National Forum on Hospitals, Health Systems and Population Health: Partnerships to Build a Culture of Health

Key Takeaways

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About TFAH: Who we are

- Trust for America’s Health (TFAH) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority.

- A number of convenings and conferences we have organized have brought us in contact with early adopters of population health approaches.
National Forum on Hospitals, Health Systems, and Population Health

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation sponsored first national population health conference in October 2014
- Brought together over 300 national leaders from hospitals/health systems, government, public health and community-based organizations
- Highlighted innovative and effective health care delivery-system-based approaches to advance population health and build a “culture of health”
Focus of the Conference

- Partnerships that build bridges between public health and health care
- Innovations to address the drivers of health (e.g., income, housing, access to affordable and nutritious food, education)
- New ways to use and share data, analytics and information technology
- Best practice for augmenting the workforce with non-traditional workers and connecting patients to social and community services
- Emerging payment models to incentivize and sustain
Why Shift Strategy & Operations to Address Population Health?

- Shift from focus on health of patients to employees to health of community
- Acting as anchor institutions
- Healthy community=healthy workforce=healthy economy
- Recognition of social determinant model and need for policy & systems change
- Shift from volume to value-based payment
- Community benefit requirements & strategy
Key Lessons Learned from Early Adopters in the Field
Partnerships are the Cornerstone

- Population health work cannot be done solely by one organization or sector – we must engage other sectors.
- Engaging partners helps mitigate risk by sharing risk across many organizations.
- Partnership is not always easy, but early adopters provide models of how it can be done.
Executive Leadership Support is Key to Culture Change

- Board and CEO support is necessary
- Success in population health takes time and requires culture change – from an environment focused on short-term results and volume-based payment to one focused on short- and long-term results and value.
- Culture change is time and resource intensive, yet necessary to engage employees and fully integrate population health into strategic plans and operations.
Evaluate Right from the Start

- Good evaluation plans are critical to documenting progress, value, and social impact of population health investments.
- Evaluations should include metrics that make sense to those not in the field, including physicians.
- Results should be broadly shared, including both what worked and what did not.
- The narrative is equally important, and stories of small successes need to be shared along the way to garner long-term commitment, especially in the face of changing leadership.
Align Financial Incentives to Accelerate Change

- Value-based payment models are key to catalyzing hospitals and health systems to invest in population health.

- The federal government is moving toward value-based payment systems and incentivizing Accountable Care Organizations to invest in prevention by establishing population-based payment systems.

- Sustaining organizations that work across sectors to address population health requires braiding of funds; funders need to promote this flexibility in the use of funds and build the local infrastructure required.
Hospitals and health plans are increasingly utilizing non-traditional workers (e.g., community health workers, patient navigators) to develop trust, engage patients, coordinate care, educate, and connect patients to the services they need.

These workforce models are new, so training, reimbursement, and other policies needed to support these models are under development.

Additionally, hospitals are expanding their community needs assessments to also map assets, which can promote community engagement and empowerment.

Tapping into community assets and sharing data to connect patients to social and community-based resources outside the walls of the hospital is also key.