



NATIONAL
QUALITY FORUM

Multistakeholder Input on a National Priority: Improving Population Health by Working with Communities—Action Guide 2.0

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This second version of the Action Guide incorporates input from a range of groups working to improve population health who field tested version 1.0. This report is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services under contract HHSM-500-2012-00009I Task Order HHSM-500-T0004.

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Why Focus on Improving Population Health?

The United States has relatively poor overall health outcomes compared to many other developed nations, faces unsustainable healthcare costs, and continues to grapple with significant disparities in health status. Improving population health through collaborative efforts is an important part of the solution. The health of the total population cannot be effectively addressed by only one type of organization. Public health agencies, the vast healthcare sector, and many other contributors are all critically important, as health is the result of a number of complex determinants and requires coordination and partnership among many stakeholders.

Many factors influence health and need to be addressed in a coordinated way across multiple sectors. Working together, much more can be accomplished than any one person or organization can do alone.

The ways in which partners come together to improve health can take many forms, such as a local coalition involving leaders from businesses, community service organizations, healthcare institutions, health plans, and a public health department; diverse governmental agencies working more closely toward mutual objectives; or a large multistakeholder group taking action across counties or a state. There is no “one size fits all” solution, but there are lessons to be learned from research and experience.

Many people think of medical care when talking about how to improve health; however, medical care has a relatively small influence on overall health when compared with behaviors such as smoking and poor diet, physical environmental hazards such as polluted air and unsafe roadways, and social factors like unemployment, low educational achievement, and poverty.¹ Because the issues are wide-ranging and the pressure to improve health and reduce healthcare costs is tremendous, sustained population health improvement requires coordinated efforts.

Public health professionals have focused on population health improvement for many years at the tribal, local, state, and national levels. In the public health system, there are different levels of capacities and resources, skill sets, and coordination with partner organizations. The potential for accreditation is an important development to advance the effectiveness of public health agencies in fulfilling their mission. Of the 11 areas in which accredited public health agencies are held accountable, at least four get to the heart of population health improvement: monitor health status and understand health issues; protect people from health problems and health hazards; give people information they need to make healthy choices; and engage the community to identify and solve health problems.²

Healthcare providers, health systems, and health plans also have a responsibility to improve health outcomes. This requires taking an active role in promoting and improving healthy populations, rather than simply engaging with individuals when they are injured or sick. Making this shift is almost countercultural for some in the healthcare system, as American society tends to value personal independence and responsibility, and can be skeptical about coordinated efforts involving public and private organizations.³ But the pressure to move in this direction is increasing. Fortunately, many

hospitals, provider groups, health plans, and other healthcare stakeholders have a history and mission of responding to the broader needs of communities and vulnerable populations, and can share lessons learned from their experiences.

Beyond healthcare and public health, the concept of “health in all policies” suggests that even those who may not think of their work or actions as being about health — such as employers, community advocates, housing organizations, schools, universities, jails, military bases, transit systems, Native American tribes, land developers, and the like — make decisions and create environments that can help or hinder good health for the overall population or for a specific subpopulation. A few examples include:

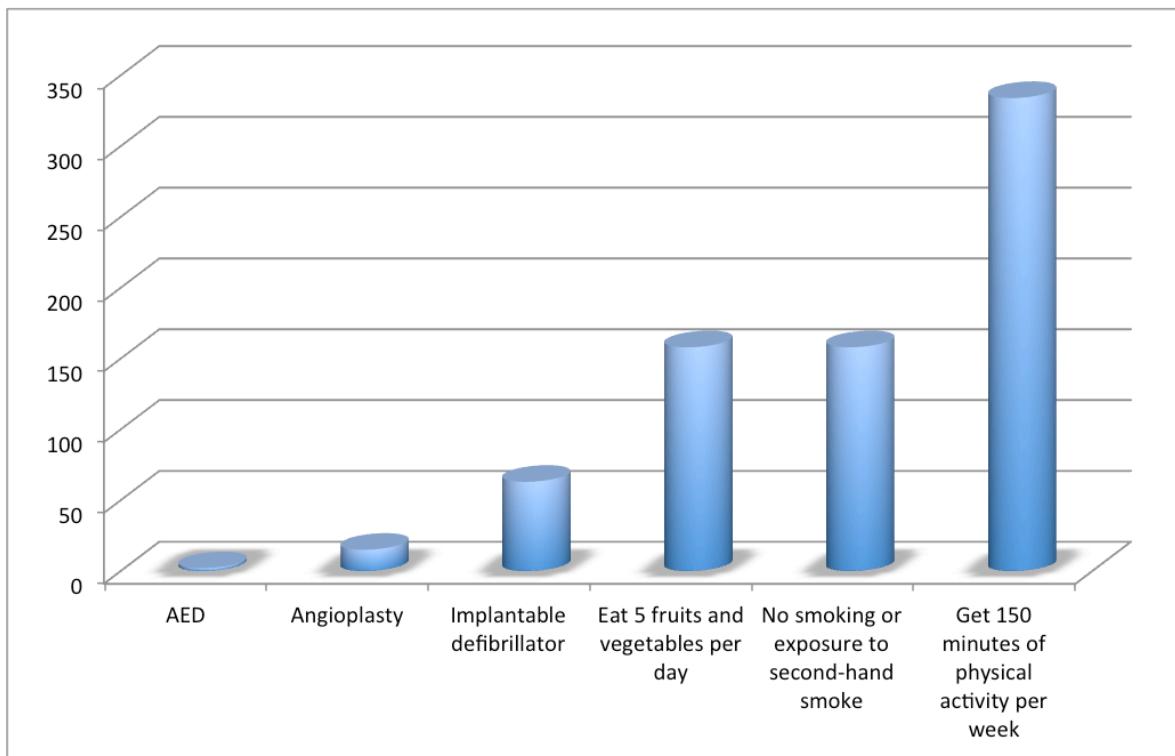
- **Business leaders and purchasers in the public and private sectors** deal every day with the direct and indirect impact of poor health of their employees and family members. This appears as higher direct healthcare costs; for example, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), chronic disease such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes accounts for 75 percent of the \$2 trillion spent on medical care. In addition, the CDC estimates that the indirect cost of employee absenteeism, turnover, short-term disability, workers compensation, and reduced work output may be several times higher than direct medical costs.⁴ The gradual shift to more sedentary types of jobs is likely a contributing factor in weight gain and obesity among workers. Over the past five decades, average energy requirements for jobs have decreased; however, well-designed workplace physical activity promotion programs can be effective.⁵ Beyond striving for a healthier workforce, many businesses also recognize the value of supporting healthier communities through activities such as volunteering time and financial donations to housing projects, educational mentoring, and neighborhood safety initiatives.
- **Parents and other family members** are at the center of influence on the current and future health of children. Children’s behaviors, such as eating and activity habits, can be affected both intentionally and unintentionally by the people around them. Certain negative life events or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can have a lasting impact on well-being, and include verbal abuse, living with a problem drinker, separation or divorce of a parent, mental illness in the household, and physical abuse.⁶ For people younger than 18, these experiences can cause toxic levels of stress or trauma, increasing the likelihood of poor physical and mental health, in addition to lower educational achievement, lower economic success, and impaired social success in adulthood.⁷ When families and their larger social support systems help minimize the exposure of children to ACEs — and teach kids resiliency and other coping skills — this can positively affect the health and well-being of the next generation.
- **Schools** are where children spend many hours of their day for much of the year. Not only is education an important influence on long-term health, but schools can serve as a hub for many more immediate health-promoting activities. For example, the Green Strides initiative of the U.S. Department of Education promotes sharing best practices and resources related to health and the environment, addressing issues such as air quality near schools and asthma.⁸

There is also a financial impact to consider. The cost of poor health is staggering, but there is evidence that certain efforts to improve health can save money. Some examples:

- Investing in “community building” — such as advocacy to support low-income or affordable housing, economic and workforce development, environmental improvements, and educational opportunities, among others — is an effective strategy for improving population health, and there can be a financial return on investment. For example, early quality child care and education have been found to have long-term positive effects, with every dollar invested saving taxpayers up to \$13 in future costs.⁹
- Health-promoting policies can save money in multiple ways. For example, researchers estimated that prohibiting smoking in all U.S. subsidized housing could potentially save approximately \$341 million in healthcare costs related to secondhand-smoke exposure, as well as millions more in avoided renovation expenses and fire damage due to smoking.¹⁰
- In Camden, NJ, leaders recognized that a relatively small number of people who frequently used hospital services were generating about 90 percent of the hospital costs. One patient had come to the emergency department 113 times in a single year. Healthcare providers alone could not solve this problem. However, by taking a community-based team approach to addressing the social and personal needs of these patients — including housing, food, home visits, and social contact — they were able to stabilize the health of this subpopulation and head off medical issues that could cost millions of dollars to address. Their coordinated efforts resulted in a 40 percent reduction in emergency department visits and a 50 percent decrease in hospital costs.¹¹

Figure 1 shows a clear example of how working on health improvement is much more effective than waiting until people get sick and need medical care. Within a population of 100,000 people ages 30-84, it was estimated that far more deaths could be prevented or postponed if everyone followed basic guidelines for good health when compared to the impact of consistently and appropriately using key heart-related medical interventions.¹²

Figure 1. Estimated Number of Deaths Postponed or Prevented in a Year by Meeting Good Health Guidelines, Compared to Consistently and Appropriately Using Heart-Related Medical Services¹³



A death prevented or postponed avoids the direct and indirect costs of illness and disease caused by poor health. Heart disease and death caused by smoking or obesity, for example, doesn't happen quickly: the years of poor health result in much higher medical costs, plus the cost of absenteeism and reduced productivity at work.

Ideally these issues should be addressed as far upstream as possible, fostering a culture of health within communities and encouraging children to develop healthy habits. Behaviors established in childhood are often more likely to become lifelong activities, and attempting to adopt and promote new behaviors in adulthood can be particularly challenging for individuals and healthcare providers. Special consideration may also be needed for certain subpopulations — for example, Medicaid patients with asthma who have variability in both physiology and in influences from their social and physical environments.

Above all, improving population health is about making life better for real people: our children and families, co-workers, neighbors, and ourselves. Preventing and postponing disease increases the odds that every child and adult has the opportunity to reach her or his full health potential.

Pieces of the “population health improvement” puzzle are being developed and, in some areas, coming together to create a more complete and effective effort. For example, establishing Accountable Care Organizations that align goals and perspectives across certain healthcare organizations is one approach, but not the same as a comprehensive effort to improve population health. Creating clear incentives is certainly an essential part of the big picture. This is taking place in programs such as Medicare Shared

Savings, the IRS community benefit rules for nonprofit hospitals, public health accreditation, and the growing use of health impact statements as part of public policy decisionmaking. However, certain pieces of the puzzle needed to achieve better population health at the local, state, and national levels are still missing or hard to find.

Even with a shared commitment to improving population health, this is challenging work. Coordinated collaboration is essential, but different individuals and groups may be motivated by competing incentives and interests that are not aligned. Capturing and sharing information can be difficult, not only because the technology involved may not be available or interconnected, but also because of differences in definitions, cultures, viewpoints, regulations, and available resources.¹⁴ Dedication to learning and applying best practices is needed to overcome these types of challenges.

What is this Guide?

This Guide is a handbook intended to be used by anyone who wants to improve health across a population, whether locally, in a broader region or state, or even nationally. Whether you are a community leader, public health professional, employer, healthcare provider, health plan administrator, policymaker, or consumer advocate interested in improving population health, this Guide contains recommendations, examples, and links to resources that can help you understand the issues and take action. It is organized in brief summaries of 10 elements important to consider during efforts to improve population health.

There are many reports, websites, tools and other resources for every aspect of population health improvement. While each item may be very helpful, the sheer volume can be overwhelming. ***This Guide is intentionally short, with links to more information when details are needed. It takes a broad look at the issues, while attempting to avoid duplication of the great work already done by others.***

As an essential forum for driving improvements in health and healthcare, the National Quality Forum (NQF), with funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), brought together a multistakeholder Committee to develop version 1.0 of this Guide through an open and iterative process. This Population Health Framework Committee (see [Appendix F](#) for the committee roster) includes population and community health experts, public health practitioners, healthcare providers, coordinators of home and community-based services, consumer advocates, employers, and others who influence population health. The committee membership and transparent process mirrors the multidisciplinary, collaborative nature of effective population health improvement.

This Guide is based on evidence and expert guidance about what works to improve population health. The Action Guide 2.0 incorporates feedback from multisector collaborative groups working on population health improvement in various regions across the country. These “field-testing” groups, listed in [Appendix G](#), provided important input on ways to improve the Action Guide 1.0 based on their practical experiences.

Population health improvement is not about starting a program with a short-term goal that, when reached, one can declare success, shut down the project, and go back to business as usual. Instead,

think of population health as an ongoing journey that requires contributions from many types of groups in different sectors across a region and at multiple levels. It is a team effort in which people take actions that, in some cases, fundamentally change how things are done. In other words, this Guide describes approaches that can help make lasting improvements in population health.

How to Use the Guide

Like a handbook or “how-to” manual, the Guide suggests 10 useful steps toward building or refining initiatives to improve population health. The Guide offers ideas, examples, and links to resources that provide detailed content for your consideration. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, so the content in this Guide should be tailored to suit different situations.

Standard Steps, Custom Approaches

The elements presented in this guide are intended to highlight best practices and resources for key topics, but the best way to improve population health depends on where the work is being done. Many types of organizations and people, personal decisions, and social and environmental situations influence the health of individuals, subpopulations, and populations. The mix and degree of impact from these influential factors, or determinants of health, differ by location.

Individuals who are newer to this type of work may benefit from reviewing the entire Guide in detail. Others may want to focus only on certain elements, or share relevant sections with partners for whom it may be more applicable. How insights from this Guide are applied for a given region will differ depending on specific circumstances. Brief examples of how the elements apply to the various field testing groups mentioned above are also provided throughout the Guide.

Start Where You Are

Whether you are refining ongoing efforts or starting a new venture, this Guide can help. In many regions, there are long-standing programs to improve population health. This Guide can be used to assess and further refine or expand such work. In other regions, bringing organizations together to improve population health may be new, so this Guide can be used to identify essential parts of the process as you move forward. Ideas for using this Guide include:

- **Prepare to get started:** Drive initial thinking about the current situation in your region and what likely needs to be done to succeed.
- **Bring others on board:** Share the insights you gain and encourage others to come to the table and participate in the initiative.
- **Take a deeper dive:** Use the description of each of the 10 elements for a general overview, then follow the hyperlinks under the examples and resources to dig deeper, explore options, and find what is most useful to your region.
- **Stay on course:** Consider posting or distributing the checklist on [page 12](#) as a quick reminder of the 10 elements and related questions.

Important Words with Clear Definitions

It's no surprise that there are differences in the words people use to describe this type of work, given the many types of organizations and individuals involved. Clear communication is critical to avoid misunderstanding and keep everyone focused on shared goals.

Although many words associated with population health may come up in discussions, the terms listed below are among the most important for establishing a common understanding. These definitions are based on the work of experts and multistakeholder groups focused on population health, and are intended to reduce confusion due to different meanings for the same word, or different words used to mean the same thing.

1. **Population Health** – The health of a population, including the distribution of health outcomes and disparities in the population.¹⁵
2. **Population (also, Total Population)** – All individuals in a specified geopolitical area.¹⁶
3. **Subpopulation** – A group of individuals that is a smaller part of a population. Subpopulations can be defined by geographic proximity, age, race, ethnicity, occupations, schools, health conditions, disabilities, interests, or any number of other shared characteristics.¹⁷
4. **Health** – A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.¹⁸
5. **Determinants of Health** – Factors affecting the health of individuals in a population or subpopulation, such as the social and physical environment, behaviors, and healthcare.¹⁹
6. **Health Disparities** – Differences in health status or health outcomes within a population.²⁰
7. **Health Equity** – The absence of systematic disparities in health or major social determinants of health between groups with different underlying social or economic advantages/disadvantages.²¹
8. **Health Inequity** – Differences in health status between groups with varying social and economic advantage/disadvantage (e.g., socioeconomic status, gender, age, physical disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, race and ethnicity) that are caused by inequitable, systemic differences in social conditions (i.e., policies and circumstances that contribute to health determinants).

When thinking about these terms and discussing them with others, there are a number of important concepts to keep in mind. For example, the definition of population used in this Guide includes everyone in a geopolitical area in order to promote a focus on improving the health of all individuals in a region, regardless of other characteristics. Geopolitical areas or regions can be determined by zip code, precinct, ward, county, district, metropolitan statistical area, state, multistate region, nation, continent,

or worldwide. In contrast, a geographic area might be less precise — such as along the coast or west of the mountains — and therefore may prove difficult in unexpected ways. Using boundaries that coincide with geopolitical designations may increase chances of finding useful data sources — for example, many population-based surveys use samples determined by geopolitical areas.²² Program funding and government regulation are often based on or defined within a geopolitical boundary, as well.

Subpopulations can be any group with shared characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, age, employment, educational status, medical condition, or disability, and so on. This can also include groups that might be relatively rare — such as people with “orphan conditions,” or people who are transgender — or some other defined group across long distances, especially because of the way technology and social networks enable people with shared characteristics to connect.

Using the definition of subpopulation is important for identifying inequities in health status (and related disparities in medical care, social services, and supports, etc.) among certain groups. The needs of relevant subpopulations should drive the goals and objectives for health improvement activities implemented by clinical care systems, public health agencies, and multisector partnerships and collaborations.²³ This promotes a “system within systems” approach where each of these sectors or organizations can work with a specific subpopulation (e.g., covered members, hospital referral area, or an at-risk group) in the context of a total population within a geopolitical area. This approach also accommodates the separate funding, implementation expectations, and data collection systems (often stand-alone) of the various sectors.²⁴ Addressing the health inequities of subpopulations in greatest need can also potentially have a significant impact on health of the total population.

The term “community” is often used interchangeably with “population” or “subpopulation”; however, that can lead to misunderstandings because there are many possible meanings of “community.” The boundaries of what defines a community are evolving, particularly in the era of the Internet and social media. To avoid confusion, this Guide refers to populations or subpopulations more than communities and does not define “community health” as a separate concept. However, an important aspect of community is the power of relationships and the interconnectedness of people, organizations, and systems within a community. Such “system” thinking and focus on relationships are very important to population health improvement work.

The definition of health used here encompasses a complete state of wellness. The World Health Organization established this broader definition and has used it consistently since 1948. It can be helpful to recognize that this definition describes an aspirational state, and that resilience and maximizing well-being are important for a given set of circumstances. Understanding population health also requires noting the variation in health within subpopulations of people in the total population. It includes looking at patterns of health determinants, and the policies and interventions that link health determinants with health outcomes, both within and across populations.

Health is shaped by many factors, including individual biology, behaviors, and the physical and social environments where we live. Relationships with friends and family can have a considerable impact on health. These determinants combine to affect the health of individuals, subpopulations, and the total population. While access and use of healthcare services is often considered when thinking about health

improvement, healthcare has less of an impact on population health compared to other factors like the social, economic, and physical environment, and a person's individual behaviors.

Disparities in health usually refer to differences in health status or health outcomes when comparing groups within a subpopulation or the population overall. Health equity, simply put, is the absence of these differences in health status or outcomes among diverse groups of individuals. Groups that are most often considered when addressing disparities are defined by race or ethnicity, such as Blacks/African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans/Alaska Natives, in addition to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). This is an important first step; however, disparities should be assessed for all vulnerable groups—including people who are disabled, pregnant women, children, the elderly, and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) individuals.²⁵

Quick View: Action Guide Key Elements

Ten elements important in successful collaborative approaches to improving population health are listed below. Consider these when starting a new project, or when refining existing programs. They do not need to be addressed in order; however, some are closely related activities or steps.

✓	Element	Questions to Consider
	Collaborative self-assessment	<i>What is needed to foster effective collaboration on population health?</i>
	Leadership across the region and within organizations	<i>Which individuals or organizations in the region are recognized or potential leaders in population health improvement?</i>
	Audience-specific strategic communication	<i>What is the level of skill or capability to engage in effective communication with each of the key audiences in the region?</i>
	A community health needs assessment and asset mapping process	<i>Which organizations in the region already conduct community health needs assessments or asset mapping regarding population health?</i>
	An organizational planning and priority-setting process	<i>Which organizations in the region engage in collaborative planning and priority-setting to guide activities to improve health in the region?</i>
	An agreed-upon, prioritized set of health improvement activities	<i>What are the focus areas of existing population health improvement projects or programs, if any?</i>
	Selection and use of measures and performance targets	<i>Which measures, metrics, or indicators are already being used to assess population health in the region, if any?</i>
	Joint reporting on progress toward achieving intended results	<i>Which organizations in the region publicly or privately report on progress in improving population health?</i>
	Indications of scalability	<i>For current or new population health work, what is the potential for expansion within the region or to other regions?</i>
	A plan for sustainability	<i>What new policy directions, structural changes, or specific resources in the region may be useful for sustaining population health improvement efforts over time?</i>

See the full Action Guide v2.0 for details about each element, examples, and links to useful resources.

Ten Key Elements: Overview

A variety of factors are important for creating and sustaining successful approaches to improving population health. The elements in this Guide were identified based on research and assessments of existing resources and initiatives focused on improving population health. Many promising programs already include some or most of these elements. To improve the likelihood of long-term success, all 10 of the elements should be considered when starting a new project or when refining or coordinating programs already in place.

Each section below describes what the element is, why it is important, provides examples of how it can be done, and includes links to useful resources. The elements are numbered, but there is no specific order in which they must be addressed. That said, starting with the self-assessment may give you the best insight about your approach to the other elements.

Element 1: Collaborative Self-Assessment

What it is

Whether you are just getting started or working to refine existing population health improvement activities, taking the time to do a self-assessment can identify strengths and weaknesses during the planning or ongoing implementation of collaborative efforts. A self-assessment can be done using a formal process, an online tool, or just starting with a review of the elements in this Guide.

Field Testing the Action Guide: DASH-NY

Designing a Strong and Healthy New York (DASH-NY) is a coalition of a large number of partners across multiple sectors in New York State working on policy, systems, and environmental changes that can reduce the burden of obesity and chronic disease in New York's communities. After several years of work, the New York Academy of Medicine (the organization staffing DASH-NY) helped lead a self-assessment of their coalition in order to gain insight on how well their diverse coalition was working together to achieve common objectives. They used a tool called the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory to guide this process.

<http://www.nyam.org/dash-ny-program>

Why it is important

Completing a collaborative self-assessment creates a foundation for understanding the current situation and environment. The assessment can highlight the unique capabilities and limitations of different partners, and reveal where there is a need for more resources or attention. Results of a self-assessment are important for making informed decisions when identifying roles for different groups participating in the work, setting goals and objectives, developing strategies, creating plans, and taking steps to achieve the desired results.

The steps to take after the self-assessment depend on what you learn from it. For example, if the assessment indicates that there has been little or no collaboration in your region to improve health within or across the population, the next step might

be to identify and bring together a small group of interested stakeholders to build trust and explore how to get started. In contrast, a self-assessment that reveals multiple existing population health improvement projects in the region could call for bringing the project leaders together to forge new or

stronger connections. The assessment may also inform decisions about which organizations are particularly well positioned to participate in a broader multistakeholder effort.

How it can be done

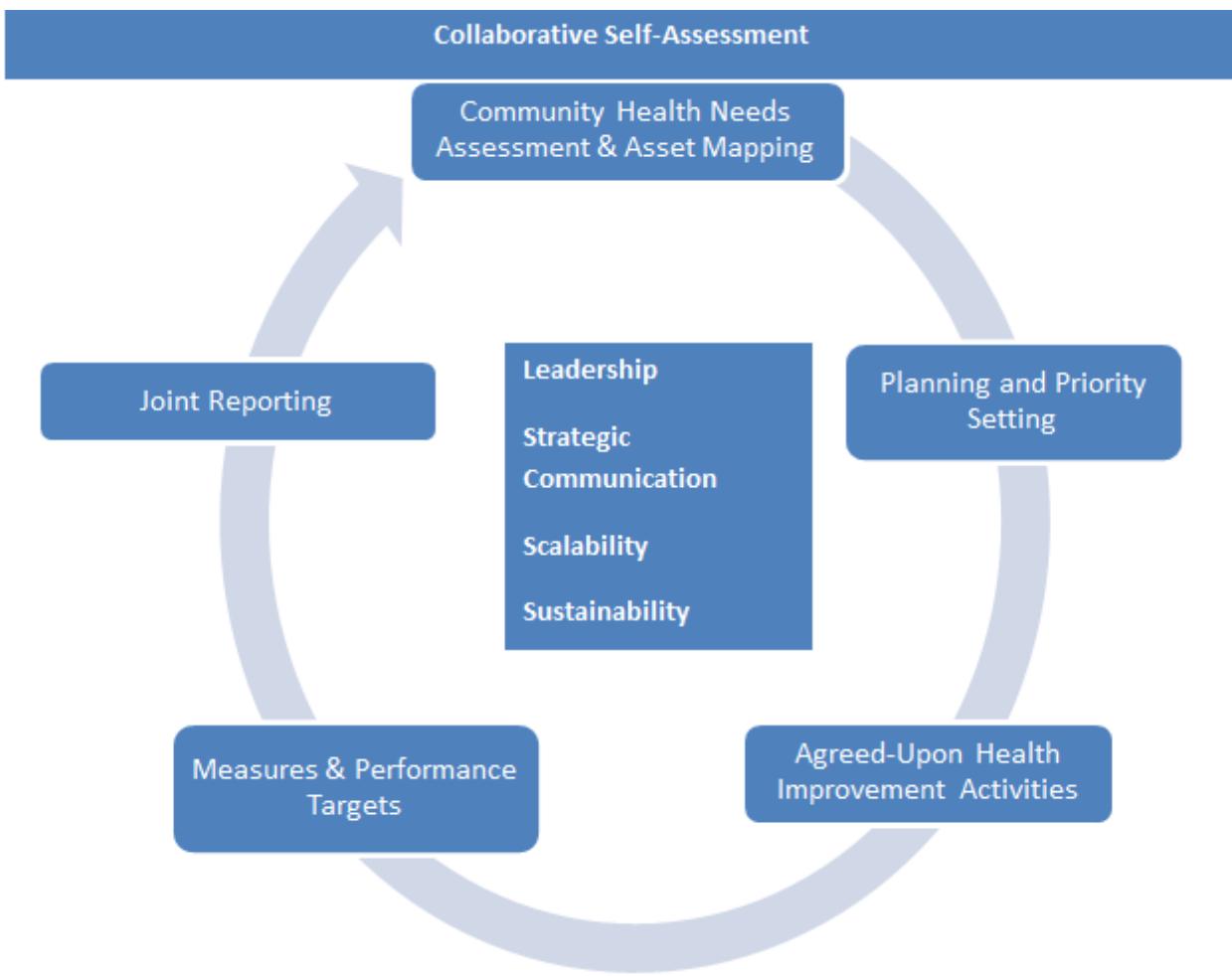
A self-assessment can be done informally, or by taking a more structured and resource-intensive approach. It may involve research, surveys or interviews of community members and key organizational partners, as well as other approaches to gather information. There are various tools and reports available to assist with self-assessments.

For each of the elements in this Guide, any number of questions might be explored during a self-assessment. Questions can help to generate ideas or hypotheses about how best to approach the work, including where to start. Exploring these questions in advance can also serve as an important reminder to ensure that sufficient resources, such as funding or time from key partners, will be allocated to each of the elements. The questions listed next to each element on page 12 can help kick-start the process.

The findings from a collaborative self-assessment should help identify the next steps to take. For example, the self-assessment may indicate that there is a lack of knowledge or agreement about the degree of collaboration already happening in a region, so a detailed mapping of community assets may help better identify existing population health improvement activities and partnerships. The results of the asset mapping could then inform next steps, such as determining what type of collaborative model may be most appropriate for the specific group of multisector partners (see the resource links below for more information).

After completing the self-assessment, the rest of the elements do not need to be followed in order. The elements should be addressed in a way that fits the regional situation. Certain elements do tend to flow together sequentially during implementation, while other elements are more relevant throughout the process. However, it is critical to consider each of the elements early, as mentioned above. For example, a plan for joint reporting of results should be considered at the start of a project to ensure prompt feedback on progress. The approach to addressing each of the elements may also need to be updated and adjusted at different times to adapt to changing conditions. Figure 2 shows one way to visualize the relationship among the various Action Guide elements.

Figure 2. Action Guide Elements



Additional resources for more information:

- **CDC Partnership Evaluation Guidebook.** This report describes six steps for evaluating the strength of your partnership. Each step is described, with illustrations or examples from real programs, and includes a checklist of tasks and worksheets for applying the concepts to your specific evaluation, as well as a summary of tips.
<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/partnershipevaluation.pdf>
- **Community Tool Box.** This is a toolkit with a detailed outline of issues to consider, additional linked resources describing different approaches and models of collaboration, and specific examples. Multiple questions are listed that can help bring focus to what is needed for effective collaboration. <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/creating-and-maintaining-partnerships>
- **Improving Community Health through Hospital-Public Health Collaboration.** Although this report focuses more on collaboration between hospitals and the public health sector, many of the insights are applicable for various other types of collaborative population health efforts. Appendix A of the report identifies “Core Characteristics of Successful Partnerships.”

http://www.uky.edu/publichealth/sites/www.uky.edu.publichealth/files/Research/hospital-public%20health%20partnership%20report_12-8-14.pdf

- **Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory.** This is a free tool to assess collaboration based on 20 research-tested success factors. The inventory takes about 15 minutes to complete. Scoring can be done manually or online.
<https://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Research-Services/Pages/Wilder-Collaboration-Factors-Inventory.aspx>

Element 2: Leadership Across the Region and Within Organizations

What it is

Simply put, leadership is the ability to guide or influence people. It is particularly important when bringing individuals and organizations together to accomplish a common task. Leadership has been the subject of study for centuries; it was part of the teachings of Confucius and Aristotle, and even appeared in Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. While the exact definition is still studied and debated, there are certain leadership skills and abilities needed to be an effective, trusted convener. These include cultivating a shared and inspiring vision, thinking strategically, applying individual and collective intelligence, managing relationships and roles, demonstrating shared accountability and recognition, using effective social skills in different situations, and being resilient, adaptable, and able to manage change over time. Leadership is important within an organization and across participating groups, especially when creating a collaborative culture. Coalition leaders act as an integrator, playing the important role of a quarterback.

Improving population health requires leaders in several types of organizations and individuals to work together. **At a minimum, this should include representatives from public health, healthcare, and other key stakeholders who are strongly invested in the affected population.**

The stakeholders who need to be involved may be diverse, such as consumer groups, local and state elected officials, tribal councils, Medicaid directors, employers and business leaders, educators, transportation officials, housing advocates, community service providers, health plans, the military, healthcare providers, corrections administrators, farmers, people with particular health conditions or disabilities, and faith communities. Each can bring important perspectives to the table, as well as unique experiences and skills.

In this type of work, leadership is more like putting together a complex puzzle, rather than directing the actions of others from the top of a pyramid.

Field Testing the Action Guide: Geneva Tower

Geneva Tower Health Collaborative is focused on improving the health of the residents of Geneva Tower, a 183-unit apartment complex in Cedar Rapids, Iowa which houses low-income elderly and/or disabled adults. Leaders from several types of organizations in the community recognized that the individuals in Geneva Tower were a particularly vulnerable subpopulation in need of extra support. The organizations proactively came together to better coordinate their services, reduce barriers to care, and identify ways to improve the quality of life for the Geneva Tower residents.

<http://www.mercycare.org/news/2015/mercy-and-abbe-center-chosen-to-guide-national-health-improvement/>

Why it is important

Leadership is needed to bring this variety of groups together. Whether it is a single leader or a small group of people who inspire and guide others to get involved, creating this kind of momentum does not happen without one or more identified leaders at the helm. This requires skills in managing relationships and roles, strategy, and helping others understand the benefit that they will get from participating.

Organizations at the table will likely have differences in perspectives, internal culture, terminology, and the value that they see in the work. Leaders of population health improvement initiatives must be able to create a collaborative culture, in part by building bridges across groups to create shared values and goals, while tapping into the unique motivations of the different organizations and individuals. An effective leader will have interpersonal and strategic skills in handling conflicts and challenges, such as addressing turnover among participating partners, securing time from key people who are already involved in several projects, and getting competing groups to join forces for a common cause. Good leaders consistently recognize and attribute success to all participating partners. Such leadership may be best provided by a trusted broker who understands the importance of being an informed, yet neutral convener.

Stakeholder organizations who are widely supported in a region and are recognized for their effective internal leadership may be natural candidates for taking on a broader leadership role. The selection of an individual leader could be as simple as considering three key questions: Does the person “fit” the current (or desired) culture of the multistakeholder group? Is the person open to learning and adapting? Does the person have a track record of being an effective leader?

Leadership is important at many levels. For example, participating organizations and individuals show leadership when they choose to take part in this work. In addition to building common ground among different groups, a crucial aspect of leadership takes place *inside* each organization involved. In other words, successful health improvement efforts involve people able to lead inside their own organizations to create an inspiring vision, and sometimes modifying existing approaches to better align their efforts with those of others. Success depends on the engagement, commitment, involvement, and support (financial and otherwise) from each organization.

How it can be done

Listed below are examples of reports or initiatives that address this topic.

- **Collective Impact.** As highlighted in a series of articles in the *Stanford University Social Innovation Review*, collective impact is a process where groups from different sectors commit to a common agenda to solve a social problem. Conditions for success include identifying a “backbone organization” to help plan, manage, and provide ongoing support for an initiative. http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact
- **Common Table Health Alliance.** This collaborative leads multiple population health improvement projects and oversees partnerships with around 200 organizations. Stakeholders include consumers, schools, hospitals, physicians, nurses, nutritionists, dentists, and other healthcare providers, medical advocacy and support groups, health plans, quality improvement

organizations, universities, employers, government (including Medicaid), media, youth groups, faith-based organizations, health-, fitness-, and recreation-related affiliates, and nonprofit agencies and foundations. The Common Table Health Alliance serves as a convener, bringing disparate elements of the community together to take a comprehensive view of health.

<http://commontablehealth.org/>

- **Community Toolbox.** This resource contains information about building leadership with several components, including multiple descriptive sections that cover various aspects of leadership, a checklist of leadership issues to consider, and an example — <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/leadership-ideas/plan-for-building-leadership/main>. Additionally, there is content about identifying and analyzing stakeholders that may be useful for leaders — <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/encouraging-involvement/identify-stakeholders/main>
- **The YMCA's Pioneering Healthier Communities (PHC).** PHC teams take a "shared leadership" approach with community partners, which led to the revision of YMCA directives and activities based on a broader view of health. One of the seven leading practices that came from these relationships is the need to "adapt to emerging opportunities."
<http://www.ymca.net/sites/default/files/pdf/phc-lessons-leading-practices.pdf>

Element 3: Audience-Specific Strategic Communication

What it is

Audience-specific strategic communication means customizing messages and approaches in ways that connect with the target audiences, including partner organizations, individual community members, and other stakeholders. Strategic communication is essential for all aspects of this work — across the active participants in the population health improvement work; with individuals and groups affected by it; and with others, such as elected officials and policymakers whose decisions affect health determinants, and news media members who raise awareness of activities and bring recognition to key partners. Although the vision and goals of the initiative should stay consistent, the content, style, and even the method of communication need to be adapted to speak to the values, priorities, and cultural filter of the intended audience. This requires cultural humility on the part of the communicator — understanding that what is intended may not always be what is heard. The goal of strategic communication is to understand the perspective of others and then communicate in ways that reflect that understanding.

Why it is important

Effective communication can make or break success. The wide range of organizations and individuals who have a role in improving health means that effective communication must take place in ways that span different cultures, terminology, literacy levels, goals, and values. Addressing differences across audiences requires culturally sensitive interaction, and is at the heart of strategic communication. This is essential for engaging and motivating individuals and organizational partners to work well together.

How it can be done

Many sectors use unique terminology that can be confusing, and this is especially true in healthcare and public health. Using words that are easy for everyone to understand, explaining commonly misunderstood terms, and avoiding acronyms are a few basic principles to follow. In addition, combining stories with meaningful data can help people emotionally connect with an essential message while also building credibility.

Field Testing the Action Guide: Oberlin Community Services and The Institute for eHealth Equity

Oberlin Community Services (OCS) is a nonprofit community services organization that has been operating in Oberlin, OH, for many years, initially as a food bank and then expanding to a fuller range of services. OCS is collaborating with The Institute for eHealth Equity (IeHE), which focuses on the use of technology to support individual decisions that lead to better health. One critical component of their partnership involves customizing messages to build trust and engagement among community members and leaders from local institutions, as well as making effective use of mobile communication technology.

<http://www.oberlincommunityservices.org>

<http://www.iehealthequity.org>

Communication that works for one group will not work for everyone. For example, some individuals and organizations are driven by business principles and will look for the value proposition and evidence of likely return on investment in any initiative. Understanding that time and financial resources are limited, and cost reduction is imperative, these groups will respond to discussions about improving health at the population level if there is a compelling business case. At the same time, some individuals and organizations engage in population health improvement because it reflects social values such as equity and fairness, dignity, and opportunity. In this case, discussing population health improvement using business-oriented perspectives and terminology may not be as effective.

Listed below are examples of reports or initiatives that address this topic.

- **The Goodman Center.** This is a resource devoted to helping organizations use stories to meet their goals. Effective stories help people remember, shape identity, and influence how they see the world. The tools on this site are focused on helping individuals and groups learn how to use stories in every aspect of internal and external communications.
<http://www.thegoodmancenter.com/>
- **Health in All Policies.** Exploring a collaborative approach to improving population health, “Health in All Policies” offers guidance for state and local governments on incorporating health considerations into diverse sectors of public policy. The glossary includes a comprehensive and generally applicable list of terms that spans health, business strategy, environmental planning, sociology, and policy. See specific communication guidance starting on page 101.
<http://www.phi.org/resources/?resource=hiapguide>

- **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – A New Way To Talk About The Social Determinants of Health.** This report highlights the findings of research on effective communication and creating compelling messages about social determinants of health, including best practices in language and framing, and use of data and information to support your case.
<http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2010/01/a-new-way-to-talk-about-the-social-determinants-of-health.html>
- **White Earth Nation Tobacco Coalition.** This action plan to reduce commercial tobacco use in the tribal community of White Earth in Minnesota is a good example of how to create culturally relevant outreach materials and policy. Materials are aimed at individuals, healthcare providers, and community institutions, and include the use of language specific to the tribal community, such as use and explanation of the word “Asayma” to mean “sacred tobacco.”
http://www.whiteearth.com/programs/?page_id=405&program_id=4#Tobacco

Element 4: A Community Health Needs Assessment and Asset Mapping Process

What it is

A community health needs assessment and asset mapping process is a way to take a comprehensive look at the health-related gaps or needs of a population, and potentially helpful resources or strengths. Needs assessments typically involve defining the geographic focus or the region of interest (e.g., zip code, county, state, service area), collecting and interpreting data (e.g., population characteristics or demographics, health status, access to services), and identifying and prioritizing the health needs in that region, in part by engaging and learning from members of the community itself.

Asset mapping is focused on the strengths or positive attributes of a region rather than deficiencies or needs. Assets can be tangible, such as financial strength, physical structures, businesses, or natural resources; or intangible, such as individual or organizational skills and capabilities, regional heritage, readiness for change that can lead to improvement, supportive public policy environment, resiliency and adaptability, or other special community characteristics or attributes.

While asset mapping and health needs assessments might be characterized as being separate and potentially at odds, they are complimentary and both need to be done. Health needs assessments and asset mapping processes should be combined to create a shared understanding based on a more complete view of the region. An important source of information for both is the members of a community itself: engaging the community to understand their perceptions and priorities. Both asset mapping and health needs assessments are important ways to listen and learn about what is already in place and what is needed.

Why it is important

Conducting a community health needs assessment (CHNA) and asset mapping helps ensure that the selected priority areas for population health improvement align with actual needs and make best use of resources. Doing this work as a larger collaborative of organizations, rather than developing competing reports, increases the likelihood of effectiveness, eliminates duplication of effort, reduces expenditures, and creates a shared understanding among all of the groups involved in the initiative. Learning from each other can be a powerful way to make more rapid progress.

Many groups have been conducting needs assessments for accountability and planning purposes. The use of community health needs assessments has been growing quickly and presents one of the most fertile opportunities for coordinated population health improvement efforts. Existing or new incentives to conduct health assessments include:

- National accreditation for public health departments
- Program requirements of Federally Qualified Health Centers
- USDA support for schools to provide healthy nutrition for children
- Regional Extension Centers' need for assessments in rural areas
- Rules that govern nonprofit hospitals registered with the IRS as a 501(C)(3) organization

For example, there are nearly 3,000 nonprofit hospitals in the U.S., according to the American Hospital Association, and each hospital is affected by an IRS requirement passed into law as part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).²⁶ Nonprofit hospitals are instructed to conduct a community health needs assessment once every three years — *in collaboration with public health entities and others* — and to develop and annually update a related “implementation strategy,” which is an improvement plan with measurable goals and objectives. The plan must address the health needs of the community, defined by the IRS as including “not only the need to address financial and other barriers to care but also the need

Field Testing the Action Guide: Kanawha Coalition for Community Health Improvement

The Kanawha Coalition for Community Health Improvement (KCCHI) was founded in 1994, when hospital engagement in wellness emerged from the Healthy Communities movement. Today, the collaborative works on community health issues in Kanawha County, WV, by bringing together about 100 key leaders to conduct a shared Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). It is their core product and is used by many groups. Their Steering Committee also engages community members by encouraging feedback and input to the CHNA.

<http://www.healthykanawha.org>

to prevent illness, to ensure adequate nutrition, or the need to address social, behavioral, and environmental factors that influence health in the community.”²⁷ Hospitals must conduct these assessments and implement related improvement plans or pay a sizeable fine. While market competition may be a factor when there is more than one hospital in the same region, the IRS regulations require a nonprofit hospital to consult with public health organizations and encourage collaboration with others in the same community, including other hospitals and medical systems.

In addition, the IRS has adopted a standardized nationwide reporting system (Schedule H filed with nonprofit hospitals’ annual Form 990) that captures more complete information about the community benefit activities of each hospital, and includes a standard definition of “community benefit.” Based on the IRS definition, nonprofit hospitals must engage in activities that include “community health improvement” provided directly by the hospital or through hospital support to community-based organizations. Community benefit may include “community building” activities that have a direct connection to promoting the health of the population served by the hospital. Examples of activities that might qualify include physical improvements and housing; economic development; environmental investments; leadership development and training for community members; coalition building; community health improvement advocacy; and workforce development.²⁸

Given the requirement that nonprofit hospitals must engage in community health needs assessments and annual improvement plans, report their population health improvement or community building activities, and demonstrate measurable impact from those activities, there is the potential for greater coordination of — and investment in — population health improvement aimed at meeting the specific needs of a region. It is also important to emphasize that other stakeholders such as health departments and community coalitions can play a crucial role in the ultimate success of community benefit activities.

How it can be done

Listed below are examples of reports, tools, or initiatives that address this topic:

- **Assessing and Addressing Community Health Needs.** This resource was developed to help not-for-profit healthcare organizations strengthen their assessment and community benefit planning processes. The book offers practical advice on how hospitals can work with community and public health partners to assess health needs and develop effective strategies for improving health in their community. It also includes ideas for data sources to understand the preferences and priorities of community members.
<http://www.chausa.org/communitybenefit/printed-resources/assessing-and-addressing-community-health-needs>
- **Community Commons – Community Health Needs Assessment Toolkit.** This toolkit is a free web-based platform designed to assist hospitals and organizations to understand the needs and assets of their communities, and work together to make measurable improvement in health in the community. <http://assessment.communitycommons.org/CHNA/>
- **DC Health Matters.** This is a community-driven, interactive web portal providing local health data, resources, best practices, and information about local events to help community

organizations and researchers understand and act upon health issues affecting DC communities. The database is a collaborative effort and a “living” project that continues to evolve as users contribute and share the information, which can be used to assess population health needs and assets. The website provides demographic, economic, and health data for the communities of the DC area and includes report creation tools. This is a good example of a collaborative resource useful for needs assessment and asset mapping: <http://www.dchealthmatters.org>. (Note: more than 100 communities have similar websites, based on the technology developed by the [Healthy Communities Institute](#), which support continuous health improvement. Other examples include <http://www.healthysonomia.org> and <http://www.ship.org>)

- **Vermont Blueprint for Health.** As part of the implementation of the Blueprint, various workgroups and teams are created, including a Community Health Team and an Integrated Health Services workgroup, to assess specific needs and coordinate efforts within the community and in the clinical care field.

<http://blueprintforhealth.vermont.gov/>

Element 5: An Organizational Planning and Priority-Setting Process

What it is

An organizational planning and priority-setting process is a clearly defined approach taken to define the goals and objectives of a population health improvement initiative — both within an organization and across organizations or groups that will collaborate. This is not simply an acknowledgement that

planning and priority setting will happen, but rather a deliberate step to define *when and what* planning will be done and *how* the participating individuals and groups will identify priorities. Other elements described in this Guide should be factored into the planning and priority-setting process.

The process should include planning for evaluation from the outset. Determining — up front — how you will assess, measure, and learn from the progress of the work over time will help define the path forward, and then guide decisionmaking and refinements along the way. Using clear approaches or models can inform how the evaluation is designed and implemented. This can include evaluating an overall initiative, measuring the success of key processes, assessing the impact of certain interventions, and tracking changes in health outcomes over time. These issues are

Field Testing the Action Guide: Empire Health Foundation (WA)

The Empire Health Foundation (EHF) is a private foundation focused on improving population health in Eastern Washington State. EHF helps convene public and private-sector partners to address community needs and priorities. For example, EHF contributed to Priority Spokane, a collaborative effort which included a formal planning process to improve high school graduation rates in their community (see Figure 3 below for a visual model of their action plan). Their organizational structure allows them to meet the evolving needs of the community and culture, while supporting innovative ideas.

<http://www.empirehealthfoundation.org>

discussed further under Element 7.

Why it is important

Given the need to build and maintain trust with participating organizations, being transparent about how decisions are made is a necessary foundation. Holding open meetings is one way to do this. In addition, establishing a unifying vision for the different participants helps promote enthusiasm for collaboration. But achieving results is what really motivates most people — that is, fostering healthier individuals, families, and populations, along with the related benefits of better health such as improved or sustained quality of life, lower healthcare costs, improved school readiness, less absenteeism, better productivity, and so on. Targeting at least some actions that can yield early successes provides incentive for continued work on longer-term goals.

Some may want to jump into getting the work done to achieve better outcomes, rather than spending time up front defining processes. However, taking a systematic, stepwise approach to planning and priority-setting and clearly communicating how that process is being followed can help prevent confusion, as well as enhance understanding of what is working well or not so well. It is important to recognize and address the goals and motivations of each group during the planning process so that all participants feel invested in the work. Over time, modifications to the process being used are likely to be needed as the initiative matures and adapts to changing circumstances.

In addition, evaluation is too often treated as an afterthought; this increases the likelihood of losing important information because it is not being captured while it is happening (or soon afterward). Incorporating evaluation into the process from the beginning also creates the opportunity to gather important information that will be useful for learning in real time to adapt and improve, and for making a compelling case to current and potential partners and funders.

How it can be done

Several models are available to use when defining and communicating the process that will be used for planning and setting priorities. For example, the table below offers criteria that can be applied when prioritizing population health problems, in addition to criteria to help choose actions to address the problem(s).

Table 1. Common Criteria for Prioritizing Population Health Problems and Interventions²⁹

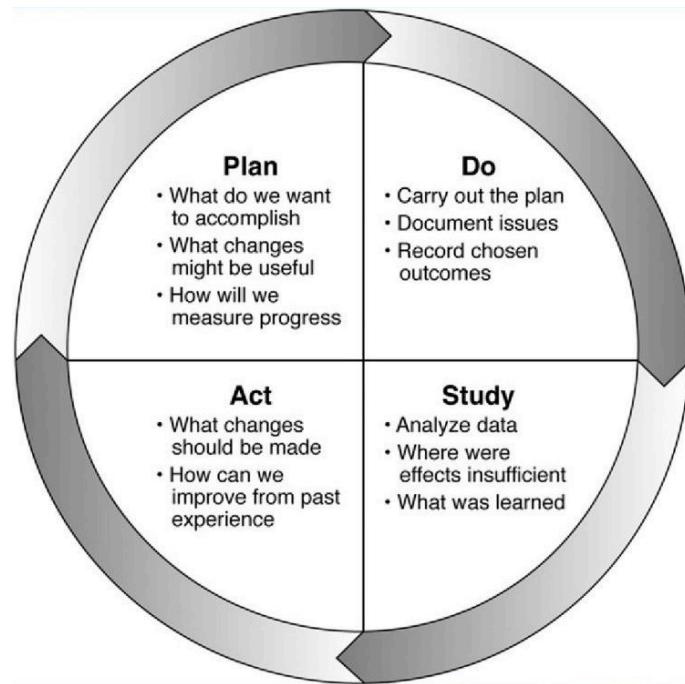
Criteria to Identify Top Priority Population Health Need(s)	Criteria to Identify Intervention(s) for Health Need(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impact of problem• Availability of effective, evidence-based solutions• Cost and/or return on investment• Availability of resources (staff, time, money, equipment) to solve problem• Urgency of solving problem• Size of problem (e.g., number of individuals affected)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expertise to implement the solution• Return on investment• Effectiveness of the solution• Ease of implementation or maintenance• Potential negative consequences• Legal considerations• Impact on systems or health• Feasibility of the intervention• Ability to influence private and public policies (for example, through monetary incentives) that can sustain the intended impact

Other examples of prioritization approaches include: the multivoting technique; use of strategy grids; the nominal group technique; the Hanlon Method; and creating a prioritization matrix. These are all described in detail in [a brief developed by the National Association of County and City Health Officials \(NACCHO\)](#).³⁰ The brief includes step-by-step instructions on how to use these approaches, with examples and templates. There is no right or wrong method for prioritization. What works best should be tailored to fit the situation.

Part of this process should involve the review of national priorities, as there is clear emphasis being placed on promoting health in all policies and creating regulatory and financial incentives that reward those who improve individual and population health. Top national priority areas, based on assessments of health needs across the country, are addressed in [Healthy People 2020](#) and the [National Quality Strategy](#). To achieve the greatest possible impact and maximize the potential benefits from alignment, consider where there are connections between the priority topics identified through the needs assessments, asset mapping, and national priorities for health improvement.

Once prioritization has taken place, the next step is to plan solutions drawn from evidence-based interventions and recommendations, such as those offered in the Guide to Community Preventive Services and National Prevention Strategy. Most planning models are cyclical, recognizing that these are not one-time activities but an ongoing process that should be designed to learn from what has already occurred and then adapted to improve the likelihood of success. Feedback loops are a key feature, deliberately seeking out information or input, then using it to improve. A helpful model is the “Plan-Do-Study-Act” process, illustrated in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycle.

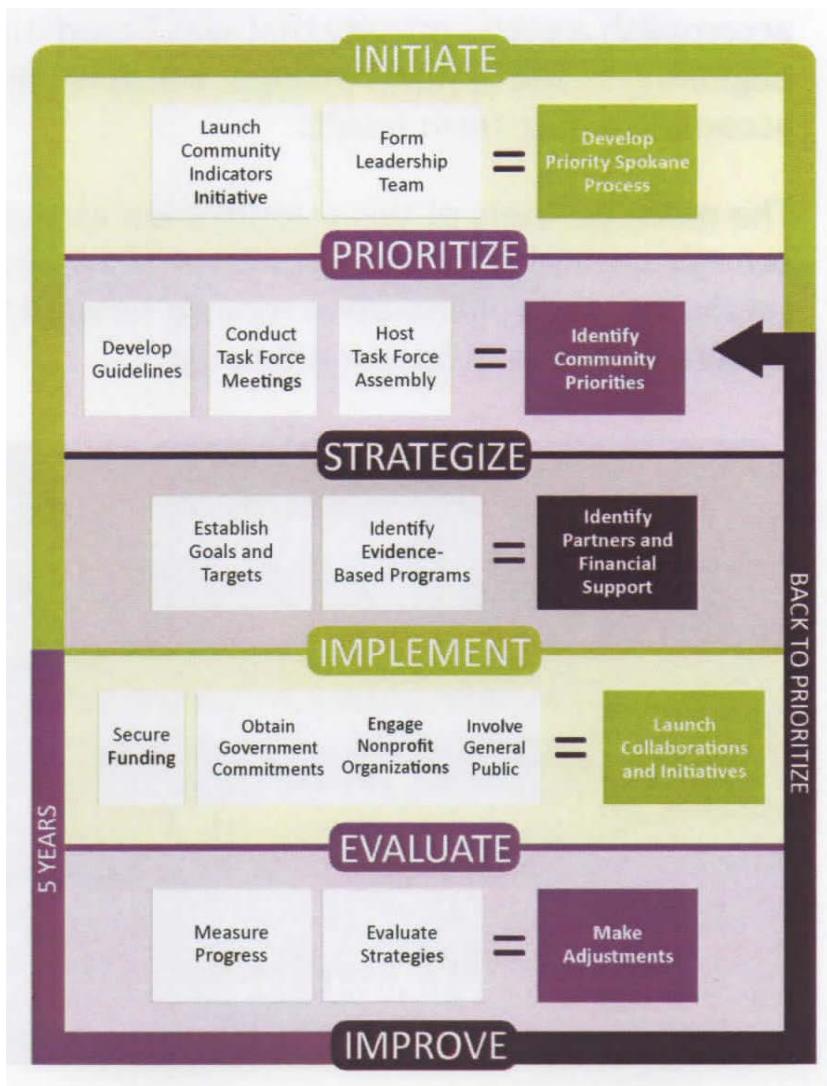


Source: Medscape / AGA 2012

In each of the segments in the Plan-Do-Study-Act model, there are steps that require more detailed thinking. For example, under the Plan step, when determining goals and changes that might be useful to improve health in your region, there are various ways to think about what actually impacts or drives health.

As mentioned above, a specific example of planning and priority setting can be seen in the approach of Priority Spokane. This effort involved defining a specific plan, which included prioritization and strategic components, followed by implementation and evaluation, and a feedback loop that informs further priority-setting. Figure 4 below illustrates the process, showing the various steps and their relationships.

Figure 4. Empire Health Foundation – Priority Spokane Approach



Listed below are additional initiatives and resources that address this topic:

- **Family Wellness Warriors Initiative.** This initiative includes one-on-one work with Alaska-native communities to plan, implement, and assess a three-year-model aimed at reducing domestic violence, abuse, and neglect. The three-year model and curriculum were developed by a steering committee of Alaska-native people and mental health professionals, who worked on adaptation and development for two years by analyzing research-based evidence and projects from around the world.
<http://www.fwwi.org/index.cfm>
- **Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP).** This is a community-driven strategic planning process for improving population health. It is a framework used by public health leaders and others to apply strategic thinking to prioritize public health issues and

identify resources to address them.

<http://www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/MAPP/index.cfm>

- **National Prevention Strategy.** This strategy envisions a prevention-oriented society where all sectors contribute to the health of individuals, families, and communities. It identifies federal actions and provides evidence-based recommendations for a variety of partners (e.g., state and local governments, employers, healthcare systems and insurers, educational institutions, and community, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations) to promote health across multiple settings. Priorities span clinical care delivery, community environments, and health behaviors, including: tobacco-free living, preventing drug abuse and excessive alcohol use, healthy eating, active living, injury and violence-free living, reproductive and sexual health, and mental and emotional well-being.

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/initiatives/prevention/strategy/>

Element 6: An Agreed-Upon, Prioritized Set of Health Improvement Activities

What it is

An agreed-upon, prioritized set of health improvement activities is a list of strategies and actions that will be taken by organizations or individuals involved in population health improvement initiatives. This requires identifying the needs (see Element 4), agreeing what the focus areas will be, then defining the specific “ask” for each of the participants, such as commitment of staff time, financial resources, changes in private sector approaches or public policy, communications, etc. Be clear about what each group is being asked to do, and what the benefit or value proposition will be for each group in return for participating. Together, the organizations identify one or a few high priority topics for which they will lead health improvement activities in the region. The priority topic or topics are identified as a result of shared planning, assessment, and decisionmaking. These priorities will drive the activities that each organization commits to doing with the people in the population or subpopulation(s) with whom they interact.

Why it is important

With so many factors that can influence health, even the best efforts of a solo project or program are at risk of having little impact. Population health is complex, involving multiple drivers and determinants, making it difficult for one organization alone to make a measurable difference. This can lead to a sense that the problem is too big to solve and that improving individual health and the health of the population overall is beyond the control of any single organization or type of group.

Organizations can accomplish far more together than a single one could ever do alone. By collectively identifying one or a few top priority focus areas, and individually committing to engage in specific activities that promote improved health related to the focus, the collective initiative is much more likely to make a lasting impact and see measurable improvement. This alignment also helps to create a shared awareness about the importance of the particular priority issue — whether that be reducing domestic violence or adverse childhood experiences, addressing depression and other mental health needs, reducing obesity, promoting stronger social and family connections that are important to overall well-being, or any other topic.

How it can be done

After drawing insights from the community health needs assessment and asset mapping process (Element 4), and identifying top priority focus areas, actions to address the priority topics or needs should then be considered in more detail. For example, an initiative called [ReThink Health](#) has developed a simulation model that can help groups predict the likely long-term effects of different activities, policy changes, financing, and other strategies on health outcomes, healthcare delivery, and costs. Using this tool can bring different options to life, spurring discussions about the value and impact of different interventions to address high priority needs.

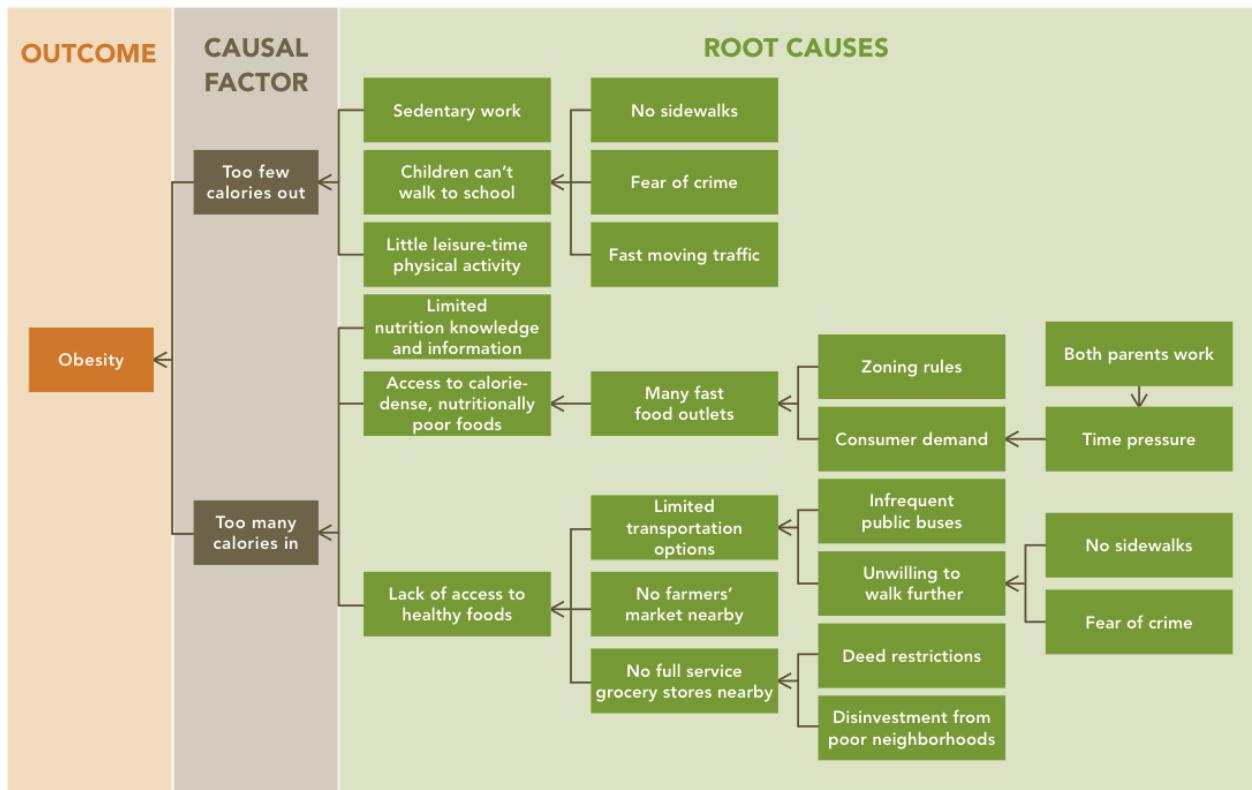
Another way to identify potential actions is to identify contributing factors and likely causes for a given need or problem, and then use this information to drive potential solutions. This can be done using a “root cause map” like the one shown below in Figure 5 that was developed for obesity.³¹

Field Testing the Action Guide: Trenton Health Team, Inc. (NJ)

The Trenton Health Team, Inc. (THT) is a collaborative made up of two hospitals and 29 community and social service agencies across Trenton, NJ. Through their Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), THT identified five priority areas of health improvement including: healthy lifestyles; substance abuse and behavioral health; safety and crime; chronic disease; and health literacy and disparities. By matching these priorities with the strengths and experience of partners such as the Children’s Home Society, the American Diabetes Association, the New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids-Healthy Corner Store Initiative, and the Henry J. Austin Health Center (a Federally-Qualified Health Center), THT was able to maximize existing assets and address collaborative health improvement goals.

<http://www.trentonhealthteam.org>

Figure 5. Root Causes of Obesity



Each outcome stems from causal factors, which can be traced to basic or root causes. Certain causes — stemming from genetics or biology, for example — may be difficult to address. On the other hand, root causes such as unsafe neighborhoods, poor access to affordable and healthy food options, a community ethic that tolerates unhealthy behavior, and so on, might illuminate possible actions or changes that can disrupt or eliminate a root cause of the poor health outcome. Maps like this can also spur discussion about other root causes to consider, especially when looking even further upstream — such as breast feeding of infants. As touched on previously, sometimes efforts to address difficult problems need to start with small steps or a manageable “win” in order to build trust and a sense of shared accomplishment, enabling groups to take on more challenging issues over time.

Building on this example, if agreement is reached that reducing obesity is a top priority for a collaborative effort, a variety of activities could be identified for different organizations to commit to doing based on the root causes like those illustrated above. Such actions might include:

- *Employers — including public, private, and the military* — ensuring that salads and other nutritious foods are offered in the cafeteria and are more affordable than unhealthy options;
- *City planners and schools* working together to make neighborhoods around schools safer for biking and walking;

- *Hospitals, doctors, and nurses* measuring the body mass index (BMI) and discussing physical activity and better nutrition for all patients, since patients may be malnourished regardless of BMI;
- *Grocery stores* highlighting healthy food options in each aisle and offering cooking demonstrations of healthy recipes;
- *Community groups* starting a Saturday market where local farmers can sell fresh fruits and vegetables in underserved areas;
- *Churches and others in faith communities* organizing weight loss support groups through parish nurses and addressing obesity in the context of spiritual health;

And so on.

The agreed-upon activities are part of a connected process that relates to the findings from the needs assessment and asset mapping (Element 4), directly supports the priority focus areas (Element 5), and has the potential to result in improvement that will be measured (Element 7). Insights from the results can then be factored into future planning and priority-setting for greater improvement over time.

Listed below are examples of reports or initiatives that address this topic.

- **Blue Zones Project.** The Blue Zones Project is an example of a community well-being improvement initiative designed to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes to the environment, policy, and social networks. The guiding principles are based on international research that identified nine healthy living principles in communities whose populations have achieved a high level of well-being and longevity. The project provides a framework for engaging public agencies, local business communities, schools, and a wide range of civic organizations in setting priorities and taking concrete actions to achieve a common goal of improving the well-being of the community.
<http://www.bluezonesproject.com>
- **CDC Community Health Improvement Navigator.** This resource contains a database of effective interventions that can be applied by community organizations, health systems, public health agencies, and others who are working together to improve health in a community.
<http://www.cdc.gov/chinav>
- **Healthy Base Initiative.** The aim of this initiative is to assess best practices and lessons learned at 14 military bases selected by the DOD, in order to promote healthier and more resilient service members, families, retirees, and civilian employees.
<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/hbi>
- **Healthy Communities Institute (HCI).** This organization provides customizable, web-based information systems to visualize local data through indicator dashboards and GIS maps. They also provide access to a national database of promising community-level interventions, and help establish connections among community members, experts, and resources.
<http://www.healthycommunitiesinstitute.com/>

- **Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement (ICSI).** This organization has been involved in efforts across the country to promote Accountable Health Communities, and offers reports and ideas for effective approaches.
http://www.icsi.org/health_initiatives/accountable_health
- **Let's Move.** Let's Move! is an executive initiative dedicated to solving the problem of childhood obesity. The program emphasizes that everyone has a role to play in reducing childhood obesity, and provides "5 simple steps" guides for parents, schools, community leaders, chefs, children, elected officials, and healthcare providers that give tips and strategies for adopting healthier lifestyles.
<http://www.letsmove.gov/>

Element 7: Selection and Use of Measures and Performance Targets

What it is

Selecting and using measures and performance targets starts with identifying the goals and measurable objectives that are relevant to the priority topics and selected health improvement activities. Part of the process should involve identifying measures already in use by participating groups, particularly measures required for other purposes. For any new measures, data sources must also be identified. Some regions may choose to set a rate of improvement as a performance target, or set a specific performance level such as "achieving a score of at least 90 percent." Others seek to exceed benchmarks, such as a statewide average rate or the national top 10 percent.

Why it is important

The purpose of this work is to *improve* health across a population. Measuring progress, ideally against performance targets, provides a way to know whether an initiative is on track. Assessment of progress toward a given target can also reveal when it is time to modify the approach to achieve better results. Measurement is an important part of evaluation activities, as described previously.

Public- and private-sector leaders are increasingly using measures to hold certain organizations accountable for improving health outcomes, including public health agencies, healthcare organizations, and health plans. Accountability is also expanding into other sectors. "Health in all policies" approaches recognize that health outcomes are affected by decisions and actions of organizations and individuals in a range of sectors. To meet accountability expectations, measurement helps gauge whether health outcomes are improving.

Field Testing the Action Guide: The University of Chicago Population Health Management Transformation

The University of Chicago Medicine (UCM) has initiated collaborative efforts with various community partners to improve population health in their city, particularly for residents on the South Side of Chicago. One of the mechanisms being explored to spur greater collaboration among the partners is how to use data and measurement to track individuals across different organizations, so that a better picture of overall health and healthcare services can be obtained.

<http://www.uchospitals.edu>

The state of available measures and data sources is an interesting mix of abundance and gaps, with a vast array of existing measures and data that do not always meet practical needs. Many organizations feel overburdened with measurement requirements, while others may be “drowning in raw data” but are not able to apply this data for measurement and decisionmaking.

Using many of the available data sources requires specialized skill and sufficient time to address challenges such as finding a relevant data source; unlocking data that is available only in a “raw” format; and creating meaning from that data through analysis and visual presentation of the results in engaging and

insightful ways. Using several data sources is common, yet not all data sources apply the same methodologies, such as modes of collection, timeframes, population definitions, etc. Making sense of the differences among data sources can be a tremendous challenge: an expedient solution may be to acknowledge the variations rather than attempt to reconcile them. Ultimately, data sources and measure results must be translated into “actionable” information so that it can be used by leaders in public health, healthcare, and other sectors to assess and improve population health.³²

The National Quality Forum (NQF) has endorsed a number of measures related to population health, across varying levels of analysis, including healthcare providers and communities. These measures address:

- Health-related behaviors (e.g., smoking, diet) and practices that promote healthy living
- Community-level indicators of health and disease (e.g., incidence and prevalence) and community interventions (e.g., mass screening)
- Primary prevention and screening (e.g., influenza immunization)

Significant gaps persist in measures available for population health improvement. Work is being done on a number of fronts to fill those gaps. For example, NQF is identifying and endorsing measures that focus on healthy lifestyle behaviors, community interventions that improve health and well-being, and social and economic determinants of health.³³ There is also a strong interest in population-level measures that are appropriate for assessing shared accountability across a variety of sectors and organizations. Examples of measure topics that NQF is seeking for consideration for endorsement include:

- Health outcomes of individuals, including health/functional status, life expectancy, mortality, and quality of life

- Measures that assess the health of a total population or a subset of a population (subpopulation), including disparities across the population
- Measures that cover the lifespan, including those that focus on children, adolescents, and the elderly
- Adoption of healthy lifestyle behaviors
- Population-level measures in priority areas (e.g., obesity, physical activity, tobacco use, nutrition and diet)
- Receipt of health promotion and education services
- Social, economic, and environmental determinants of health with a clear connection to population health outcomes

NQF is providing guidance for measure developers to ensure a shared understanding of population health improvement and the related needs for new or modified measures. Such guidance recognizes that population health measures can reflect any point along the following continuum:

- Upstream factors that determine health, including socioeconomic status, social norms, physical environment factors, and preventive health services
- Individual factors (i.e., behavior and genetics)
- Intermediate health outcomes (e.g., rates of disease and injury)
- Various states of health, including functional status
- Quality of life

Several types of measure gaps have been identified in NQF's prior projects, for example: the need for more outcome measures; population-level blood pressure screening measures for the Million Hearts Campaign; and composite measures that take into account process, outcome, access, structure, population experience, population management, population costs, and population services. Examples of areas of additional interest include measures with a focus on built environments, such as walkable neighborhoods; measures that assess patient and population health outcomes — such as functional status and teen pregnancy rates — that can be linked to public health activities; assessments of population health interventions, such as activities aiming to prevent elderly persons from falling or to increase school readiness; and measures that focus on various subpopulations, such as specific services needed by children, or counseling for physical activity and nutrition in younger and middle-aged adults.

How it can be done

There is no universally recommended, practical set of population health measures for which there are widely available data sources. The mere availability of certain measures should not dictate priorities. Instead, the organizational planning and priority setting process (Element 5) should drive the measure selection. A shared framework for measurement can also be used as a way to build consensus.

In 2015, two new and potentially significant measure resources were announced:

- **The Institute of Medicine** issued the Vital Signs report, which includes a set of core metrics for assessing health and healthcare progress. The recommendations contained in this report promote measurement of a broad array of health determinants and outcomes, while also emphasizing the importance of improving measure alignment.
<http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2015/Vital-Signs-Core-Metrics.aspx>
- **The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** is developing a set of metrics for their Culture of Health initiative, which takes a very holistic view of health. It is anticipated that the underlying framework may be useful for consideration in other population health measurement efforts. The report is scheduled to be released later in 2015.
<http://cultureofhealth.org>

Groups working on population health improvement need data sources that are relevant to their region. Often this will be local-level data that is granular enough to measure performance that informs specific activities. While there are many data sources available from national sources, they are often too broad or outdated. [Appendix D](#) contains additional resources for finding data that may be useful for population health assessment and improvement.

One particular resource that addresses a number of issues around data and measurement for community improvement is:

- **What Counts – Harnessing Data for America’s Communities.** This report highlights a wide variety of related topics, such as how to transform data into information that is relevant for policy, data access and transparency, and strategic practices for using data. A number of real-life examples are also provided demonstrating how communities have made practical use of data to improve the health and well-being of their populations.

<http://www.whatcountsforamerica.org/>

Given the dependence on available data and other differences among regions, an initial approach for some initiatives may be to choose a focused set of measures that address priorities and are available now, then expand or refine over time. In other words, take a phased approach to measuring performance based on regional priorities and available data. Data sources continue to expand, in part due to increased reporting requirements and support for transparency in public and private activities. Advances in technology have enabled collection and sharing of de-identified healthcare data. New data sources are also appearing, such as consumer-generated data drawn from countless discussions and comments on social media.

Consider using disparities-sensitive measures to assess differences in health status or outcomes for ethnic or racial groups, and other vulnerable populations. These measures can be used to detect differences in quality across settings or in relation to certain benchmarks, and to detect differences in quality among subpopulations or social groupings based on race, ethnicity, language, and other characteristics.

Drawing from a previous assessment of 26 reports that evaluate population health improvement, the following chart lists the most common measures and indicators that were used, grouped by topic or domain.³⁴

Table 1. Example of Population Health Measures by Topic

Topic/Domain	Measures/Indicators
Health status/health related quality of life (total population level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life expectancy • Healthy life expectancy • Years of potential life lost • Healthy days (physically, mentally) • Self-assessed health status • Expected years with activity limitations • Expected years with chronic disease
Health outcomes Ultimate/final (total population level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mortality (death rates) • Morbidity (e.g., disease or injury rates, obesity rates, mental health) • Pregnancy and birth rates • Health status and health-related quality of life
Health outcomes Intermediate (total population level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of risk behaviors (e.g., diet, physical activity, tobacco use, alcohol/drug use) • Rates of access to, use of, and coverage of preventive services (e.g., cancer screening, immunizations, weight loss intervention, smoking cessation) • Physiologic measures (e.g., controlled blood pressure or cholesterol levels)
Determinants of health (total population level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty level • High school graduation rates • Exposure to crime and violence, neighborhood safety • Affordable and adequate housing
Social environment	
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built environment (transportation options, availability of healthy foods, recreational facilities and parks, neighborhood walkability) • Exposure to environmental hazards (air, water, food safety) • Natural environment (e.g., access to green space, protection from natural disasters)
Clinical care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to healthcare services and insurance coverage • Unmet health needs or delayed care
Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rates of tobacco use, alcohol misuse, physical inactivity, and unhealthy diet

Table 2. Example of Population Health Measures by Topic (continued)

Topic/Domain	Measures/Indicators
Health improvement activities – capacity, process, and outcomes (subpopulation level)	<p>Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electronic health records and integrated surveillance systems• Preparedness surge capacity and response times <p>Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials translated, health literacy• Quality improvement projects• Effective and efficient care coordination and case management• Adherence to health promotion or treatment advice• Levels of risk behaviors (e.g., diet, physical activity, tobacco use, alcohol/drug use)• Rates of access to, use of, and coverage of preventive services (e.g. cancer screening, immunizations, weight loss intervention, smoking cessation)• Physiologic measures (e.g., controlled blood pressure or cholesterol levels)• Preventable hospitalizations and readmissions• Patient satisfaction• Timely and appropriate care received

Taking a practical approach is necessary. Identify measures already in use, any new measures needed to fill gaps, and the data available for the region. For data, use sources that are high-quality, relevant, understandable, and timely, if possible. Over time, what may start as a short list of population health measures will undoubtedly become more robust as the field evolves.

Eventually, for each measure used, groups set expectations or targets for future performance. To increase buy-in, an initial target may simply be to see improvement over time. Other options for targets include using comparison benchmarks, such as performing better than a state or national average. In some cases, data regarding percentiles are available, allowing for a stretch goal to be in the top 10 percent or higher. The most appropriate performance target will be influenced by factors such as level of trust among the collaborative partners, available data, the current level of performance, and the likelihood of significant improvement within the measurement timeframe.

Element 8: Joint Reporting on Progress Toward Achieving Intended Results

What it is

Joint reporting on progress toward achieving intended results is a way for groups and organizations in a partnership to share information on successes and problem areas. This could relate to various elements described earlier in the Guide, such as the needs assessment and asset mapping, evaluation of activities,

and use of measures and performance targets. Sharing of information is important for collaborating groups, but ideally with the larger community as well.

Why it is important

Joint reporting establishes the accountability of each organization to the others in an initiative. In addition, pulling together the results of health improvement activities (described in Element 6) and sharing that information with all participants keeps everyone informed about the progress of the work and creates common ground for shared learning. It also helps to identify where greater collaboration might be needed to improve results. This reporting should align with the areas of evaluation that are part of the planning and priority-setting process (Element 5), to reinforce the shared commitment to achieving the intended results at a variety of levels.

Field Testing the Action Guide: The Colorado Cross-Agency Collaborative

Several state agencies in Colorado came together to collaborate and develop a statewide strategy to improve population health. The agencies have a particular interest in sharing data and jointly reporting results of key metrics. By making this concerted effort to better align resources, the agencies can be more efficient and more readily track progress on policies and programs that affect the health of all residents of Colorado.

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/hcpf/colorado-cross-agency-collaborative-reports>

How it can be done

Building trust among participating organizations is an essential precursor to joint reporting, as it requires strong alignment among partner groups and engaged stakeholders. For more about this, see the section on leadership (Element 2). In addition to reporting on health outcomes, the content of reports might address impact on social values or perceptions about health, return on investment, and elements that indicate the progress of the overall initiative. Such reporting might typically begin as private sharing of results among participating organizations, either reported individually or developed as a single report about the collaborative and individual efforts. Given the importance of transparency and accountability, the ultimate goal is to share the progress reports with the general public.

Listed below are examples of reports or initiatives that address this topic.

- **HealthLandscape.** An interactive mapping tool, this online resource is intended for use by a variety of stakeholders interested in analyzing and displaying information about health and health determinants. Maps can be created from publicly available data sources related to education, healthcare, criminal justice, etc. <http://www.healthlandscape.org/>
- **National Health Service Care Data.** While the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom has collected and used hospital data for the last few decades as part of its national database, a new initiative aims to expand the amount of information available to patients, clinicians, researchers, and planners. The NHS claims that “better information means better care” and will ensure consistency in quality and safety, and highlight areas where more investment is needed.
<http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/tsd/care-data/>

- **Primary Care and Public Health – Exploring Integration to Improve Population Health.** The Institute of Medicine identifies a set of core principles derived from successful integration efforts that involve the community in defining and addressing needs for population health improvement. The framework emphasizes that the collection and use of data to assess needs and progress is important to the integration process, and that sharing data appears to be a natural way in which primary care and public health can work together.

<http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2012/Primary-Care-and-Public-Health.aspx>

Element 9: Indications of Scalability

What it is

Scalability relates to the potential for an initiative to expand, either by becoming more deeply involved in a region — for example, increasing the number of participating organizations or taking on new priority topics and related health improvement activities — or by sharing the lessons learned with others to motivate spread to additional regions. The latter can happen either as the initiative grows geographically, or when a new group learns from the work and decides to take a similar approach.

Field Testing the Action Guide: Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa

The Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa located in Tulsa, OK, comprises a 20-member collaborative supporting 31 programs, and is nearly 75 years old. To address scalability, the Council's long-standing community relationships have been essential in advancing their work. Scalability was also built into grant proposal funding for a Maternity Medical Home project, addressed through a series of annual improvements in coordination of care and unbundling payments, and facilitated by a value-based payment model to support future state-wide scalability.

<http://www.csctulsa.org>

Scalability or expansion of initiatives to new areas is not guaranteed and does not always happen even when the evidence is clear that a program has achieved intended, positive results.

Why it is important

Poor health is a problem everywhere in the United States. To the degree that existing health improvement efforts are refined and new successful initiatives started from which others can learn and adopt in their own region, this expands the possibility for achieving better health for more people. That being said, achieving traction in other regions may not always be possible, especially if the population health improvement work relies on assets or characteristics that are unique to a region.

How it can be done

During the planning process (Element 5), consider and emphasize activities that can be easily expanded or adopted by others. At the same time, during the asset mapping process (Element 4) consider which assets might be unique to either one subpopulation or to a smaller geographic part of the whole geopolitical area. These unique assets may limit the ability to spread the initiative across the entire population and/or geopolitical region.

Listed below are examples of reports or initiatives that address this topic.

- **Camden Care Management Program and Cross-Site Learning.** This program was developed by the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers started in Camden, New Jersey, using data to target and coordinate care for patients who lack consistent primary care and often suffer from chronic illness, mental illness, and substance use disorders. The Cross-Site Learning program is now being implemented in 10 cities.
<http://www.camdenhealth.org/cross-site-learning/>
- **ENACT.** This is a database of local policies from the Strategic Alliance to Promote Healthy Food and Activity Environments. The information in this database can be used to spread programs to additional areas, and change the policy infrastructure in ways that support long-term sustainability of population health improvement programs.
<http://eatbettermovemore.org/sa/policies>
- **Healthy Communities Institute (HCI).** This organization provides customizable, web-based information systems to help communities create custom websites — with far less overhead and time required than starting from scratch — that draw from the best-available local data to show indicator dashboards and GIS maps. The Healthy People 2020 Tracker helps evaluate the effectiveness of the local group's programs and the health of the community compared to national goals. HCI websites have been replicated by many communities across the country.
<http://www.healthycommunitiesinstitute.com/>
- **Help Me Grow.** This program provides a system to assist states in identifying at-risk children, and then helps link families with existing community-based programs and services. A national center serves as a resource to support the replication of Help Me Grow systems throughout the country. Nearly half of the states in the country are Help Me Grow affiliates.
<http://www.helpmegrownational.org/>
- **State Innovation Models Initiative.** This initiative led by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is intended to foster the testing and development of state-based models for improving health system performance through multipayer payment reform and other system changes. The projects are broad-based and focused on enrollees of Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The initiative is exploring models that could form a foundation for expansion into larger health system transformation.
<http://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/state-innovations/>

Element 10: A Plan for Sustainability

What it is

Sustainability is the ability to continue operating, funding the work, and remain productive over time. In addition to developing a sustainable business model, adaptability and resilience are key characteristics of sustainable initiatives.

Why it is important

In the current policy environment, health improvement has gained new relevance: poor health outcomes are widely understood as a major problem, coupled with unsustainable healthcare costs. Population health improvement is a complex field, and although public health agencies and others have been working to improve population health for years, the only way to achieve a lasting positive impact is through multifaceted, sustainable approaches that address health improvement in activities across multiple determinants of health over the long term.

How it can be done

Developing and implementing a sustainability plan or a business plan based on a sustainable model is an effective approach. Knowing what approaches can be continued over the long run, with appropriate support and financial stability, is not easy.

Receiving a multiyear grant or being funded through a government project is no substitute for a solid sustainability plan, as even multiyear grants and government programs eventually come to an end. However, options to secure financial support do exist, including social investment funds, social venture capital, or engaging payers as investors. In each of these cases, it will be important to make the case for the expected return on investment for any funding provided to the population health improvement work.

Opportunities exist given the rapidly changing health policy environment. When engaging in population health improvement, the ability to motivate structural changes can increase the likelihood that the change will be sustained. Examples include new or revised commitments (e.g., public or private policy or contract provisions that incentivize better health or incorporate health in all policies), new patterns of care and coordination among different organizations, and linking medical and public health information systems. Examples of new policy opportunities include structures being developed or implemented such as Accountable Care Organizations, Accountable Health Communities, Patient Centered Medical Homes, community health improvement requirements for nonprofit hospitals (see Element 4), and public health department accreditation.

Field Testing the Action Guide: Michigan Health Improvement Alliance

The Michigan Health Improvement Alliance (MiHIA) is a multistakeholder, not-for-profit organization with a mission to improve the health of the population in a 14-county region in central Michigan through effective use of information and collaboration. MiHIA has focused on sustainability by leveraging multiple assets crucial for their ongoing work, such as convening power, an engaged Board, passionate participants, a comprehensive health dashboard, and a strong track record of successes.

<http://www.mihia.org>

Examples of How Changes in Public Policy Can Sustain Conditions that Promote Good Health

- ✓ Tobacco use prevention and cessation is promoted with smoke-free workplaces and public places.
- ✓ Physical activity for children increases under policies that allow and promote safe routes to schools and open school recreation areas for after-school community use.
- ✓ Establishing farmers' markets is possible once land use planning policies allow for such activities.
- ✓ Access to healthy foods and beverages improves when school vending machine policies follow nutrition guidelines.

While activities that encourage changes in public or private policy sometimes involve political advocacy, this is not always the case. An example of a private-sector policy change is to support employers in encouraging employees to make use of covered preventive services and smoking cessation programs. Employers could also begin assessing and reporting (Element 8) the degree to which their employee population is using such benefits.

Listed below are examples of reports or initiatives that have successfully addressed this topic:

- **A Healthier America 2013: Strategies to Move from Sick Care to Health Care in Four Years.** This guide for improving the nation's health system focuses on various strategies and priorities for achieving sustainability, in addition to recommendations for shifts in governmental funding. Suggested policies include ensuring sufficient and stable funding for public health departments, with recommendations to explore new funding models based on supporting basic capabilities.
<http://healthyamericans.org/report/104/>
- **Georgia Health Policy Center Sustainability Framework.** This framework identifies components that contribute to organizational and programmatic sustainability.
<http://www.raconline.org/sustainability/pdf/georgia-health-policy-center-sustainability-framework.pdf>
- **Health in All Policies.** The Health in All Policies guide for state and local governments defines sustainability as "the need of society to create and maintain conditions so that humans can fulfill social, economic, and other requirements of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The document focuses on environmental sustainability as an essential part of ensuring the longevity of health improvement plans, with examples referenced throughout.
<http://www.phi.org/resources/?resource=hiapguide>
- **HICCUP.** As part of work for the Health Initiative Coordinating Council, an assessment of financing opportunities for communities working on population health initiatives was completed

and highlighted in an online document.

https://d3aencwbm6zmht.cloudfront.net/asset/486425/KIN_Challenge_HICCup_6-9-14.pdf

Conclusion

This refined version of the Action Guide, version 2.0, is intended to be a handbook describing 10 key elements to consider when attempting to improve population health. It takes a broad look at a variety of important issues and provides links to information and useful resources for more detail. Moving forward, this Guide will likely be further refined and/or integrated with other resources, particularly with a deeper focus on measures and data sources that are being used or needed for efforts to improve population health at the local, state, regional, and national levels.

Endnotes

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Appendix A: Methodological Approach

The first version of this Action Guide was developed primarily under the guidance of the project committee, with additional input and feedback from the public. This second draft version of the Guide was revised to reflect input from 10 field testing groups, with additional input from the project Committee and public. The field testing groups are engaged in population health improvement, and they volunteered to review, apply, and help refine the Guide. The project team regularly interacted with these field testing groups to learn from their implementation activities associated with the Guide, then used the input to make the Guide more specific and practical. With continued support of this work by the Department of Health and Human Services, the third year of this project will involve the finalization of the Action Guide, including a deeper focus on the measures in use by the field testing groups.

This Action Guide v2.0 builds on insights from the following sources:

- Input from 10 field testing groups working on population health improvement. See [Appendix G](#).
- NQF Population Health Framework Committee, a multistakeholder group of experts providing guidance regarding the development of the Guide. For a list of committee members and a summary of their activities, go to http://www.qualityforum.org/projects/population_health_framework.
- *Multistakeholder Input on a National Priority: Working with Communities to Improve Population Health. Environmental Scan and Analysis to Inform the Action Guide*, developed by a project team at NQF in 2013. This paper assessed key elements in a wide variety of existing conceptual frameworks, in addition to core aspects of programs being implemented at the local, state, or national levels, to identify insights regarding potential content for the Action Guide.¹
- *An Environmental Scan of Integrated Approaches for Defining and Measuring Total Population Health*,² commissioned by NQF in 2012. Jacobson and Teutsch established definitions for key concepts and a list of recommendations that provided a starting point for the environmental scan, including criteria that were used to assist with selection of the frameworks and initiatives addressed in this report. Given the tremendous amount of research and thousands of programs focused on population health improvement, this report was designed to gather a representative range of examples that present a strong cross-section of insights.

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Appendix B: Links to Helpful Resources

Listed below are the 10 elements and links to sources of additional information, tools, and other resources that relate to each topic. These may change over time, but many were identified as useful by the project Committee and/or field testing groups.

Element 1: Resources for Collaborative Self-Assessment

- **County Health Ranking and Roadmaps – Tools and Resources.** This Robert Wood Johnson program provides a database and a large number of tools to help assess readiness and the resources and needs of your region.
[http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/resources?f\[0\]=field_global_action_steps%3A18389](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/resources?f[0]=field_global_action_steps%3A18389)
- **Are You Ready to Pursue the Triple Aim?** This is an online assessment provided by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement intended to help health-related organizations or systems, or coalitions of organizations working to improve health and healthcare, get ready to pursue the Triple Aim — including population health improvement.
<http://www.ihi.org/Engage/Initiatives/TripleAim/Pages/TripleAimReady.aspx>
- **Community Commons – Community Health Needs Assessment Toolkit.** This toolkit is a free web-based platform designed to help hospitals and organizations understand the needs and assets of their communities, and work together to make measurable improvement in population health.
<http://assessment.communitycommons.org/CHNA/>
- **Collective Impact Forum:** This is a site for groups practicing collective impact, with information, tools, discussion, and other resources that may be helpful during planning and priority-setting.
<http://collectiveimpactforum.org/>

Element 2: Resources for Leadership Across the Region and Within Organizations

- **Pioneering Healthier Communities: Lessons and Leading Practices.** This document shares the seven “leading practices” learned through YMCA initiatives and explains how other organizations can implement these principles.
<http://www.ymca.net/sites/default/files/pdf/phc-lessons-leading-practices.pdf>
- **Working Together, Moving Ahead: A Manual to Support Effective Community Health Coalitions.** This handbook is designed to support those who participate in coalitions, provide staff support to coalitions, provide funding or in-kind resources to coalitions, or require their grantees to organize and utilize coalitions in their work. It provides practical advice on common concerns and problems facing coalitions. The manual aims to get people thinking about why they have chosen to use coalitions in their work, about their assumptions in building coalitions, and about the structures and processes they are using with coalitions.
<http://www.policyarchive.org/handle/10207/21720>

- **Community How-To Guide on Coalition Building.** This guide from the National Highway Safety Transportation Administration provides guidance on bringing together a diverse group of people in pursuit of a common goal. The guide is part of a set to assist with underage drinking prevention efforts; however, the information is not topic-specific and can be applied to various population health improvement projects.
http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/alcohol/Community%20Guides%20HTML/Guides_index.html
- **County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.** The “Action Cycle” includes an interactive graphic exploring the various stakeholders that should be included in population health projects, along with guidance on how to connect and work together.
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/action-center>

Element 3: Resources for Audience-Specific Strategic Communication

- **County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.** The “Action Center” framework provides guidance on effective communication.
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/action-center/communicate>
- **Disseminating Relevant Health Information to Underserved Audiences: Implications of the Digital Divide Pilot Projects.** This paper examines the digital divide and its impact on health literacy and communication. The digital divide can be a significant impediment in health literacy and information dissemination.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1255755/>
- **Simply Put: A Guide for Creating Easy-to-Understand Materials.** This resource from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers insight on how to use plain language, visuals, clear formatting, and cultural sensitivity to communicate effectively with health-related materials.
http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/pdf/simply_put.pdf
- **YMCA Pioneering Healthy Communities:** This is a practical toolkit that includes a useful framework for considering how to communicate effectively, using culturally respectful plain language.
<http://www.ymca.net/healthier-communities>

Element 4: Resources for a Community Health Needs Assessment and Asset Mapping Process

- **ACHI Community Health Assessment Toolkit.** The toolkit provides detailed guidance on six core steps of a suggested assessment framework, including, but not limited to, data collection.
<http://www.assess toolkit.org/>
- **Asset Mapping from the Southern Rural Development Center.** This article explains a process for mapping the assets of a community and provides guidance on collaborating with various organizations and individuals with the goal of community development and enhancement. The article offers an overview of the needs assessment process and then a step-by-step work plan for

each element of the model.

http://www.nebhands.nebraska.edu/files/227_asset_mapping.pdf

- **County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.** The “Assess Needs and Resources” section of the “Roadmaps” framework provides guidance on taking stock of your community’s needs, resources, strengths, and assets.
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/action-center/assess-needs-resources>
- **Practical Playbook.** The “Stages of Integration” framework encourages public health entities to analyze the most recent community health needs assessment to identify population health projects. The framework also offers guidance on the prioritization process and how various entities can work together to identify needs in the community.
<https://practicalplaybook.org/stages-integration>
- **Regional Equity Atlas 2.0 and Action Agenda.** This population health improvement tool maps the intersection of chronic disease prevalence data and data on the social, economic, and physical determinants of health for the Portland metro region, providing insight into key findings. As a resource, the Regional Equity Atlas has been used by various Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q) projects to identify target areas for health improvement in specific geographic areas.
<http://clfutre.org/equity-atlas>
- **Community Commons – Community Health Needs Assessment Toolkit.** This toolkit is a free web-based platform designed to assist hospitals and organizations to understand the needs and assets of their communities, and work together to make measurable improvement in health in the community. <http://assessment.communitycommons.org/CHNA/>
- **Resources for Implementing the Community Health Needs Assessment Process.** This set of resources from the CDC helps to translate the requirements of the Affordable Care Act, with the intent to encourage active engagement between hospitals and public health.
<http://www.cdc.gov/policy/chna/>

Element 5: Resources for an Organizational Planning and Priority-Setting Process

- **Guide to Measuring the Triple Aim: Population Health, Experience of Care, and Per Capita Cost.** This 2013 white paper from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement offers a useful logic model for considering drivers of health, with related examples for measuring population health.
<http://www.ihi.org/resources/Pages/IHIWhitePapers/AGuidetoMeasuringTripleAim.aspx>
- **Practical Playbook.** The “Stages of Integration” framework encourages organizational planning and offers guidance on the process. <https://practicalplaybook.org/stages-integration>
- **County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.** The “Roadmaps” framework provides guidance on the organizational planning process and how to determine priorities.
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/action-center/focus-whats-important>
- **Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA).** The PDSA model has been utilized by the National Health Service in the United Kingdom to encourage trials of new policies before implementation. The model consists of four recommended steps to test an idea and assess its impact: planning the change to be tested or

implemented (Plan); carrying out the test or change (Do); studying data from before and after the change and reflecting on what was learned (Study); and planning the next change cycle or full implementation (Act).

http://www.institute.nhs.uk/quality_and_service_improvement_tools/quality_and_service_improvement_tools/plan_do_study_act.html

- **ReThink Health.** This suite of interactive tools opens up new ways of looking at population health improvement. The intention is to guide leaders in considering the impacts of different policies and interventions and make better and more creative decisions about redesign.

<http://www.rethinkhealth.org/>

Element 6: Resources for an Agreed-Upon, Prioritized Set of Health Improvement Activities

- **The Guide to Community Preventive Services.** The Community Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) was created by the Department of Health and Human Services to determine which interventions work for improving population health in various settings. Recommendations of the Task Force are available in the Guide to Community Preventive Services, a free resource to help identify programs and policies to improve health and prevent disease in the community. Systematic reviews are used to explore program and policy interventions, effective interventions for specific communities, and the cost and potential return on investment of interventions.
<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html>
- **CDC Community Health Improvement Navigator.** This resource contains information, tools, and a database of effective interventions that can be applied by community organizations, health systems, public health agencies, and others who are working together to improve health in a community.
<http://www.cdc.gov/chinav>
- **A Compendium of Proven Community Based Prevention Programs.** This report from The Trust for America's Health and the New York Academy of Medicine highlights nearly 80 evidence-based prevention programs that have been proven to improve health and save lives. Topics addressed include tobacco use reduction, asthma, injuries, sexually transmitted infections, alcohol abuse, physical activity, and eating habits.
http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/Compendium_Report_1016_1131.pdf
- **County Health Rankings and Roadmaps.** The "What Works for Health" database includes health improvement activities from the Guide to Community Preventive Services as well as other population health topics.
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/what-works-for-health>
- **Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement (ICSI).** This organization has been involved in efforts across the country to promote Accountable Health Communities, and offers a number of reports and ideas for effective approaches.
https://www.icsi.org/health_initiatives/accountable_health

Element 7: Resources for Selection and Use of Measures and Performance Targets

- **Population Health Measures Endorsed by NQF.** This list or portfolio of measures contains measures which have been identified by the National Quality Forum as being relevant for population health measurement.
<http://www.qualityforum.org/QPS/QPSTool.aspx?p=3863>
- **Disparities-Sensitive Measures Endorsed by NQF.** This subset of measures includes those which have been identified by the National Quality Forum as being appropriate for assessing disparities, within the population health measure portfolio.
<http://www.qualityforum.org/QPS/QPSTool.aspx?p=3865>
- **Health Indicator Warehouse.** This online library provides access to national, state, and community health indicators. It serves as the data hub for the HHS Community Health Data Initiative and is a collaboration of various agencies within the department. The Health Indicator Warehouse is referenced by the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps program as a resource for those working on population health projects.
<http://healthindicators.gov/>

Element 8: Resources for Joint Reporting on Progress Toward Achieving Intended Results

- **County Health Ranking and Roadmaps.** This resource shows results for a number of measures and indicators by county across the United States, and clearly describes their methods for developing the rankings that are reported.
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/Our-Approach>
- **The Network for Public Health Law: Checklist of Information Needed to Address Proposed Data Collection, Access and Sharing.** This tool provides a checklist to assist public health practitioners in providing relevant factual information to address issues of legality, privacy, and ethics.
https://www.networkforphl.org/resources_collection/2014/01/07/400/tool_checklist_of_information_needed_to_address_proposed_data_collection_access_and_sharing

Element 9: Resources for Indications of Scalability

- **Let's Move Initiative.** This national initiative focused on reducing childhood obesity uses its website as a tool for sharing best practices and promotional material that others can use. The initiative has encouraged "Let's Move Meetup" programs in more than 400 cities nationwide, where community members get together to share success stories and discuss ways to tackle childhood obesity. Let's Move also uses its Facebook page as a connector for communities to share tips and news from across the country.
<http://www.letsmove.gov/>
- **Practical Playbook.** This resource for public health and primary care groups features an interactive tool that guides users through the stages of integration for population health improvement projects.

Information on how to scale up efforts is included.

<http://www.practicalplaybook.org/>

Element 10: Resources for a Plan for Sustainability

- **Healthier Worksite Initiative.** This resource from the CDC addresses workforce health promotion and offers information, resources, and step-by-step toolkits to help worksite health promotion planners in the public and private sectors improve the health of employees.
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/>
- **A Sustainability Planning Guide for Healthy Communities.** The CDC's Healthy Communities Program has worked with more than 300 community coalitions to help create a culture of healthy living while building national networks for sustainable change. The Sustainability Planning Guide provides evidence-based insights to help coalitions, public health professionals, and other community stakeholders develop, implement, and evaluate a successful sustainability plan.
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/healthycommunitiesprogram/pdf/sustainability_guide.pdf

Appendix C: Measures

Development of a Measures Chart. In the process of working with the field testing groups to refine the Action Guide, each group identified the measures they use to help them assess and improve population health status in their region. Differences in the measures used by each group can be attributed to a number of factors, such as varying levels of experience, diverse areas of focus, and how readily they could draw from existing measurement efforts. For example, many groups are using measures that are part of one or more Community Health Needs Assessments conducted in their region.

The measures, metrics, and indicators that the field testing groups identified were compiled into a draft measures chart. Each group provided additional information about their measures — such as the levels of analysis, data sources, and how results are being applied — which is included in the chart. Initial topic categories were assigned to measures to begin assessing where there may be measure alignment across field testing groups and with key national measure sets (such as Healthy People 2020 Leading Health Indicators, the County Health Rankings measures, and the Public Health Accreditation Board measures). During the third year of the project, the draft measures chart will be refined by working with the field testing groups to update the content and format. The goal is to produce a useful tool for entities working on population health improvement at any level.

Listed below are some existing resources that identify measures which may be useful for population health assessment:

Healthy People 2020 – Measure Domains

This national project defines four areas of health measures used to monitor progress toward promoting health, preventing disease and disability, eliminating disparities, and improving quality of life. These broad, cross-cutting areas of measurement include general health status; health-related quality of life and well-being; determinants of health; and disparities.

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/about/tracking.aspx>

Healthy People 2020 – Leading Indicators of Health

Representing a smaller set of objectives for high-priority health issues, the 26 Leading Health Indicators have baseline and target levels specified, as well as data sources included for each.

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/Leading-Health-Indicators>

Kids Count Data Center

A comprehensive source for data on child and family well-being in the United States, with hundreds of measures, plus downloadable data and the ability to generate reports and graphics specific to your region of interest.

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps

The County Health Rankings score communities according to a variety of health measures based on health outcomes and health factors, which are broken down into eight composite areas and then into subcomponent areas.

http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/sites/default/files/resources/2013Measures_datasources_years.pdf

A Healthier America 2013: Strategies to Move from Sick Care to Health Care in Four Years

This strategic paper suggests Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) accreditation standards in 12 domains: 10 essential public health services; management and administration; and governance. See page 10 of the report.

<http://healthyamericans.org/report/104/>

Clinical-Community Relationships Measures Atlas

This measurement framework lists existing measures for clinical-community relationships and explores ways to define, measure, and evaluate programs that are based on such relationships for the delivery of clinical preventive services. The list of existing measures includes detailed information on each measure's purpose, format, and data source, validation and testing, applications, and key sources. The Master Measure Mapping Table provides an overview of domains and the relationships involved. See page 10 of the report.

<http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/prevention-chronic-care/resources/clinical-community-relationships-measures-atlas>

Early Education Readiness Using a Results-Based Accountability Framework

A collaborative of parents and child-serving organizations in Los Angeles County worked together to establish a set of school readiness indicators. The workgroup used the National Education Goals Panel's (NEGP's) working definition of school readiness: children's readiness for school, school's readiness for children, family and community supports, and services that contribute to children's readiness for school success. Indicators were also chosen to reflect the five outcomes adopted by Los Angeles County: good health; safety and survival; economic well-being; social and emotional well-being; and education/workforce readiness.

<http://www.first5la.org/files/ShapingtheFutureReport.pdf>

Guide to Measuring the Triple Aim: Population Health, Experience of Care, and Per Capita Cost

This 2013 white paper from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement suggests measures for the three dimensions of the Triple Aim, accompanied by data sources and examples, with descriptions of how the measures might be used.

<http://www.ihi.org/resources/Pages/Measures/default.aspx>

Healthy Communities Data and Indicators Project (HCI)

To serve a goal of enhancing public health, this project includes the development of a standardized set of statistical measures for use in community health planning and assessment. A draft core list of indicators was developed in 2013 and more than 50 indicators are being vetted and constructed, with information on the impact, evidence, data sources, bibliographic references, and methods and limitations of each.

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Pages/HealthyCommunityIndicators.aspx>

http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Documents/Healthy_Community_Indicators_Core_list1-15-13Table1-5.pdf

HHS Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities

The action plan is based on national goals and objectives for addressing health disparities identified by Healthy People 2020 and focuses on evidence-based programs and best practices. Stakeholders include HHS public and private partners, plus other federal partners working together on the initiative, including the Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Commerce (DOC), Education (ED), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Labor (DOL), Transportation (DOT), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). See Appendix C, page 44 for measures.

<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/npa/templates/content.aspx?lvl=1&lvid=33&ID=285>

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0 and Action Agenda

This population health improvement tool maps the intersection of chronic disease prevalence data and data on the social, economic, and physical determinants of health for the Portland metro region, providing insight into key findings. The tool covers a set of domains that includes measures spanning clinical care, demographics, environment, and social characteristics.

<https://clfutre.org/programs/regional-equity-atlas/maps-and-analysis>

Toward Quality Measures for Population Health and Leading Health Indicators

Measurement domains include 26 leading health indicators outlined in Healthy People 2020 as well as 12 additional topics: access to health services; clinical preventive services; environmental quality; injury and violence; maternal, infant, and child health; mental health; nutrition, physical activity, and obesity; oral health; reproductive and sexual health; social determinants; substance abuse; and tobacco. See page 15 of the report.

<http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2013/Toward-Quality-Measures-for-Population-Health-and-the-Leading-Health-Indicators.aspx>

The Institute of Medicine Vital Signs report

Includes a set of core metrics for assessing health and healthcare progress:

<http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2015/Vital-Signs-Core-Metrics.aspx>

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health

RWJF is coordinating development of a set of metrics for their Culture of Health initiative, which takes a more holistic view of health. The measures are anticipated to be announced in 2015.

<http://cultureofhealth.org>

Appendix D: Data Sources

Listed below are examples of resources that provide data useful for population health measurement and improvement:

Center for Vital Statistics Health Data Interactive

This resource presents tables with national health statistics for infants, children, adolescents, adults, and older adults. Tables can be customized by age, gender, race/ethnicity, and geographic location to explore different trends and patterns.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hdi.htm#tutorials>

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

BRFSS is an on-going telephone health survey system focused on collecting behavioral health risk data. The annual survey data is published online and used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal agencies.

<http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/about/index.htm>

Correctional Health Outcomes and Records Data Set (CHORDS)

CHORDS is a clinical outcomes data sharing system being designed for correctional healthcare settings. Data is supplied by jails and other correctional facilities.

<http://www.ncchc.org/chords>

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps

The County Health Rankings score communities according to a variety of health measures based on health outcomes and health factors, which are broken down into eight composite areas and then into subcomponent areas.

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/home>

Data.Gov

The U.S. government's data portal provides access to federal, state and local data, as well as tools, research resources, and more. The "Health" section includes 1,125 data sets, tools, and applications related to health and healthcare and can be used as a resource for groups or individuals looking for examples of data or actual data sets for reporting purposes.

<https://www.data.gov/health/>

Data.CDC.Gov

This online database provides access to data sources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

<https://data.cdc.gov/>

Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index is a measure derived from an empiric database of real-time changes in factors that drive well-being. The database captures perceptions on topics such as physical and emotional health, healthy behaviors, work environment, social and community factors, financial security, and access to necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare. Gallup conducts 500 telephone interviews a day with Americans to gather their perceptions of well-being, for a resulting sample that represents an estimated 95 percent of all U.S. households.

<http://www.healthways.com/solution/default.aspx?id=1125>

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Data Sharing Repository

The National Library of Medicine (NLM) website provides a table of NIH-supported data repositories that accept submissions of appropriate data from NIH-funded investigators (and others). Also included are resources that aggregate information about biomedical data and information sharing systems.

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/NIHbmic/nih_data_sharing_repositories.html

Appendix E: General Resources/Tools

Listed below are examples of resources that can be used as tools for population health measurement and improvement:

ACHI Community Health Assessment Toolkit

The ACHI Community Health Assessment Toolkit is a guide for planning, leading, and using community health needs assessments to better understand and improve the health of communities. Tools include checklists, budgets, and timeline guides and templates for each of the six steps in the framework, with specific guidance on skills needed, budget drivers, time drivers, and a task checklist.

<http://www.asesstoolkit.org/>

The Blue Zones Project

The Blue Zones Project focuses on encouraging individuals and community members to aspire to healthy lifestyle ideals, which are based on research into communities around the world with the highest number of centenarians. An online community provides guidance and tips ranging from healthy eating to stress management, and the project also includes “policy pledge actions” for schools, workplaces, local government entities, and communities pertaining to the physical environment, food, and smoking.

<https://www.bluezonesproject.com/>

Camden Care Management Program and Cross-Site Learning

This program through the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers includes development of a database to analyze and quantify the utilization of hospitals by Camden, New Jersey residents. This tool relies on data from the Camden’s Health Information Exchange (HIE) to target and coordinate care for patients who lack consistent primary care and often suffer from chronic illness, mental illness, and substance abuse. The Cross-Site Learning program is being implemented in 10 cities. Tools, planning guides, and other materials are being provided to expand “hot spotting” to other locations.

<http://www.camdenhealth.org/cross-site-learning/>

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps

The Roadmaps to Health Action Center provides an interactive framework (“The Action Cycle”) for organizing and planning initiatives, projects, and collaborative actions aimed at population health improvement. The County Health Rankings is a tool providing information about the health of populations by county, including health outcomes and a broad set of health determinants. The website provides access to all of the data underlying the rankings and a guide to evidence-based policies, programs and system changes (“What Works for Health”) and a “Tools & Resources” page with external links to educational materials and additional tools.

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

Family Wellness Warriors Initiative

This Alaska-based antidomestic violence initiative holds multiday trainings to educate “natural helpers” and community members on how to work with people affected by violence, reduce abuse in the community, and implement the program’s antiviolence curriculum. The program’s website also includes a map with localized resources, such as counseling centers, for violence and abuse prevention.

<http://www.fwwi.org/index.cfm>

Green Strides

This is a U.S. Department of Education initiative aimed at making all schools healthier, safer, and more sustainable. Resources include a webinar series, blog, and social networking to facilitate sharing of best practices and resources. The resources page lists tools for schools, teachers, parents, and students to use in planning and execution of improvement strategies, such as reducing environmental impact and cost, promoting health and wellness, and learning about environmental sustainability.

<http://www.greenstrides.org/>

The Guide to Community Preventive Services

The Guide to Community Preventive Services is a free resource to help identify programs and policies to improve health and prevent disease in the community, based on recommendations from the Community Preventive Services Task Force.

<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html>

Healthy Communities Institute (HCI)

The Healthy Communities Institute provides customizable, web-based information systems to visualize the best-available local data through indicator dashboards and GIS maps. Supporting tools include Indicator Trackers for evaluation, a database of more than 2000 best practices, and collaboration tools to support ongoing collective work. The database includes more than 100 quality-of-life indicators for any community and the ability to add custom indicators locally. The Healthy People 2020 Tracker helps evaluate the effectiveness of the local group's programs and the health of the community compared to national goals, and custom trackers can be locally created to track local priorities and progress towards locally defined targets.

<http://www.healthycommunitiesinstitute.com/>

Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments

The Health in All Policies guide includes “Food for Thought” questions in each section that leaders of a Health in All Policies initiative are encouraged to consider. The guide also includes tips for identifying new partners, building meaningful collaborative relationships across sectors, and maintaining those partnerships over time, as well as more than 50 annotated resources for additional support.

<http://www.phi.org/resources/?resource=hiapguide>

Let's Move

Online resources from the Let's Move initiative include “5 simple steps” guides for parents, schools, community leaders, chefs, children, elected officials, and healthcare providers on how to play a role in preventing and reducing childhood obesity and living and promoting healthier lifestyles. The website also includes educational materials for printing and distribution within communities.

<http://www.letsmove.gov/action>

Moving Healthy

This overview of the health-related strategies being explored by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) references tools and resources to help transportation professionals and health practitioners identify and address the health impacts of transportation.

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/health_in_transportation/resources/moving_healthy.cfm

The National Prevention Strategy

The Surgeon General's website for this national initiative features resources related to the National Prevention Strategy, including fact sheets, infographics, implementation, and scientific resources.
<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/initiatives/prevention/resources/index.html>

One in 21 Muskegon County

This is the umbrella program for local initiatives like "Project Healthy Grad" and includes educational information, links to farmers' markets and other local resources for Muskegon County, Michigan.
<http://1in21.org/resources>

Operation Live Well

This initiative — aimed at improving the health of military personnel and their families — includes resources related to key focus areas and preventive health, plus a list of health tools from various organizations.

<http://www.health.mil/livewell>

Practical Playbook

This resource for public health and primary care groups features an interactive tool that guides users through the stages of integration for population health improvement projects.
<http://www.practicalplaybook.org/>

Regional Equity Atlas 2.0 and Action Agenda

This project includes maps of the Portland, Oregon region using data on chronic disease prevalence and social, economic, and physical determinants of health, and provides key findings. A mapping tool allows for customized creation of maps on issues affecting the region.

<https://clfutre.org/equity-atlas>

Shaping the Future Report

This report presents school readiness goals and indicators to guide planning and accountability around children's readiness for school in Los Angeles County. The tool was created to engage community stakeholders, monitor trends, and implement a results-based accountability framework.

<http://www.first5la.org/files/ShapingtheFutureReport.pdf>

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

SAMHSA provides resources and guidance on substance abuse, mental illness, trauma and justice, health reform, health information technology, public awareness and support, outcomes and quality, and recovery support. This includes access to tools, materials, and links to external organizations.

<http://www.samhsa.gov/>

Vermont Blueprint for Health

This is a state-led initiative aimed at transforming the way that healthcare and health services are delivered in Vermont by providing the community with a continuum of seamless, effective, and preventive health services, while reducing medical costs. Tools include healthier living and tobacco cessation workshops, plus educational materials and guidance on how to implement the Blueprint.
<http://hcr.vermont.gov/blueprint>

YMCA Healthier Communities Initiatives

The YMCA provides resources for promoting healthier communities, including a guide on linking policy and environmental strategies to health outcomes and the Community Health Living Index (CHLI), which contains self-assessments and provides best practices to promote improvement.

<http://www.ymca.net/healthier-communities>

Appendix F: Population Health Framework Committee Roster

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Appendix G: Population Health Field Testing Groups

Colorado Cross-Agency Collaborative

Denver, CO

<https://www.colorado.gov/hcpf>

Community Service Council of Tulsa

Tulsa, OK

<http://www.csctulsa.org/>

Designing a Strong and Healthy NY (DASH)

New York, NY

<http://www.nyam.org/dash-ny-program/>

Empire Health Foundation

Spokane, WA

<http://www.empirehealthfoundation.org/>

Kanawha Coalition for Community Health Improvement

Charleston, WV

<http://www.healthykanawha.org/>

Geneva Tower Health Collaborative

Cedar Rapids, IA

<http://www.mercycare.org/news/2015/mercy-and-abbe-center-chosen-to-guide-national-health-improvement/>

Michigan Health Improvement Alliance

Saginaw, MI

<http://www.mihia.org/>

Oberlin Community Services and The Institute for eHealth Equity

Oberlin, OH

<http://www.oberlincommunityservices.org/>

Trenton Health Team, Inc.

Trenton, NJ

<http://www.trentonhealthteam.org/tht/index.php>

The University of Chicago Medicine Population Health Management Transformation

Chicago, IL

www.uchospitals.edu

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