Million Hearts® in Municipalities Tool Kit

Module 5: Evaluation and Monitoring

Acknowledgments

This Million Hearts® in Municipalities Tool Kit was completed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in collaboration with the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) with the goal of helping health departments and municipal organizations implement Million Hearts® strategies at a local level. NACCHO is an association that provides advocacy, leadership, subject matter expertise, and resources to 3,000 local public health departments across the United States.

Million Hearts® in Municipalities: Evaluation and Monitoring

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Module Overview

Scope and User Outcomes

The Million Hearts® in Municipalities* Tool Kit is intended to assist local and state departments of health (LSDOHs) to be active partners in the Million Hearts® initiative, which will henceforth be referred to as MH.

What's included?

- Introduction to key concepts and principles to support evaluating and monitoring MH efforts.

- Readiness Assessment and Action Plan to evaluate and monitor MH efforts.

- Resources related to evaluating and monitoring MH efforts.

What's not included?

- This module does not include a step-by-step guide for evaluation. Each LSDOH will need to determine the best approaches based on the municipality's current goals and objectives related to MH. Consider data availability and data collection methods to determine your evaluation plan. Information about national MH measures can be found in Module 2: Setting Goals.

Expected outcomes for module users:

- Understand the role and importance of evaluating and monitoring your MH efforts.

- Identify current strengths, opportunities, and gaps related to evaluating and monitoring your MH efforts.

- Identify immediate priorities for your municipality related to evaluation and monitoring.

- Increase awareness of resources and materials relevant to evaluating and monitoring MH efforts.

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* The term "municipality" is used loosely throughout all modules of this Tool Kit. You may be able to implement these strategies in your city, town, county, state, or other jurisdiction.

Section 1: Introduction

Evaluating and monitoring the performance of public health activities is necessary to identify effective ways to prevent and treat cardiovascular disease (CVD). Prior to initiating or enhancing your MH efforts, it is important to pre-determine the goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes that will be monitored and evaluated. Those components should be mapped out in a comprehensive project logic model from which a companion evaluation plan can be created. (See Module 2 for guidance on creating a logic model.) Depending on your capacity to conduct an evaluation, this may be a good time to engage partners, such as local hospitals and universities, who may be able to assist in your evaluation efforts.

Checklist of Decisions for Your Evaluation Plan

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends discussing the following questions to develop your evaluation plan:

- What will be evaluated? That is, what is "the program" and in what context does it exist?

- What aspects of the program will be considered when measuring change/performance?

- What standards (i.e., type or level of performance/change) must be reached for the program to be considered successful?

- What data source(s) will be used to indicate how the program has performed?

- What conclusions about program performance are justified when the available evidence is compared to the selected standards?

- How will the lessons learned from the evaluation be used to improve public health and program effectiveness?[1]

When developing your evaluation and monitoring plan, consider the following:

Potential Changes to Track

- Awareness of heart disease risks or available prevention strategies

- Implementation of effective, evidence-based policies and interventions

- Disparities in heart disease and stroke outcomes

- Health outcomes

- Health care costs

Potential Data Sources

- Hospital discharge data

- Emergency department visits for CVD/hypertension

- Clinical data registries

- Electronic health records

- Public health surveys

- Outpatient claims data

- Census data

National Surveillance Data Sources Used for Million Hearts®

- CDC Interactive Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke: https://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/maps/atlas/index.htm

- CDC National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES): http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhanes.htm

- CDC National Vital Statistics System (NVSS): http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss.htm

- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP): http://www.ahrq.gov/research/data/hcup/index.html

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH): https://nsduhweb.rti.org/respweb/homepage.cfm

Section 2: Developing an Evaluation and Monitoring Plan

Determine What and How to Evaluate

When developing your MH Evaluation and Monitoring plan, consider the following:

- Evaluation questions to answer
- Indicators to use
- Data sources
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data analysis and responsible staff
- How the data will be used

Partnerships and Data Sharing

LSDOHs may have fairly good access to traditional public health data sources for their evaluation efforts. Accessing clinical data may prove more difficult.

Having strong partnerships is essential to the success of MH (revisit Module 3: Partnerships). Diverse partnerships and data accessibility will ensure that the accurate and timely collection of data supports your evaluation efforts. Enhance partnerships and include data use/sharing agreements in your MH efforts. This will assist you in assessing which data are accessible and with whom data sharing permissions are required.

MH staff worked with public and private partners to embed a small set of evidence-based clinical quality measures (CQMs) for the ABCS (Aspirin when appropriate, Blood pressure control, Cholesterol management, and Smoking cessation) of heart health into existing quality reporting systems and registries.[2] By aligning these CQMs across a wide range of reporting systems, MH is helping reduce the reporting burden on clinicians, focus quality improvement efforts on the same outcomes, and improve communication about performance measures that can have the biggest effect on cardiovascular health. The following suggestions for readily accessible data systems

> **"Timely data** can help accelerate the pace of progress, focus our actions over the next few years, and inform course corrections. Dashboards and other reports that display progress motivate us all and pave the way for rapid improvement. We ask partners to share their reach and efforts to date. Plan now to achieve results and celebrate with us in 2022."
>
> —Janet Wright,
> Past Executive Director,
> Million Hearts®

can be used to determine your performance metrics and data collection methods:

- **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Uniform Data System (UDS).** Annually, health centers and similar organizations report their performance through this standardized reporting system. Data are collected on patients, visits, staffing and utilization, quality of care indicators, health outcomes and disparities, financial costs, and revenues. To find data on health centers near you, visit the HRSA UDS Data Center.

- **Performance Metrics and Accessing Data.** Since MH began, much progress has been made in this area thanks to the commitment of a wide range of stakeholders to share information via data. For more information about these efforts, visit the Clinical Quality Measure Alignment webpage.

Data Tips and Challenges to Anticipate

- Have a realistic time frame for collecting data and observing change.

- Recognize the differences in national and local data. National data may have a delayed time frame, while data at the clinic and municipal level may give a more "real-time" picture and be helpful in adjusting clinical processes.

- Avoid spending excessive time and resources on collecting and monitoring data rather than implementing strategies. Balance your efforts.

- Know that measuring outcomes or "events," such as heart attacks and strokes, is a complicated process. You will need to combine different data sources and definitions.

- Even if you cannot collect data from partners locally, you can encourage them to align their data collection methods with your measures and to regularly and frequently share performance data with their stakeholders.

- When reporting your results, tailor the reporting to your different audiences. Determine what they are most interested in and share those findings. Refer to Module 4 for sample communication messages.

- Anticipate and quickly adapt to the inevitable changes in evidence, guidelines, and performance measures.

Provide Feedback and Results to Partners and the Public

An important component of any evaluation and monitoring effort is to provide stakeholders feedback on the progress of your initiative. Successes should be celebrated, and challenges should be discussed and addressed. MH made a commitment to share progress with its partners and the public. To meet this commitment, staff have written reports and developed communication methods to keep partners engaged and motivated.

Section 3: Readiness Assessment

Readiness Assessment for Evaluating Municipal Million Hearts® Efforts

The statements below are intended to identify current municipal strengths, opportunities, and gaps in addressing the evaluation of CVD prevention efforts. If possible, complete the following assessment with key internal data/evaluation staff and a couple of external data/ evaluation partners who are already working and/or have an interest in evaluating CVD prevention efforts.

As a group, read each statement in the assessment and indicate which number best describes your current situation on a scale of 0 to 5, where 0 indicates "This is not happening at the municipal level" and 5 indicates "This is happening in a robust way at the municipal level."

After completing, discuss why you rated each statement as you did. Then, go to the next section to identify ways to improve or enhance your evaluation and monitoring efforts.

Table 1. Readiness Assessment for Evaluating Municipal Million Hearts® Efforts

Municipal Activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
We have identified and prioritized health outcomes to evaluate.						
We have identified staff or partner organizations who are responsible for evaluating and monitoring our MH efforts.						
We have specifically allocated resources (e.g., staff, funding) for evaluating and monitoring MH efforts.						
We have set tracking methods for each of the short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals that we have identified.						
We have established partnerships with agencies that can readily access health outcomes data.						
We are working with our clinical partners to encourage them to align their data collection with our measures.						
We currently use evaluation results to improve our efforts.						
We have pre-determined performance metrics aligned with current CVD prevention activities in our municipality.						
We share evaluation results with our partners, key government leaders, elected officials, and communities to sustain, expand, support, and engage.						

Section 4: Action Planning

After assessing current strengths, opportunities, and gaps, you/your planning team should begin to develop next steps or actions to move MH efforts forward. Action plans should focus on a few priority areas that would most benefit municipal CVD prevention efforts.

Getting Started

- Review the results of the Readiness Assessment to identify a few immediate priorities on which you can begin to work. To choose these priorities:

  - Look at the statements you ranked 4 and 5 and ask, "What is the best way to leverage or expand on this strength as the MH efforts are developed?"

  - Look at the statements you ranked 1, 2, and 3 and ask, "Will this gap delay or prevent progress on the MH efforts? If so, how can this gap or asset be strengthened?"

- Use the Evaluation Action Plan template below (Table 2) to identify the next steps, who is responsible for each step, and your due dates.

Developing an Action Plan

Use the template below or one you develop to outline the next steps for you/your planning team. Actions should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Identify who on the team will be responsible and the expected date of completion. Any resources that will be needed to complete the action should also be identified at this time. Plan to meet regularly to revisit the action items and provide updates on progress and/or barriers.

Table 2. Action Plan Template

Actions to Take	Who is Responsible	Due Date	Resources Needed	Notes

Section 5: Resources

The following resources will support evaluating and monitoring MH efforts.

Table 3. Evaluation and Monitoring Resources

Resource	Description
CDC Evaluation Framework https://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework/index.htm	CDC suggests following this framework for public health program evaluation.
CDC Evaluation Resources http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/evaluation_resources.htm	This webpage contains many online resources that can be used to develop an evaluation plan, including sample evaluation plans, workbooks, and tool kits.
Developing an Effective Evaluation Plan: Setting the Course for Effective Program Evaluation http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/cdc-evaluation-workbook-508.pdf	This CDC workbook can help public health program managers, administrators, and evaluators develop a joint understanding of what constitutes an evaluation plan, why it is important, and how to develop an effective plan.
CDC Guide to Developing Logic Models https://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/evaluation_resources/guides/logic_model.htm	This Evaluation Guide offers a general overview of the development and use of logic models as planning and evaluation tools.
CDC Fundamentals of Evaluating Partnerships https://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/docs/partnership_guide.pdf	This guide applies the CDC Evaluation Framework to evaluating partnerships.
CDC Public Health Professionals Gateway: Develop SMART Objectives https://www.cdc.gov/phcommunities/resourcekit/evaluate/smart_objectives.html	This resource provides guidance on creating SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) objectives, which are helpful in the evaluation and monitoring process.
Million Hearts® Partnership Network Analysis Publication: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29889170 Key Evaluation Findings and Successes: https://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/evaluation_resources/mh-partner-network-evaluation.htm	An evaluation was conducted on the structure, content, quality, and quantity of MH partnerships. The study used a social network analysis to assess the network of partnerships and identify potential implications for policy and practice.
CDC's Interactive Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke https://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/maps/atlas/index.htm	This mapping tool allows users to create and customize county- and state-level maps of heart disease and stroke by race and ethnicity, sex, age group, and more.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Framework for program evaluation in public health. *MMWR*. 1999. https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr4811.pdf. Accessed June 4, 2019.

2. Million Hearts. Clinical Quality Measure Alignment. https://millionhearts.hhs.gov/data-reports/cqm/measures.html. Accessed April 18, 2019.