

The Division of Public Health Adopts New Population Health Approach

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Introduction

The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) has worked to improve the health of the state's residents both on an individual level, and as a whole at the population level, for many years. Most recently, DPH adopted a new strategic approach to how it addresses population health specifically. Over the last two to three years, DPH began to foundationally reorganize and intentionally connect staff with organizations and communities that are also working toward addressing population health issues. To further the Division's efforts and lay additional groundwork, DPH formed a small working group in 2018 to discuss and solidify a population health plan.

The working group agreed that DPH staff needed to adopt common language. The group researched and reviewed various definitions for common terms such as health, population health, health equity, and social determinants of health and ultimately agreed on the following definitions:

- Health – The state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.¹
- Population Health – The health outcomes of a group of individuals, including the distribution of such outcomes within the group. Population health includes the interrelated conditions and factors that influence the health of populations over the life course, identifies systematic variations in their patterns of occurrence, and applies the resulting knowledge to develop and implement policies and actions to improve the health and well-being of those populations.²
- Health Equity - Achieving the conditions in which all people have the opportunity to reach their health potential; the highest level of health for all people.³
- Social Determinants of Health - The circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, as well as the systems put in place that influence health. The underlying environmental, economic, social, and political structures that determine the quality and distribution of resources needed for health.³

Next, the working group determined an action framework that DPH staff could embrace at all levels and could use to guide the development of strategic intentional goals focusing on addressing specific population health issues. The group reviewed various concepts and settled on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Culture of Health Framework, which is a collaboration between the RWJF and RAND Corporation.⁴ The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has committed itself to a vision of working alongside others to build a national

Culture of Health (see Figure 1). The Culture of Health Action Framework sets a national agenda to improve population health, equity, and well-being. Informed by rigorous research on the multiple factors that affect health, it recognizes that there are many ways to build a Culture of Health, and provides numerous entry points for all types of organizations to get involved. The DPH team determined that the framework was an appropriate model to track progress in Delaware, in part because it encourages work across all sectors.

Figure 1 – 10 Principles for a Culture of Health⁴



The RWJF Culture of Health Framework contains four action areas (see Figure 2). These action areas represent significant strategic opportunities to realize the culture of health at the community level. Each action area has drivers. The drivers are priority areas where attention and innovation are needed to make ongoing systemic, cultural, and social change that can impact health. Lastly, the framework provides measures (see Figure 3). DPH developed unique measures to track positive and negative changes in each action area over time.

Figure 2: Culture of Health Taking Action⁴



Figure 3: Culture of Health Framework⁴

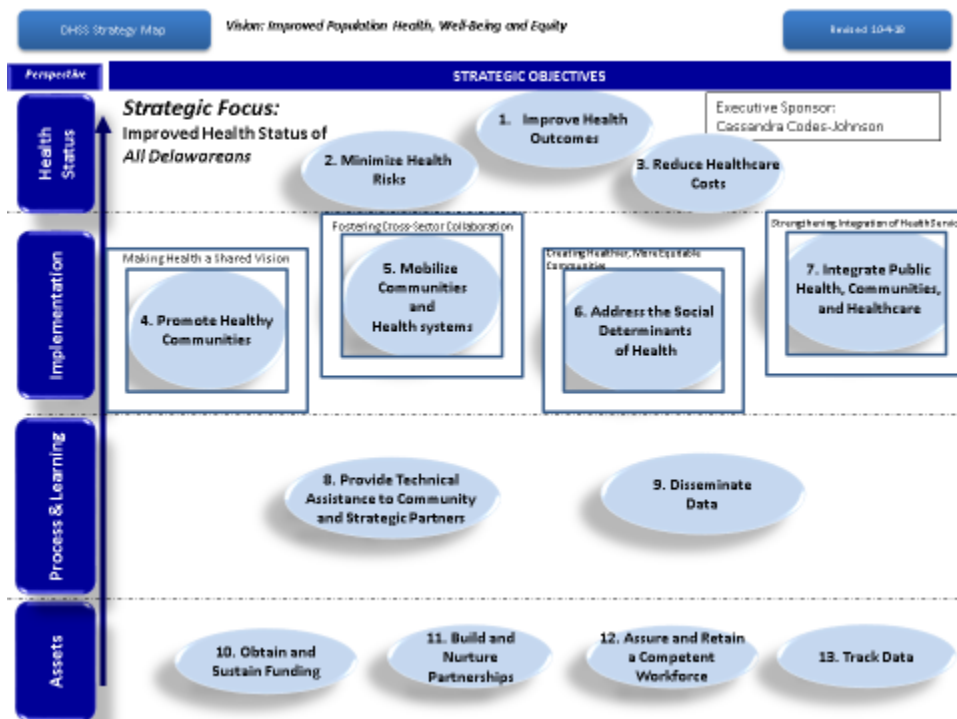
FROM VISION TO ACTION: A FRAMEWORK AND MEASURES TO MOBILIZE A CULTURE OF HEALTH

CULTURE OF HEALTH ACTION FRAMEWORK

ACTION AREAS	DRIVERS	MEASURES
1 MAKING HEALTH A SHARED VALUE	MINDSET AND EXPECTATIONS	Value on health interdependence Value on well-being Public discussion on health promotion and well-being
	SENSE OF COMMUNITY	Sense of community
	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	Social support Voter participation Volunteer engagement
2 FOSTERING CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING	NUMBER AND QUALITY OF PARTNERSHIPS	Local health department collaboration Opportunities to improve health for youth at schools Business support for workplace health promotion and Culture of Health
	INVESTMENT IN CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION	U.S. corporate giving
	POLICIES THAT SUPPORT COLLABORATION	Federal allocations for health investments related to nutrition and indoor and outdoor physical activity Community relations and policing Youth exposure to advertising for healthy and unhealthy food and beverage products Climate adaptation and mitigation Health in all policies (support for working families)
3 CREATING HEALTHIER, MORE EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES	BUILT ENVIRONMENT/PHYSICAL CONDITIONS	Housing affordability Access to healthy foods Youth safety Residential segregation
	SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT	Early childhood education Public libraries Complete streets policies Air quality
	POLICY AND GOVERNANCE	
4 STRENGTHENING INTEGRATION OF HEALTH SERVICES AND SYSTEMS	ACCESS	Access to public health Access to stable health insurance Access to mental health services Routine dental care
	CONSUMER EXPERIENCE AND QUALITY	Consumer experience Population covered by an Accountable Care Organization Electronic medical record linkage Hospital partnerships
	BALANCE AND INTEGRATION	Practice laws for nurse practitioners Social spending relative to health expenditure
OUTCOME	OUTCOME AREAS	MEASURES
IMPROVED POPULATION HEALTH, WELL-BEING, AND EQUITY	ENHANCED INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING	Well-being rating Caregiving burden
	MANAGED CHRONIC DISEASE AND REDUCED TOXIC STRESS	Adverse child experiences Disability associated with chronic conditions
	REDUCED HEALTH CARE COSTS	Family health care cost Potentially preventable hospitalization rates Annual end-of-life care expenditures

In addition to adopting the Culture of Health Framework, the DPH team developed an internal strategy map (see Figure 4). This strategy map will guide day-to-day efforts towards improving specific population health issues. The DPH team incorporated the Culture of Health action areas into the strategy map. The strategy map will be used as a tool to guide the implementation of strategic initiatives, as well as to track internal efforts toward achieving identified population health goals.

Figure 4: Division of Public Health Population Health Strategy Map



The DPH Population Health Plan and Strategy Map was shared with the DPH Leadership Team to obtain feedback and gain approval for implementation. Using the Map as a guide, Leadership team members were asked to document Policy, Systems and Environmental (PSE) level strategies that their programs are either currently engaged in, or could potentially implement in the near future, that are believed to have a positive impact on specific population health indicators. PSE change approaches seek to go beyond programming and into the systems that create the structures in which we work, live, and play. An effective PSE approach should seek to reach populations and uncover strategies for impact that are sustainable. Efforts may accelerate the adoption or implementation of effective interventions by effectively integrating approaches into existing infrastructures. Such approaches often involve the input of advocates, decision makers, and policy makers.⁵

As DPH works internally, using the strategy map to track its efforts, it is also employing continuous quality improvement review to help determine if its efforts have positive impacts. The Division has also embarked on a path to provide more information to the public regarding population health and the factors that impact health outcomes. To that end, DPH is developing a State of Delaware Population Health Indicators Scorecard (see Figure 5). The scorecard will provide more timely trend data for various clinical, social, and environmental data points. This scorecard contains measures across nine areas: community safety, healthy lifestyles, infectious diseases, maternal and child health, health services utilization, chronic disease, mental health and substance use disorder, economy, and education.

Figure 5. Population Health Scorecard Measures, Division of Public Health, 2018

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Community Safety	Healthy Lifestyles	Infectious Diseases	Maternal and Child Health	Health Services Utilization	Chronic Disease	Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder	Economy	Education
Violent Crime	Adult Overweight and Obesity Prevalence	Incidence of HIV Infection	Infant Mortality	Mortality Amenable to Health Care	Diabetes Prevalence	Infants Diagnosed with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome	Unemployment Rate	High School Graduation
Adult Intentional Injury Deaths	Youth Overweight and Obesity Prevalence	Incidence of Chlamydia Infection	Pre-term Births	Preventable Hospital Stays	Cancer Mortality	Drug Overdose Deaths	Employment Growth	3 rd Grade Reading Proficiency
Youth Intentional Injury Deaths	Youth Current electronic vapor product use	Incidence of Gonorrhea Infection	Teen Pregnancy	Adults who have had Colorectal Cancer Screening	Lung Cancer Mortality	Suspected non-fatal drug overdoses	Children in Poverty	8 th Grade Reading Proficiency
Adult Unintentional Injury Deaths	Healthy Weight		Unintended Pregnancy	Adult – Potentially Avoidable ED Visits	Diagnosis of local stage colorectal cancer	Adults who currently use tobacco products		
Youth Unintentional Injury Deaths	Children and adolescents who meet current federal physical activity guidelines		Children receiving developmental screening	Youth – Potentially Avoidable ED Visits	Adults with Hypertension	Adults who currently engage in excessive drinking		
	Youth Daily Vegetable Intake		Children age 19-35 months with recommended vaccines	Adult – 30-day Hospital Readmissions		Suicide Rate		
	Water Fluoridation		Oral Health Care Visit (Children)			Prevalence of suicide plan attempts		
	Adequate Sleep		Foster Care			Youth – Use of Rx pain medicines without prescription		
			Child Maltreatment					
			Bullying in School					

Source: Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, 2018.

The DPH population health strategy also supports, and aligns with, State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) goals. The population health scorecard will highlight and inform the public regarding how Delaware is trending on important indicators that impact SHIP goals. The division's internal population health strategy work is designed to create alignment throughout programs that will allow DPH to evaluate current investments being made and make determinations as to whether current strategies are working or if a shift in investments would better support SHIP goals.

By following these data points and intentionally working to improve the clinical, social, and environmental health determinants, DPH and others can work collectively toward improving the state's population health.

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