Using the Foundational Public Health Services Framework to Build a Performance Management System

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Introduction

Performance management, along with quality improvement, can be used by any public health department to improve performance and better serve communities. As described by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), "The Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) framework outlines the unique responsibilities of governmental public health and can be used to explain the vital role of governmental public health in a thriving community; identify capacity and resource gaps; determine the cost for assuring foundational activities; and justify funding needs. However, to best serve their communities, health departments will provide additional services and may require additional capacity in different areas,"[1] as shown in Figure 1. Building FPHS into a performance management system is a relatively new approach and is beginning to be used by some health departments to focus on the delivery of FPHS.
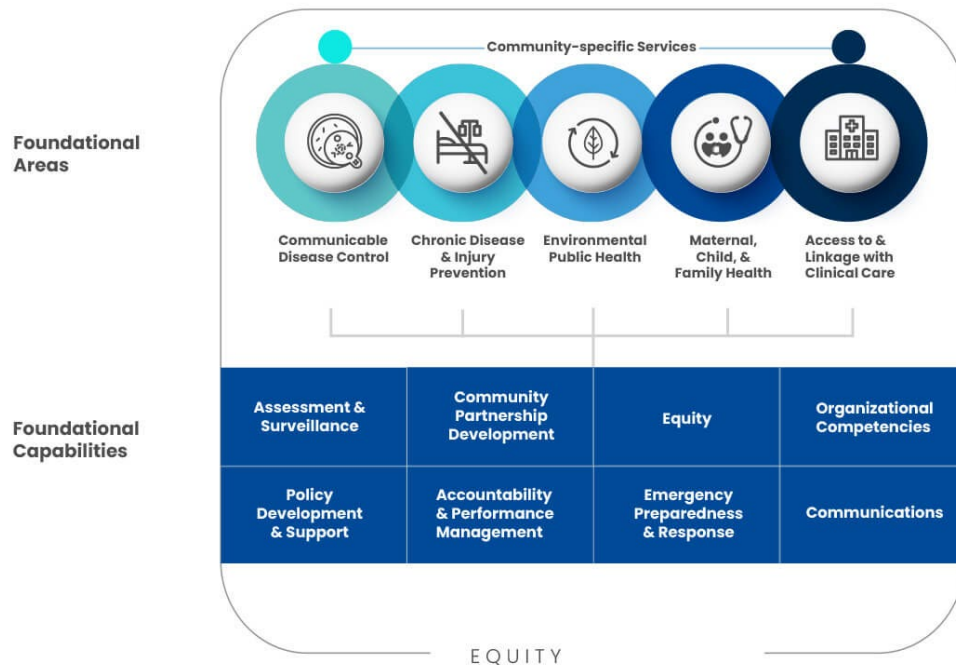

Figure 1

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[1] https://phaboard.org/center-for-innovation/public-health-frameworks/the-foundational-public-health-services/, Accessed February 4, 2025.

How to Build a Performance Management System Using the FPHS

Performance management can be used for Foundational Capabilities, Foundational Areas, and Community Specific Services. Whichever parts of the FPHS framework are being used, the performance standards, measures, and data need to relate to the relevant parts of the framework.

A public health department can use the FPHS framework to build a performance management system by following these steps:

1. **Prioritize Unique Responsibilities**: Start by prioritizing the unique responsibilities that are essential for your public health department, such as communicable disease control, environmental health, maternal and child health, and chronic disease prevention.
2. **Set Performance Standards**[2]: Establish clear performance standards and goals for priority unique responsibilities. These standards should be based on national, state, or scientific guidelines, and should be measurable and achievable.
3. **Develop Performance Measures**[3]: Create specific performance measures to assess the achievement of the performance standards. These measures should be relevant, reliable, and valid, and should provide actionable data.
4. **Collect and Analyze Data**: Implement systems to collect and analyze data on the performance measures. This can include surveys, health records, and other data sources. Regularly review and evaluate the data to identify trends and areas for improvement.
5. **Report and Communicate Results**: Develop a process for reporting and communicating the results of the performance measures to staff, leadership, the community, and other interested parties. Transparency and accountability are key to building trust and support.
6. **Prioritize Improvement Areas**: Use the data to identify areas that need improvement and prioritize actions to address these areas. This can involve revising policies, implementing new programs, or enhancing existing services.
7. **Engage the Community**: Involve the community in the performance management process, including community members, healthcare providers, and other partners. Their input can help ensure the performance management system is relevant and effective.
8. **Continuous Improvement**: Establish a culture of continuous improvement by regularly reviewing and updating the performance management system. This can involve training staff, revising performance measures, and incorporating new technologies and practices.

Example: The Tangerine Health Department used the FPHS approach and started by selecting Communicable Disease Control of the Foundational Area of the FPHS framework as their initial priority to track. This example demonstrates how a public health department can incorporate FPHS into their current performance management system by following the following steps:

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[2] Performance Management Toolkit: Performance Standards, https://services.phf.org/pm-toolkit/system-framework-components-and-resources/#pm-system, Accessed February 4, 2025.
[3] Performance Management Toolkit: Performance Measurement, https://services.phf.org/pm-toolkit/system-framework-components-and-resources/#pm-system, Accessed February 4, 2025.

Step 1: Prioritize Unique Responsibilities:
- **Unique Responsibility**:
  - Control and prevention of communicable diseases.

Step 2: Set Performance Standards:
- **Performance Standard**:
  - Reduce the incidence of communicable diseases by 10% over the next year.

Step 3: Develop Performance Measures:
- **Performance Measures**:
  - Number and % of new communicable disease cases investigated within 24 hours of reporting.
    - Target: 90% of cases
  - Number and % of disease-related complaints investigated within 24 hours of reporting.
    - Target: 90% of complaints

Step 4: Collect and Analyze Data:
- **Data Collection Sources**:
  - State-level reportable disease reports.
  - State-level complaint tracking reports.
  - Internal case investigation completion reports.
  - Internal complaint investigation completion reports.
- **Data Analysis**:
  - Identify trends in disease incidence.
  - Identify trends in response times.

Step 5: Report and Communicate Results:
- **Process to Report:**
  - Regularly update staff, leadership, the community, and other interested parties on progress through reports and dashboards.
- **Process to Communicate:**
  - Share success stories and areas for improvement with the community.

Step 6: Prioritize Improvement Areas:
- **Identified Areas:**
  - Increase staffing for faster response times to disease reports.
  - Increase staffing or processes for completion of investigations.

Step 7: Engage the Community:
- **Engagement Strategies:**
  - Solicit feedback from residents and healthcare providers to refine strategies.
  - Evaluate feedback on process improvements.

Step 8: Continuous Improvement:
- **Review and Update**:
  - Regularly review performance data and adjust strategies as needed.
  - Train staff on the latest communicable disease control techniques.
  - Incorporate new technologies and best practices into the program.

Summary

This example demonstrates how a health department can incorporate the FPHS framework into its performance management system. By following these steps, a public health department can create a robust performance management system that helps achieve its mission and improve public health outcomes.

About the Authors:

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