A Selection of Health-Oriented Collaboration Measurement Frameworks: Elements for Consideration in a Cross-Sector Alignment Measurement System

January 2021
Introduction

This is the second of two publications prepared in support of the development of a cross-sector alignment measurement system. The first brief contained preliminary reflections on measuring cross-sector alignment gathered during a recent review of existing collaboration and cross-sector alignment metrics. A key finding from that first brief was that there are many different types of measures, for example standardized versus situationally specific measures, measures that evolve over time, and measures developed using different approaches.

Similarly, a recent review of shared data by researchers at the American Institutes for Research identified considerable variation in the ways that measures were used by collaboratives. Examples include:

- Encouraging alignment efforts
- Monitoring alignment goals and objectives
- Sustaining participation by demonstrating progress
- Building community buy-in
- Advocating for policy change
- Addressing health equity
- Understanding the community context

In both cases, the implication is that there is a need to understand and address different approaches to measurement systematically during the development of a cross-sector aligning measurement system. Accordingly, the purpose of this report is to selectively review a diverse set of existing health collaboration measurement frameworks to identify useful elements that may be included in a cross-sector aligning framework. The measurement frameworks reviewed here were chosen for their differing approaches to measurement on the assumption that more could be learned from examining a variety of measurement styles. They include —

- The Pathways Community HUB Institute: The PCHI Community HUB Certification Program
- Well Being in the Nation Network: The WIN Measurement Framework
- Mathematica: An Evaluation of the DASH All In Community Collaboratives
- Community Commons: The Seven Vital Conditions for Well-Being Framework
- Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC), 100 Million Healthier Lives, and the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Project: The Assessment for Advancing Community Transformation
• Tamarack Institute: The Inquiry Framework
• The Funders Forum on Accountable Health: Framework to Measure the Health Equity Impact of Accountable Communities for Health

EXISTING MEASUREMENT APPROACHES

The Pathways Community HUB Institute: The PCHI Community HUB Certification Program

The Pathways Community HUB Institute (PCHI) has outlined a model of care wherein community-based care coordinators work with community members to attain needed services from across sectors.\(^2\) As part of this model, PCHI offers a [HUB certification](#) to organizations that implement the model successfully according to a series of predefined measures.

Working with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), PCHI identified a [subset of its certification measures](#) that reflect the core components of the RWJF Framework for Aligning Sectors. Thus, PCHI has a method for assessing cross-sector activities in general as well as cross-sector alignment in particular. PCHI suggests that the certification system can motivate action and also help in understanding the status of aligning communities. The certification approach put forward by PCHI could serve as a model for future work and implies that general guidance for leveraging existing certification systems may be helpful in the future.

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<td><strong>Features that could be added if used for a cross-sector alignment measurement system</strong></td>
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<td>• An aligning measurement system may be able to draw on other measurement or certification systems or outline a generalized process for drawing on such measures and systems.</td>
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Well Being in the Nation Network: The WIN Measurement Framework

The National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics partnered with 100 Million Healthier Lives and over 100 other organizations and communities to create the Well Being in the Nation Network. This network developed a series of multisector measures (Well Being in the Nation (WIN) Measures) that can be used for evaluating population health and well-being. The framework has three tiers: core measures, leading indicators, and a flexible, expanded set of measures. The core measures can be understood as outcome variables, and they are focused on the well-being of people, the well-being of places (specifically, the well-being of people in terms of their geography), and equity (specifically, the well-being of people compared between groups, given their geographies). Measures in the next tier are called leading indicator measures. The leading indicator measures can be understood as investigating variable factors expected to affect the outcomes captured by the core measures. The leading indicator measures are organized into 12 domains such as community vitality, education, housing, and demographics. The third tier, the flexible, expanded set of measures, is an additional set of measures offered alongside the leading indicators. This last set of measures includes additional measures that may be of interest, including measures of local or emerging importance. The WIN measurement framework identifies specific data sources for the core measures, leading indicators, and some of the flexible expanded set measures. Guidance around the flexible measures could be further expanded in a cross-sector alignment measurement system that draws on the WIN measurement framework.

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<td>• A broader measurement system might include more guidance for situationally specific measures that could be used in situations where standard measures would be unproductive or counterproductive for a given objective.</td>
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Mathematica: An Evaluation of the DASH All In Community Collaboratives

Mathematica recently evaluated the Data Across Sectors for Health (DASH) program to assess effectiveness of DASH at promoting shared data between organizations across sectors.\textsuperscript{4} In doing so, they created a framework for assessing alignment with an emphasis on shared data. Mathematica’s methods included document review, a survey network analysis, and analysis of key informant interviews with DASH staff and site representatives. Their measurement approach was thus based on qualitative interview analysis as well as quantitative analysis, the latter involving a series of multimeasure indices created by Mathematica or drawn from earlier research. This use of both qualitative interview data and quantitative survey data connotes, respectively, (1) an ability to speak to anticipated and unanticipated processes in depth and (2) an ability to identify general tendencies across sites. While this approach was primarily employed by Mathematica to evaluate DASH’s work on the data component of the Framework for Aligning Sectors, this approach and some of the measures developed in it might be useful for measuring aligning more broadly.

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Community Commons: The Seven Vital Conditions for Well-Being Framework

Community Commons developed the Seven Vital Conditions for Well-Being Framework to help users think about, and attain, well-being in communities. The seven conditions identified are meaningful work and wealth, reliable transportation, basic needs for health and safety, lifelong learning, humane housing, thriving natural work, and belonging and civic muscle. For each of the seven conditions identified, Community Commons provides resources such as background information, important areas to address, stories for inspiration, data sources, policy resources, and action and dialogue guides. The resources provided for each condition range from individual, community, and national-level data and can be updated because the framework is online. While this framework is not geared toward aligning across sectors specifically, the approach of providing background resources could be adapted in an aligning measurement system.

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| **Elements that might be useful as part of a cross-sector alignment measurement system** | • This framework goes beyond data by providing a compiled library of information, policies, and guides for each condition.  
  • This framework is dynamic in that new tools are added regularly.  
  • This framework allows for measurement of each condition at various levels (e.g., nationally, locally, individually). |
| **Features that could be added for a cross-sector alignment measurement system** | • This framework offers tools for measurement but does not prescribe precisely what to measure for each condition. If this were desired, specific measures could be added, perhaps based on the material provided in the framework.  
  • This framework focuses on well-being and its determinants rather than organizing or aligning in itself. If such a focus were desired, additional resources would be required. |
The Assessment for Advancing Community Transformation (AACT) tool was jointly developed by GHPC, 100 Million Healthier Lives, and the RWJF County Health Rankings & Roadmaps project.6 The AACT tool is designed to help communities assess their progress in six health-oriented domains and then plan their future activities accordingly. The six domains are titled Collaboration, Communication, Advance Equity, Plan for Action, Measure to Improve, and Sustainability. To use the tool, individuals in each group independently assess progress in each domain for the community in question. Scores range from “Not Yet Started” to “Sustaining.” The group then deliberates and settles on an agreed-upon score for each domain. That score can then serve as a basis for planning progress in each domain. To promote flexibility, the AACT does not specify the definition of community or the composition of the evaluation group.

### GHPC, 100 Million Healthier Lives, and the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Project: The Assessment for Advancing Community Transformation

#### Background
- This assessment contains six main topics, each of which has several items scored on a scale from “Not yet started” to “Sustaining.” The scale offers guidance on how scorers might score their community on each item.
- Individual scores are discussed with the group, and collective scores and action items are developed collaboratively by the group.

#### Elements that might be useful as part of a cross-sector alignment measurement system
- A concrete tool is provided to guide the evaluation process.
- The assessment compels deliberation and collective agreement about the current status of a community or intervention. These activities may have practical benefits beyond the assessment in and of itself.
- The AACT is designed to optimize local flexibility and shared language about the state of an individual community or intervention.
- This tool emphasizes subjectivity and the development of shared language about the state of a community or intervention.

#### Features that could be added if used for a cross-sector alignment measurement system
- The AACT is not intended to help compare, rank, or benchmark communities in relation to each other. Should that be desired, additional tools could be used.
- To promote flexibility, the nature of a group that might use this tool is undefined, and the AACT tool leaves community to be defined locally. If specifics are desired, they could be added.

The Foundation Strategy Group (FSG) developed a cross-sector approach for addressing complex social issues called collective impact. To assess collective impact, FSG and the Aspen Institute created the Collective Impact Forum, which then produced the Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact. This guide offers practitioners, funders, and evaluators a way to think about, plan for, and implement different performance measurement and evaluation activities. It also contains the Framework for Designing and Conducting Performance Measurement and Evaluation of Collective Impact Efforts.

A key idea underlying this framework is that collective impact partners should use a combination of different performance measurement and evaluation activities to assess and understand progress as an initiative develops. The framework identifies three different types of evaluations to be implemented in consecutive but overlapping phases. In the early years, the framework proposes the use of locally agreed-upon early performance indicators and a developmental evaluation addressing the initiative’s context and early development. In the middle years, the framework proposes a formative evaluation addressing if, where, for whom, how, and why an initiative is making progress. The idea is that the initiative may have, by this time, a shared measurement system in place that can be used in the formative evaluation. Sample measures are provided. In the later years of the initiative, the framework proposes a summative evaluation. Evaluation in this period is again expected to leverage a shared measurement system, perhaps using any longitudinal data that has become available. Key objectives in this phase include assessing the initiative’s accomplishments and understanding its long-term impact on targeted issues or populations.

While the framework is intended to be widely applicable and leaves many specifics to be determined by the user, it would be possible to supplement such a framework with prespecified measures and data sources in order to promote learning across contexts.

| Background                                                                 | The Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact was developed by FSG and the Collective Impact Forum for measuring and evaluating the effect of collective impact organizations on social problems. It provides a three-stage evaluation framework with different approaches for each stage.  
|                                                                           | The guide recommends use of a shared measurement system. |
| Elements that might be useful as part of a cross-sector alignment measurement system | The shared measurement system and evaluation system are designed to be complementary and generate data that is both descriptive and explanatory.  
|                                                                           | The guide outlines both advantages and disadvantages of commonly used data-collection methods so that practitioners can apply the right measures for given purposes.  
|                                                                           | The guide offers information on who should design and implement the shared measurement system and evaluation.  
|                                                                           | The guide provides sample measures for each stage of evaluation.  
|                                                                           | The guide offers advice on selecting measures (e.g., timing, feasibility, and capacity requirements).  
|                                                                           | The guide offers instruction for communicating findings. |
| Features that could be added if used for a cross-sector alignment measurement system | If a more structured measurement system is required, specific measures or even data sources could be identified. |

### Tamarack Institute: The Inquiry Framework

Building from FSG’s work on collective impact, the Tamarack Institute developed a tool to guide evaluation — the Inquiry Framework. The Inquiry Framework describes three types of results from systems change initiatives that social innovators and evaluators should consider: strategic learning, systems change, and mission outcomes. In presenting and discussing these three types of results, the Inquiry Framework identifies critical outcomes and also provides resources for thinking about them and measuring them. This framework offers high-level guidance, and the approach could be supplemented with specific guidance in a future aligning measurement system.
### Background
- Tamarack Institute developed this Inquiry Framework to evaluate systems change results. There is a specific emphasis on the collective impact approach.
- The framework is designed to guide the evaluation process by identifying three types of results that flow from all initiatives and by providing guidance for thinking about and assessing those types of results.

### Elements that might be useful as part of a cross-sector alignment measurement system
- The broad approach allows for the application of the Inquiry Framework for various settings or complex issues.
- Tamarack Institute offers many measurement tools and educational materials that might serve as a supplement to the Inquiry Framework.
- Tamarack collaborates with other institutions for developing and sharing resources.

### Features that could be added if used for a cross-sector alignment measurement system
- The Inquiry Framework focuses on concepts and principles. This is intentional and likely is a benefit in many ways. However, issues may arise, for example, in navigating the many resources that are made available. If more specific direction is required, it may be helpful to find or develop more prescriptive tools to supplement the Inquiry Framework. Perhaps a middle ground could be found.

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**Funders Forum on Accountable Health: Framework to Measure the Health Equity Impact of Accountable Communities for Health**

The Funders Forum on Accountable Health developed the [Framework to Measure the Health Equity Impact of Accountable Communities of Health](#) to measure health equity in Accountable Communities for Health (ACHs). This framework has two paths of evaluation: internal and external. The internal process includes evaluating how health equity is reflected in the ACH’s “essential elements.” This can be done by assessing the ACH’s mission, policies, training, recruitments, etc. The external evaluation is twofold: the ACH assesses what partnerships are involved in addressing health equity and what specific interventions are being implemented. The framework divides into three temporal phases of measurement: short-, mid-, and long-term outcome assessments. At each phase, questions and metrics are provided to guide the assessment. To promote buy-in across the partnership, the framework suggests using cross-sector metrics and using multiple measures to assess various dimensions of health equity, potentially using “summary scores.” The equity approach embodied by this framework lends itself to adaptation within a broader measurement framework.
The Funders Forum on Accountable Health: Framework to Measure the Health Equity Impact of ACHs

| Background | The Funders Forum on Accountable Health developed this framework to measure health equity in ACHs. This framework addresses factors internal and external to ACH organizations in the short-, medium-, and long-term phases. |
| Elements that might be useful as part of a cross-sector alignment measurement system | Questions and metrics are provided to guide assessment at each short-, mid-, and long-term outcome stage. Short-term outcome measures assess factors within and across partnerships. Midterm outcome measures are focused on the ACH’s portfolio of interventions, community systems, and structural change impact on health equity. The long-term assessment focuses on the equity of individual and community health outcomes. This framework suggests using multiple measures to assess various dimensions of health equity, for example by using “summary scores.” This framework suggests using measures that are meaningful to all sectors and presenting the material in a way that is meaningful to all stakeholders. |
| Features that could be added if used for a cross-sector alignment measurement system | This framework’s focus on equity could be an important complement to broader measurement frameworks. |

Discussion

In researching this selection of measurement frameworks, each had specific benefits that could be incorporated into a cross-sector alignment measurement system. Below is a table combining potentially useful elements from each measurement framework above.
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• PCHI certification requires the implementation of measures that have been mapped to the Framework for Aligning Sectors.  
• Certification measures may be used to understand the status of aligning organizations and communities.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| **Well Being in the Nation Network: The WIN Measurement Framework**                       | • A diverse and broad work group including practitioners from multiple sectors contributed to the development of the framework.  
• Standard measures are identified, allowing comparisons across contexts. The framework includes ideas for additional, customizable measures.  
• Data sets containing the featured measures are identified.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| **Mathematica: An Evaluation of the DASH All In Community Collaboratives**                | • The multimethods approach increases capacity to (1) speak to anticipated and unanticipated processes in depth and (2) speak to general tendencies across sites.  
• This evaluation approach employs existing measures and also creates new measures.  
• This evaluation approach uses multimeasure indices to assess underlying constructs that are otherwise difficult to assess.                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| **Community Commons: The Seven Vital Conditions for Well-Being Framework**               | • This framework goes beyond data by offering an extensive library of information, policies, and guides for each condition.  
• This framework is dynamic in that new tools are added regularly.  
• This framework allows for measurement of each condition at various levels (e.g., nationally, locally, individually).                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| **GHPC, 100 Million Healthier Lives, and the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Project: The Assessment for Advancing Community Transformation** | • A concrete tool is provided to guide the evaluation process.  
• The assessment compels deliberation and collective agreement about the current status of a community or intervention. These activities may have practical benefits beyond the assessment in and of itself.                                                                                                      |
| Foundation Strategy Group and Collective Impact Forum: *The Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact* | • The shared measurement system and evaluation system are designed to be complementary and generate data that is both descriptive and explanatory.  
• The guide outlines both advantages and disadvantages of commonly used data-collection methods.  
• The guide offers advice on who should design and implement the shared measurement system and evaluation.  
• The guide provides sample measures for each stage of evaluation.  
• The guide offers guidance on selecting measures (e.g., timing, feasibility, and capacity requirements).  
• The guide offers direction for communicating findings. |
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• Tamarack Institute offers many measurement tools and educational materials that might serve as a supplement to the Inquiry Framework.  
• Tamarack collaborates with other institutions for developing and sharing resources. |

Several elements appear across two or more of the frameworks, implying their potential usefulness in a cross-sector alignment measurement system. Examples include the use of standardized measures that are readily available or help promote understanding across contexts, the use of indices built from multiple measures, the use of flexible measures that are determined to be situationally appropriate in specific contexts, collaborative identification of the measures to be used, the use of multiple data-collection and analysis methods, the use of measures at different levels, the provision of supplemental resources, and an emphasis on outcomes measurement.

In some cases, the frameworks contained elements not observed in other frameworks. These elements also could be employed in a cross-sector alignment measurement system. Examples include the certification approach employed by PCHI, the provision of a concrete guidance tool and the emphasis on team building in the AACT, the guidance on communicating findings and linking measurement to evaluation emphasized by FSG, the guidance on how to think about measurement as a whole provided by Tamarack, and the emphasis on equity embodied in the Funders Forum on Accountable Health’s health equity measurement framework.
Conclusion

As noted in the introduction, measures can be used by collaboratives for a wide variety of purposes. The wide range of elements identified in the measurement frameworks above reflect these diverse purposes. A key challenge for the development of an aligning measurement system will be to create a user-friendly method of matching appropriate measurement elements to different users’ needs.

References


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