



Creating a Framework to Monitor and Evaluate Health Reform Impacts

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Why Create a Formalized Framework?

- To represent agreement on goals and priorities, and how progress will be measured
 - Framework can be the beginning of a stakeholder engagement process, or the result of one
- To cross program/agency boundaries and focus on the “big picture”
- To identify data and resources needed for tracking changes over time
- To be prepared to respond to future questions from policymakers
- To provide the foundation for evaluating progress toward goals

Why States?

- Why not just rely on national studies or 50-state analyses from other sources?
 - National surveys are a great source of data, especially when cross-state comparisons are important
 - But states often have richer data to examine questions in-depth
 - Examine progress toward state priorities
- Each state will be unique in how it implements the ACA

Why Now?

- Define in advance what is important to measure – helps identify successes and problem areas
- Establish a baseline prior to reform implementation (ACA or other reforms)
- Plan for future needs – e.g., workforce needed to meet the needs of newly insured
- Identify gaps in available data, and ways to fill the gaps
 - Take advantage of opportunities to “build in” to new data systems

Integration across programs/silos

- A broad framework helps focus attention on:
 - Big picture goals
 - How each component (e.g., Medicaid, exchange) contributes to those goals
 - Outcomes, not just processes
- Where it makes sense, ensure that individual programs are collecting data and measuring consistently
- Select a lead agency or person to be accountable

Defining Scope

- Need to keep the number of topic areas manageable
- What are you trying to achieve? Examples:
 - Reduced uninsurance; better affordability for individuals; better access to care
- What issues are policymakers most concerned about? Examples:
 - Provider capacity to care for newly uninsured; employer decisions to continue offering coverage

Focus of Framework

- Outcomes vs process (“what” vs. “how”)
- Information useful for making policy decisions
- Information useful for making operational decisions
- ...or all of the above

Choosing Measures: “What is Important to Know?”

- Need to keep the number of measures manageable - prioritize
- What are you trying to achieve?
- What are the main mechanisms for achieving these goals? (policy levers)
- What will happen if the policy strategies are successful? What will happen if they are unsuccessful? What unintended consequences might there be?

Choosing Measures, continued

- Choose measures that are directly related to policy goals
- Think about near/medium/long term impacts and include some measures for each
- Include some measures that might be “early success signs” or “early warning signs”
- Consider feasibility - existing data vs possibility of collecting new data

Levels of Measurement

- System/population
- Specific population groups – e.g., age, income, health insurance coverage type, race/ethnicity, immigration status
- Geography
- Employer size
- Health care provider type – e.g., safety net providers

Setting benchmarks/goals

- In addition to measuring trends over time, framework can be used to compare to other states or monitor progress toward goals
 - Desire to compare to other states will influence choices about data sources
- The most useful goals are:
 - Realistic
 - Specific
 - Connected to specific actions/strategies
 - Connected to policy priorities

Stakeholder role

- “Stakeholder” can be defined narrowly or broadly
- Stakeholders can be engaged at any point in the process
- Need for clear boundaries on scope and purpose
- Best to present stakeholders with something to react to

For more information

- *Measuring Health Reform Impact: Coverage Workshop, October 2010*
- Sonier J. and E. Lukanen, *A Framework for Tracking the Impacts of the Affordable Care Act in California, June 2011*

Discussion questions

- How are state limiting the scope (what are key domains of interest)?
- How many states have legislation what would inform goal setting?
- Are these efforts for primarily for internal state use? Or for public dissemination?
- Are states focused on ACA, state reform or individual policy areas (like exchange)?
- Is it more important to have a short list of high level monitoring measures or many operational measures?
- How are states engaging stakeholders? What stakeholders are involved?

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