

Assessing Activities to Identify a Health Equity Focus



This resource will help you assess and address three common challenges in identifying a health equity focus:

1. Information overload leading to analysis paralysis
2. Accessing, reporting, sharing, and analyzing data
3. Excluding patients and community-based organizations from the process of identifying a health equity focus.

Sometimes it can be difficult to select a health equity focus due to the large amount of healthcare quality and outcome data available for analysis; also, there are typically numerous disparities and inequities identified in that data. As a result, individual organizations and multi-organization collaboratives can experience “analysis paralysis”, engaging in a seemingly endless series of deliberations without landing on an ultimate decision. Part of the difficulty is that there are many contextual factors that can influence the selection of a health equity focus. Reviewing those factors can help narrow the field of options and facilitate decision-making.

Instructions:

Use the following prompts to identify quality improvement and health equity priorities and the larger context driving them.

For multi-organization collaboratives, have at least one representative from each organization utilize the prompts to describe their organization’s priorities for a health equity focus and the context in which they work. Record the priorities for each organization so the team can compare them side-by-side.

Topic	Next Steps
Difficulty identifying a health equity focus area.	What is the patient population of interest (e.g., statewide, specific counties, or other geographic areas; patients attributed to a specific payer)?
Difficulty agreeing on a health equity focus for a multi-organization collaborative.	Which healthcare and health equity topics have been prioritized by the community-based organizations or coalitions serving the patient population? Are there financial or contract-related motivations that impact the decision (e.g., specific expectations embedded in value-based payment contracts, reducing the overall cost of care, Medicaid 1115 waiver requirements)?

	Are there existing or planned quality improvement objectives or initiatives that factor into the decision (e.g., reducing avoidable 30-day re-admission rates, improving overall rates of blood pressure control for patients with chronic hypertension, improving door-to-balloon time in the treatment of ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction [STEMI])? Are there politically motivating factors that impact the selection of a focus area (e.g., a special focus on a particular health issue or inequity promoted by the governor, pro- or anti-sentiment held by elected officials regarding specific healthcare issues or policies)? Are there influential key stakeholders invested in the decision? What are their desires? What are their concerns? Are there other factors to consider? For multi-organization collaboratives: After each of the organization's representatives have shared their priorities, compare and contrast them to identify priority areas and motivations held in common. Is it feasible to identify more than one health equity focus?
Data opportunities and challenges	Identifying a health equity focus requires accessing, reporting, sharing, and analyzing data. Ensure that your organization or team is prepared to evaluate the quality of the data you will use and to anticipate data-related challenges. First, review the following resources: <u>Anticipate Data Needs and Opportunities (Presentation)</u> <u>Anticipate Data Needs and Opportunities (Tool)</u> <u>Considerations for Accessing, Collecting, and Sharing Data (Tool)</u> Discuss the following questions as a team to identify next steps: What did you learn from reviewing and using the resources that can help guide your work in identifying a health equity focus? What quantitative data will your team use to identify a health equity focus? What are the potential biases and weaknesses of that data? What qualitative data will your team use to identify a health equity focus? What are the potential biases and weaknesses of that data?
Partnering with Patients and Community Based Organizations	It is important to partner with patients and community-based organizations when identifying one or more health equity focus areas. Consider the following questions and use the team's responses to

identify next steps. Don't forget to utilize the resources in the [Partnering with Patients and Community-Based Organizations](#) component of the Roadmap.

Have patients been involved in the work of identifying a health equity focus?

- If so, what have they shared about the health conditions or decision-making factors that are most important to them?
- If not, why not? How can you partner with them and include their perspectives in the decision-making process?

Are there any community health needs assessments conducted by your organization or others (e.g., public health agencies) that can inform the process of identifying a health equity focus?

Does your organization currently partner with any community-based organizations? How can you learn about their ideas and recommendations regarding identifying a health equity focus?

What health and healthcare equity activities are taking place in the communities of the patients/members that you serve?

What existing publications, websites, or other types of public communication describe healthcare and health equity topics prioritized by community-based organizations or coalitions in your service area? How can those materials inform your decision-making?