to know scholars from other places, but most of these were comments about the value of meeting other scholars *during SEPHLI*, rather than about developing helpful relationships *long-term*. These comments are illustrative:

*[The] biggest influence was meeting other county directors in other states and learning about their day to day responsibilities. Exposure to different positions of authority made me realize that I could make a difference in the community.*

*SEPHLI has allowed me to broaden my networking across several states and to understand how different states work and create their systems.*

*Participation in SEPHLI helped provide a stronger understanding of public health issues and helped further my leadership skills. My background is more related to environmental regulation and protection. As a newcomer to public health at the time I participated in SEPHLI, I was exposed to many different aspects that helped improve my understanding. Also, having the opportunity to work with scholars from other states broadened my knowledge of public health issues and organizations outside of West Virginia.*

*SEPHLI helped me realize that most public health professionals face the same problems: lack of trained manpower, governmental bureaucracy, and funding shortages. Through discussions with other students I learned how other areas are dealing with these issues.*

*Great adventure and increase[d] my love of Public Health. I was motivated by the caring and knowledgeable peer[s] that I met in SEPHLI.*

*[This] has been my only opportunity to meet leaders from other states- invaluable!*

*SEPHLI is a tremendous benefit to the development of public health by having leaders and emerging leaders collaborate, learn, reflect on the history and synthesize new solutions to problems. Ideas spread faster when you network with people outside your paradigm.*

Only a few respondents described ongoing knowledge-sharing relationships built through SEPHLI, after graduation:

*SEPHLI opened up a whole new world of resources that have been very important to me. I became far more familiar with productive ways to network electronically (message boards, focused conference calls). I also formed relationships within my state that have continued to be very helpful. It's almost like a trusting alumni group that can go for long periods without contact, but when a project emerges that you needs cross cutting*

*collaboration, your partners are there and there is instant productivity. Almost like a shorthand language exists between SEPHLI graduates.*

Another described receiving specific help with a project after consulting with other graduates:

*SEPHLI helped me to develop the idea (change the mindset) within the organization that diabetes education is an area that we can and should get into, is appropriate for our mission, and is sorely lacking in our community. It helped by networking with other states that provide care and shared their resources.*

## Ongoing Collaboration

Another feature of some networks is collaboration around problems of common interest. While there was evidence that at least some graduates were sharing knowledge during and, to some degree, after the program, there was little evidence that graduates were collaborating in the long run on common problems.

Only a few survey or interview comments yielded significant evidence of ongoing collaboration. One scholar, a workforce development coordinator at the state level, described how SEPHLI helped her state health department form a long-term partnership with the North Carolina Institute for Public Health (which runs SEPHLI). SEPHLI forged a relationship with the NCIPH and was the first in a series of collaborations with staff from various units in the NCIPH including the Southeast Public Health Training Center and the North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness. The coordinator became SEPHLI's major liaison and scholar recruiter in this state, and then as coordinator of all workforce development for the state, continued to work with these NCIPH programs that address the southeastern region. This example will be described in more detail under "program changes" later in this report.

Another scholar reported asking one of the SEPHLI faculty to speak at a later meeting:

*Developed a good working relationship with Dr. Ed Baker, who I have recruited to speak about accreditation at our Tennessee Public Health Association's Annual Conference which I preside over in August of this year.*

Apart from these examples, there was little evidence that SEPHLI graduates were continuing to collaborate with other graduates or faculty after SEPHLI concluded.

## Indirect Network Effects: SEPHLI Graduates Build Collaborations and Partnerships

Evidence about SEPHLI's *indirect* influence in the development of networks came from scholars' statements about efforts they had undertaken to improve programs, organizations, systems and partnerships, and policies. A major theme in these stories of change was that graduates used "collaborative" or "teamwork" methods to facilitate these changes, following the counsel of SEPHLI courses about collaborative leadership. This style of leadership led to short-

term relationships in the context of the specific project work described, but scholars sometimes also described longer-term partnerships or collaborations that were formed.

Responses such as those below show a downstream, indirect SEPHLI network development effect between organizations or within communities. Many more such examples are provided below under sections on improvements in programs, organizations, systems, and policies, but repeat a few of them here to show how scholars' work builds lasting collaborations.

One scholar explained:

*[SEPHLI assisted me with a] program change ... institution of Medical Reserve Corps [MRC] groups in the region to assist with medical surge capacity. I studied the concept, and wrote the original federal grant application for five counties in my region. SEPHLI contributed to the change in that the teamwork concept was, and continues to be, very important in implementing MRC units within the region. We collaborate and hold trainings of our volunteers together, I am responsible for conducting many of these trainings or finding a collaborative partner to deliver the needed trainings, and we also meet to discover additional ways in which our volunteers can be utilized to keep them interested and involved, i.e. health fairs, influenza vaccination clinics, etc. This change is extremely important because we are in a primarily rural region where many of our volunteers wear numerous hats; therefore, volunteer medical workers are at a premium. In the event of a public health emergency, we realize that we will not have adequate staff to support the community's needs, and the only way we can hope to do so is through volunteers who will step forward to help out as needed.*

A microbiology supervisor in a state health department cited this impressive outcome, again rooted in collaboration and teamwork concepts learned at SEPHLI:

*Through the local university, the findings on my SEPHLI workforce development project were published and then used to obtain a grant for a new Allied health associate and certificate program that will provide help to a shortage of laboratory personnel. I serve on the consultant board for this degree program. I have learned [with contributions from SEPHLI] that I should not just depend on myself to accomplish projects. Working as a team pulls in expertise from areas in which I am not familiar, providing my project a better outcome. I have established partnerships with the local university and with the Department of Health and Human Resources commissioner's office to tap into resources that I thought were previously unavailable to me. It helps me to reach my goals.*

A nursing supervisor in a local health department described this outcome, aided by SEPHLI partnership concepts:

*The project that I was involved in with SEPHLI was the development of a Teen Health Clinic involving cross disciplinary staff and several community partnerships. ... It has led to a 30% increase in the number of teens in Family Planning clinics, a 60% increase in utilization by African American teens, and great buy-in from the community. SEPHLI*

helped me by providing a framework to address community partnerships, use systems thinking and advocacy to get to this point.

One graduate who works in animal control in a local health department described using his SEPHLI project to bring together invested parties in the community, leading to an annual program:

*We had often talked about increasing collaboration with the veterinary community by providing public health forums where we could share animal control information and field any concerns they had with our program. The forum was the primary goal of our SEPHLI project, and we completed it with great success. ... We can't provide our services without good communication with the veterinarians in our area. This has opened up an avenue where we are giving back to them, honoring them, and creating value for our view of them and all they assist us with in our daily activities..... This forum yields an annual time of sharing and thanks to a group that is often overlooked by the public for their part in public health.*

Thus, while ongoing collaboration between SEPHLI graduates appeared minimal, graduates appeared to be widely collaborating with others in their states and communities, partly under the influence of SEPHLI teaching about collaboration, partnership, and teamwork as a leadership method.

The next section explains more about SEPHLI's impact on programs, organizations, systems, and policies.