



Program Planning

Some participants described HealthSTAT as “an organizational chart...more like a business diagram” than a program planning tool that reflect logic models or workplans. Programs tend to use logic models and workplans more often for grant-funded work, and the models are often provided to them by the funders. Programs are less likely to use these models if their work is dictated by Montana rules or statutes.

Between CDC reporting mechanisms and HealthSTAT, staff can feel like they are using “three different systems” for their work. Some staff still refer to the logic models and workplans they created when they designed their HealthSTAT, and stated “the process of doing the planning for what to put into HealthSTAT was really helpful. The personnel available to help with the development of the core activities was really useful.”

The purpose of HealthSTAT

Participants weren’t always sure of when or what to track in HealthSTAT, citing confusion due to inconsistent procedures from Bureau to Bureau or program to program. Participants may also be in programs that have not updated the content of their HealthSTAT since it was first developed: “We were maybe using it a lot, but it’s trickled off since grant outcomes have changed.” Since the content no longer reflects their work, they don’t see the benefit.

Participants were also confused about the benefit of HealthSTAT and asked for a clear vision from the PHSD Management Team: “It’s critical that management and leadership say, this is the goal and the purpose of HealthSTAT. The goal is different than it was 8 years ago. And we need to hear that really strongly articulated.”

Description of the current state

What’s not working well?

HealthSTAT is not a great presentation tool—it doesn’t “tell the story of a program,” and doesn’t provide an overview of a program that is easy to see and access. The charting capabilities are limited. The application itself was described as “clunky,” and unable to capture the complexity of coordinated work and budgets. Staff don’t use HealthSTAT for monitoring their budgets, and maintaining the system feels time intensive and duplicative for programs with grant funding who report on metrics in other ways as well. Because of the time constraints and duplication, HealthSTAT is seen as perpetually out of date.

Participants didn’t see a clear connection between what is currently tracked in HealthSTAT and the PHSD’s larger goals within the Strategic Plan, the SHIP, and PHAB accreditation.

What is working well?

Participants mentioned liking the quality improvement-related aspects of HealthSTAT. Programs that do regularly update the content of their HealthSTAT see that it reflects their work and can be a useful tool for reporting on their programs to funders and the management team. It is a central repository for the program data and resources that allows some managers the ability to see the big picture of multiple grants and projects in one place.

Participants felt HealthSTAT is best used to track high-level metrics, rather than day-to-day work. Also, participants mentioned the presentations being useful. While there are challenges to preparing for presentations, one participant described the feedback they receive from the management team as useful because “there are usually one or two good ideas to get us to think about our work in a new way or consider new ways to partner with other groups.”

Future state

Participants want to track high-level metrics, with the flexibility to incorporate more detail as needed. In general, participants wanted to see a stronger connection to the PHSD Strategic Plan. Participants could also see the use of an application that could track PHAB accreditation, because “we get to a point where we are scrambling” for examples.

Participants expressed interest in a tool that had the following features:

- Alerts and reminders for updating the application
- Application Programming Interface (API), where two different applications can “speak” to each other
- Uploading attachments
- Connections to the State Health Improvement Plan, PHSD Strategic Plan, and PHAB accreditation standards in a way that allows individual programs to “roll up” into a larger goal or strategy
- Customizable reporting templates
- High-level dashboard to review programs and metrics
- Grant and task management tools
- Flexible data entry, with import and export features
- Interactive display features for charts and graphs
- Track quality improvement projects
- Role-based access and permissions