

# COMMUNITY ACTION GUIDE:

## Multistakeholder Input on a National Priority: Improving Population Health by Working with Communities



### WHAT IS THE ACTION GUIDE?

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The *Action Guide* is a tool to help multisector groups work together toward population health improvement by following 10 key elements for success and accessing related resources. The *Action Guide* was created in collaboration with a multistakeholder Committee of population and community health experts. Ten ‘Field Testing

Groups’ working on population health improvement were selected from various regions across the country to assess the practical application of the *Action Guide*. Structured feedback from the Field Testing Groups was incorporated into the 10 elements and resources to refine the *Action Guide* into the user-friendly tool it is today.

### WHY WAS THE ACTION GUIDE CREATED?

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Overall health outcomes in the United States rank lower than many other developed nations. The country faces unsustainable healthcare costs and continues to struggle with significant disparities in health status. To address these issues, the **National Quality Strategy** is focusing on driving

action across the country to create healthier people and communities, better healthcare, and more affordable care through collaborative efforts. The National Quality Forum developed the *Action Guide* with funding from the Department of Health and Human Services to advance this goal.

### WHO CAN USE THE ACTION GUIDE?

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The concept of “health in all policies” suggests that even those who may not think of their work or actions as being about health — such as employers, community advocates, housing organizations, schools, prisons, military bases, transportation systems, land developers, and others — make

decisions and create environments that can help or hinder good health for others. Anyone working collaboratively across sectors to improve the health of a community or population can use the *Action Guide* as a resource.

### HOW DOES THE ACTION GUIDE WORK?

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Like a handbook or “how-to” manual, the *Action Guide* contains recommendations, examples, and links to resources that can help those interested in population health improvement to understand the issues and take action. The *Guide* is organized in brief summaries of 10 elements to consider when building or refining initiatives. There is no

one-size-fits-all approach, so the content in the *Guide* can be tailored to suit different collaborative efforts. Individuals who are newer to this type of work may benefit from reviewing the entire *Guide* in detail, while others may want to focus only on certain elements.

Download the Action Guide at [http://www.qualityforum.org/Population\\_Health\\_Framework/](http://www.qualityforum.org/Population_Health_Framework/)

## THE 10 KEY ELEMENTS

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The *Action Guide* contains a description of each element, why it is important, examples of how it can be done, and links to useful resources.

KEY ELEMENT	QUESTIONS AND FOCUS OF ACTION GUIDE RESOURCES
<b>Collaborative self-assessment</b>	What is needed to foster effective collaboration on population health?
<b>Leadership across the region and within organizations</b>	Which individuals or organizations in the region are recognized as potential leaders in population health improvement?
<b>Audience-specific strategic communication</b>	What is the level of skill or capability to engage in effective communication with each of the key audiences in the region?
<b>A community health needs assessment and asset mapping process</b>	Which organizations in the region already conduct community health needs assessments or asset mapping regarding population health?
<b>An organizational planning and priority-setting process</b>	Which organizations in the region engage in collaborative planning and priority-setting to guide activities to improve health in the region?
<b>An agreed-upon, prioritized set of health improvement activities</b>	What are the focus areas of existing population health improvement projects or programs, if any?
<b>Selection and use of measures and performance targets</b>	Which measures, metrics, or indicators are already being used to assess population health in the region, if any?
<b>Joint reporting on progress toward achieving intended results</b>	Which organizations in the region publicly or privately report on progress in improving population health?
<b>Indications of scalability</b>	For current or new population health work, what is the potential for expansion within the region or to other regions?
<b>A plan for sustainability</b>	What new policy directions, structural changes, or specific resources in the region may be useful for sustaining population health improvement efforts over time?

## THE NEXT STEP IN POPULATION HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

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Population health requires ongoing contributions from many types of groups, in different sectors across a region, and at multiple levels. It is a team effort in which people take actions that, in some cases, fundamentally change how things are done. The *Action Guide* is designed to be a framework for communities to achieve their shared goals and help make lasting improvements in population health.

While the *Action Guide* addresses measure selection and priorities, future work should consider how to display appropriate measures to achieve population health improvement goals. NQF is committed to using the knowledge gained through the creation of the *Action Guide* to further population health improvement and measurement work. Stay tuned for more to come!

**The *Action Guide* is publicly available. [Share it with anyone engaging in this work.](#)**