

Developing a Population Health Driver Diagram

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Description: A population health driver diagram can be used collaboratively by public health and health care partners to identify and address the primary and secondary drivers of a shared community health challenge. This tool offers a starting point and framework for discussion, and flexibility for identifying and addressing unique community characteristics and needs. It also can help to create an atmosphere of cooperation by enabling each participant in these discussions to identify roles already being played by their organization and others in the community, and determine additional action that can be taken individually and collectively to positively impact the particular community health challenge.

Using a Tree Diagram⁴ structure and methodology, 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. 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.

Using a Driver Diagram: A population health driver diagram is best used as a systematic way to explore and address the “cause and effect” relationships of factors related to a targeted community health challenge. 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.

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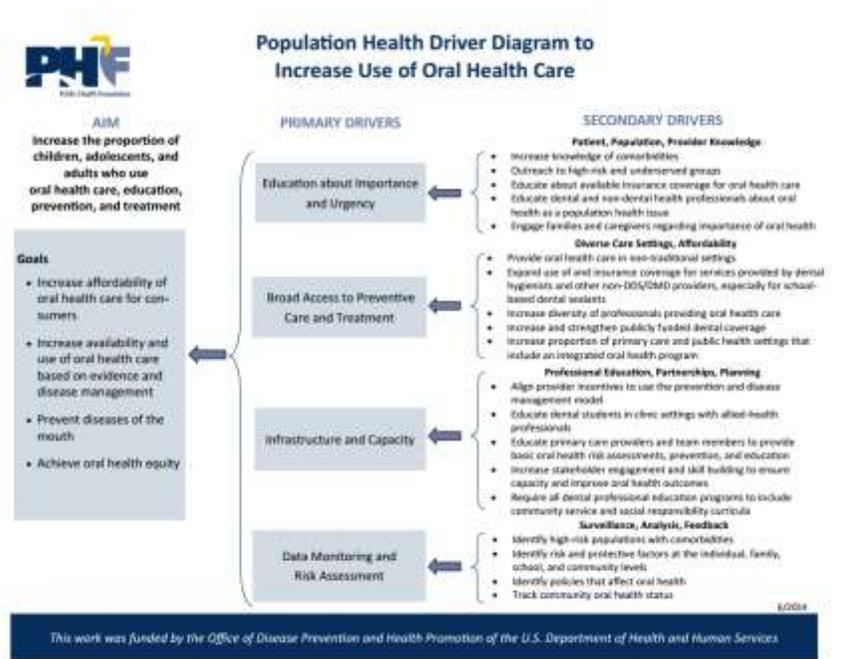
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⁴ *Public Health Quality Improvement Encyclopedia*, Public Health Foundation, Washington, DC, 2012, pp. 145-146.

Construction Steps:

1. Develop a specific AIM for addressing the community health challenge. The AIM should be clear, crisp, and concise.
2. Draw a large Tree Diagram with three levels of detail. The first level is the AIM and the goals of the AIM, the next level consists of the primary drivers, and the most specific level includes the secondary drivers related to achieving each primary driver.
3. Develop the main goals related to the AIM statement to be achieved and write them in the first level box.
4. Develop the primary drivers that can contribute directly to the AIM. These are the more general categories of activities that can help achieve the AIM.
5. Develop the secondary drivers for each primary driver – these are the more specific interventions, changes, or improvements that can help achieve the associated primary driver.

Example: [Population Health Driver Diagram to Increase Use of Oral Health Care](#)⁵



The Public Health Foundation (PHF) facilitates development and use of population health driver diagrams. [Visit the PHF website](#) to read about development and piloting of the Public Health Antibiotic Stewardship Driver Diagram in three communities. Contact Micaela Kirshy, mkirshy@phf.org, (202)218-4410, if you are interested in exploring ways that your community can use population health driver diagrams to address a community health challenge.

⁵ <http://www.phf.org/resourcestools/Documents/Driver%20Diagram%20with%20Cover%20Note,%20Final.pdf>