

Developing a Population Health Driver Diagram Using The Community Guide

June 2019

A population health driver diagram captures a proposed health change for a community in a single visual graphic diagram that shows a potential path of change. It depicts a detailed theory of potential change, developed by subject matter experts, about how to improve a community health priority by showing a potential improvement path. A population health driver diagram organizes information on proposed improvement activities so that the relationships between the aim of the improvement project and the changes to be tested and implemented are made clear. This makes it easier for the organizations involved to see where they fit into the improvement process. A measurement framework can be developed for the actions and sub-goals to help monitor progress as improvement actions are agreed upon and teams are formed to start implementing the changes.

A population health driver diagram can be used collaboratively by public health, healthcare, and other stakeholders to identify the potential drivers that can help achieve an identified community health objective. It serves as a framework for determining and aligning actions that can be taken within a community for achieving the health objective. This strategy relies on multiple sectors working collaboratively rather than competitively. Diverse organizations are more effective when they combine their efforts to address a health issue than when they work separately and competitively.

Communities may use a population health driver diagram as a starting point for discussion among stakeholders and to help create an atmosphere of cooperation by enabling each participant to identify their organization's role in addressing the community health priority and develop an understanding of how what they are doing fits in with the work of other community organizations. This framework offers flexibility for identifying and addressing unique community characteristics, assets, and needs, and can be used to determine actions that can be taken individually and collectively to positively impact the particular community health objective.

Using a Tree Diagram structure and methodology¹, a population health driver diagram guides interdisciplinary improvement teams through the process of brainstorming and developing improvement strategies that are associated with their health improvement AIM statement and goals. It is a visual tool that consists of a general AIM statement, goals of the AIM statement, and primary and secondary drivers that specify actions that can be taken to help achieve the desired goals. It is best used as a systematic way to explore and address the "cause and effect" relationships of factors related to a targeted community health priority. When using this tool, communities should first achieve consensus about the primary drivers that will influence a defined health goal. The primary drivers can then be explored and broken down into a set of more specific and precise secondary drivers, from which targeted interventions can be developed and implemented.

¹ *Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, Public Health Foundation, Washington, DC, 2012, pages 145-146.

A population health driver diagram is a recommended pathway to improvement based on existing circumstances and is put forth for others to consider and modify to fit their particular needs. The ultimate goal of a driver diagram is to define a potential pathway and a number of actions or interventions that a community may want to undertake that will help it achieve the AIM of the improvement project. It is a “living” document that can be updated at any time to reflect new learnings from implementation activities, local conditions, or new evidence-based strategies. Depending on the progress a community is making, additional drivers may be addressed over time, existing drivers may be refined, and other drivers may be added. In addition, choosing a subset of drivers to address may help focus community efforts and achieve desired results.

This resource provides steps for constructing a population health driver diagram to achieve a community health objective using [The Community Guide](#) (The Guide to Community Preventive Services), a collection of evidence-based findings of the [Community Preventive Services Task Force](#) that can help in identifying interventions to improve health and prevent disease in a community.

12 Steps to Developing a Population Health Driver Diagram

1. Select a community health priority of importance to the community.
2. Engage an anchor organization that will serve as the neutral convener and backbone of the initiative. This organization may be a hospital, health department, or other community organization. The anchor organization will help organize the effort, engage the appropriate community partners, schedule meetings, provide regular communications, develop a briefing sheet for the first coalition meeting on why this issue is important, and identify resources to assist the effort.
3. Develop a draft population health driver diagram of the community health initiative to vet with a community coalition. A population health driver diagram template is provided below. This draft driver diagram should include the AIM of the initiative, associated goals to be achieved, primary drivers, and secondary drivers. The AIM is a clear statement of what the improvement project will address. The goals should be specific, measurable, time-bound, and focused on the desired outcomes of the improvement. Primary drivers are a set of high-level improvement areas that the team believes must be addressed to achieve the AIM; these are 3-4 factors that have the greatest impact in driving achievement of the AIM. Secondary drivers are specific sub-areas of the primary drivers where the team plans to make changes or interventions; each secondary driver will contribute to at least one primary driver, but could impact multiple primary drivers. This draft driver diagram should be developed by members of the anchor organization and members of a few select community organizations, such as the health department or hospital/health system. Use The Community Guide as a reference to help determine primary and secondary drivers and the interventions the community may eventually wish to implement.
4. Develop a coalition consisting of community partners tackling the community health priority in the community.

5. Develop an inventory of services relevant to the community health priority currently being offered in the community by the community partners. This inventory should be prepared by the anchor organization.
6. Convene the first coalition meeting to discuss the draft population health driver diagram. Use a round-robin approach to make sure that all coalition members see the entire draft driver diagram and have a chance to comment on it. Review the inventory of services currently offered in the community that was developed by the anchor organization with the coalition members to determine if it is accurate and up to date.
7. Once all comments have been received, revise the draft population health driver diagram and the inventory of services currently offered in the community to reflect the coalition's input. Send both of these revised documents to all coalition members. This revision and dissemination should be done by the anchor organization.
8. Select team leads for each primary driver before convening the second coalition meeting.
9. Convene the second coalition meeting about one month after the first coalition meeting. At the meeting, ask coalition members to join the primary driver team with which they feel the most connected based on their work on this community health priority. Devote the rest of the meeting to having the primary driver teams meet and discuss their action plans going forward. Provide The Community Guide links related to the primary and secondary drivers to the teams and reinforce the use of evidence-based strategies where possible. By the end of the meeting, the primary driver teams should have identified a project to work on; developed an action plan (a Gantt Chart² may be used), future meetings schedule, and metrics to monitor; identified any additional members from the community they would like to add to their team; and created a contact list for all team members. Additional meetings may be convened if necessary to accomplish all of these tasks.
10. Hold future meetings monthly for project updates. These updates should include reporting progress on the project, challenges being encountered, and potential funding needs for implementation of recommendations. These update meetings could include the full coalition or the team leads could meet for updates monthly with the full coalition meeting bimonthly. Refine the population health driver diagram and project action plans as needed.
11. Explore potential community funders that might be able to support primary driver teams that need future funding to implement their recommendations. Identify potential funders and their requirements for granting assistance. This research into potential funders should be done by the anchor organization.
12. Develop a sustainability plan for the coalition, as such community health initiatives may take 2-3 years to complete and the interest of coalition members can waver over time. This could include rotating the anchor organization or the leadership of the coalition, bringing in new coalition members, rotating the primary driver team leads, finishing one project and taking on another secondary driver, reviewing the population health driver diagram after a year to

² *Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, Public Health Foundation, Washington, DC, 2012, pages 47-48.

see if updates are needed, or repeating Step 3 to get the energy back. The key is to keep the attention on the community health priority alive and moving forward. Development of the sustainability plan should be done by the anchor organization.

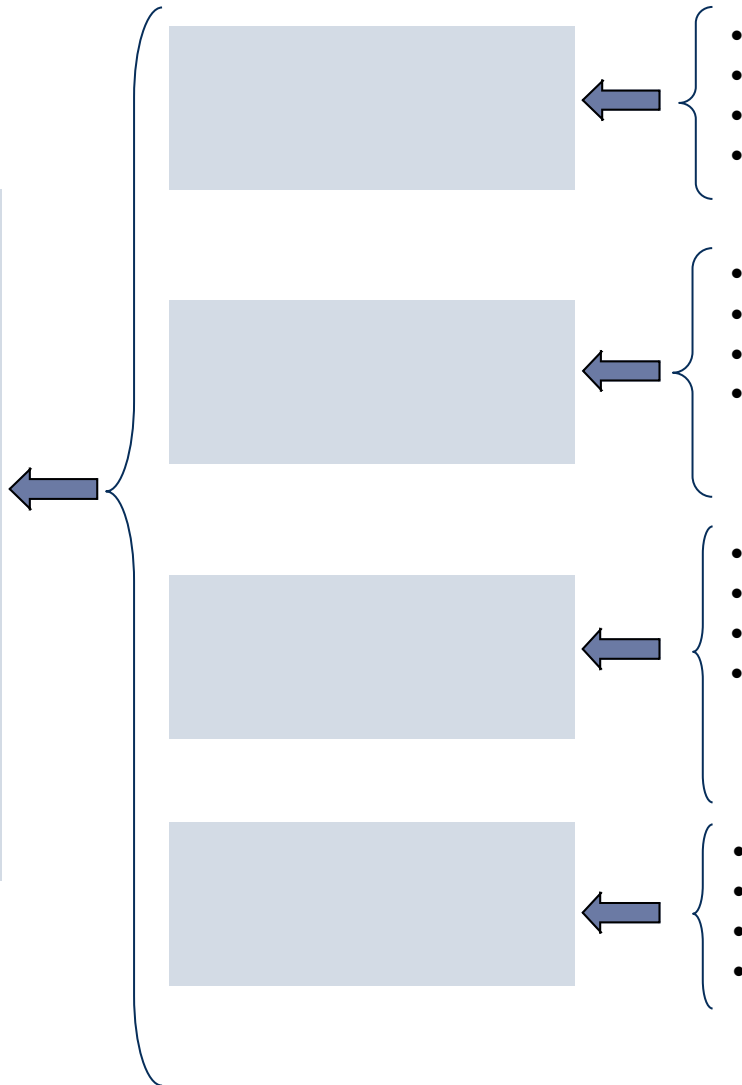
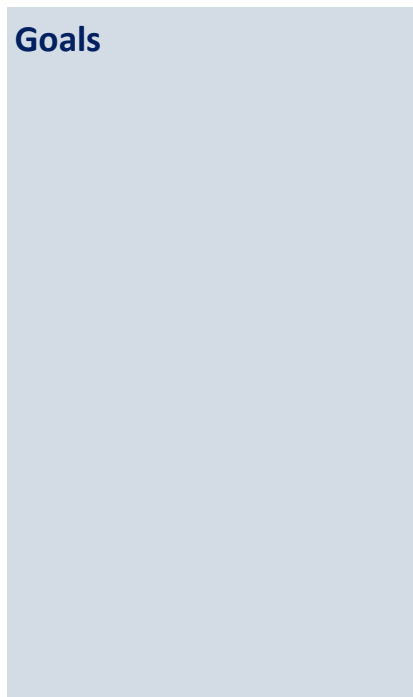


Population Health Driver Diagram Template

AIM STATEMENT

PRIMARY DRIVERS

SECONDARY DRIVERS



Additional Quality Improvement Tools

Additional quality improvement tools may be helpful in working with coalitions to implement evidence-based strategies from The Community Guide. Many of these can be found in the [Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia](#) or online. These include:

- Agree/Add/Change Matrix
- AIM Statement (*Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, pages 3-4)
- Cause and Effect Diagram (*Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, pages 11-12)
- Flowchart (*Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, pages 37-38)
- Force Field Analysis (*Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, pages 41-42)
- Gantt Chart (*Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, pages 47-48)
- Impact Effort Plot (*Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, pages 55-56)
- Is - Is Not Balance Sheet (*Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, pages 59-60)
- Matrix Diagram (*Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, pages 71-72)
- Prioritization Matrix (*Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, pages 93-94; http://www.phf.org/resourcestools/Pages/Electronic_Prioritization_Matrix.aspx)
- Radar Chart (*Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, pages 105-106)

Related Resources

- *Using The Community Guide for Community Health Improvement Initiative*: <http://www.phf.org/CommunityGuideCHI2019>
- The Community Guide: <https://www.thecommunityguide.org>
- Population Health Driver Diagrams:
 - Using Driver Diagrams to Improve Population Health: http://www.phf.org/programs/driverdiagram/Pages/Using_Driver_Diagrams_to_Improve_Population_Health.aspx
 - Developing a Population Health Driver Diagram: http://www.phf.org/resourcestools/Pages/Developing_a_Population_Health_Driver_Diagram.aspx
 - IOM Discussion Paper: Using a Population Health Driver Diagram to Support Health Care and Public Health Collaboration: http://www.phf.org/resourcestools/Pages/Using_a_Population_Health_Driver_Diagram_to_Support_Health_Care_And_Public_Health_Collaboration.aspx
 - *Using The Community Guide for Community Health Improvement Initiative* Webinars: <https://www.train.org/main/search?query=%22driver%20diagram%22>
 - Customized Technical Assistance: Mapping Solutions with Population Health Driver Diagrams: http://www.phf.org/consulting/Pages/Achieving_Population_Health_Improvement_with_Driver_Diagrams.aspx
- Ten Positive Preparatory Steps to Enable a Population Health Coalition to Prosper (White Paper): http://www.phf.org/resourcestools/Pages/Ten_Positive_Preparatory_Priority_Steps_to_Enable_a_Population_Health_Coalition_to_Prospers.aspx

- Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia:
http://www.pfh.org/resourcestools/Pages/Public_Health_Quality_Improvement_Encyclopedia.aspx
- Quality Improvement Tools to Advance Public Health Performance:
http://www.pfh.org/programs/QItools/Pages/Quality_Improvement_Tools_to_Advance_Public_Health_Performance.aspx

For More Information

This resource was developed by the [Public Health Foundation](#) (PHF) through the *Using The Community Guide for Community Health Improvement* initiative, a collaboration of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Association for Community Health Improvement](#), [Catholic Health Association](#), and PHF. Additional information about the initiative can be found at <http://www.pfh.org/CommunityGuideCHI2019>. Questions or requests for information may be sent to info@phf.org.

Funding Acknowledgement

This initiative is supported by Cooperative Agreement Number NU38OT000211, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.