

HEALTH EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

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NORC's multidisciplinary Health Evaluation and Performance Measurement team combines deep knowledge of the analytic techniques involved in quantitative and qualitative program evaluation with an understanding of complex, objective performance measurement systems capable of tracking program outcomes over time. NORC Public Health team members regularly undertake evaluations of health and social programs using one or both of these strategies. Evaluation activities rely on the gathering and synthesis of both quantitative and qualitative data to shed light on the effects of funded projects and advance the state of knowledge about the effectiveness of particular interventions. Typical data collection strategies include: qualitative interviews and focus groups with program staff and participants, locally and nationally representative surveys, development of web-based data collection systems, and the use of secondary data sources. Data collection strategies are selected based on their ability to answer identified evaluation questions, and other considerations such as cost and respondent burden.

NORC is skilled in the development of performance metrics and electronic performance measurement systems designed to capture ongoing program information for review and analysis, track program performance over time, and identify program outcomes. The objective of all of NORC's evaluation and performance measurement activities is to offer clients a balanced, unbiased view of the performance and value of their investments.

Sample Projects

Development of OMH's Performance Improvement and Management System (PIMS). For the US Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH), NORC has developed and implemented a web-based Performance Data System (PDS) for collecting, reporting, and disseminating performance- and results-oriented data and information relative to OMH's mission. NORC assists OMH and its grantees in adopting evidence-based performance measures and practices and improving the evaluation of program activities to determine outcomes and impacts achieved.

Office of Rural Health Policy Rural Health Outreach and Tracking Program. For the Health Resources and Services Administration Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP), NORC is monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of seven grant programs funded under the Outreach Authority of the Public Health Services Act. Projects are designed to identify consistent measures for collection among funded grant programs; validate current performance measures collected by ORHP; develop evidence-based model toolkits for current and prospective grantees; and perform implementation evaluations for individual grant programs.

Evaluation and Analytic Support for the HHS Healthy Weight and Obesity Initiative. For HHS' Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE). NORC collected and analyzed qualitative and quantitative data from the HHS Healthy Weight and Obesity Initiative. The data supported quarterly and annual reports describing progress in improving nutrition, physical activity, and other risk factors and health behaviors associated with overweight. NORC, in collaboration with a federal technical working group, developed metrics, qualitative information, and key



messages to assist HHS technical evaluation specialists in designing feasible approaches to measuring short-term, intermediate, and long-range outcomes of funded Healthy Weight interventions.

National Public Health Improvement Initiative (NPHII) Evaluation and Case Studies.

Funded by CDC, and for the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI), the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), NORC is conducting evaluation and case study activities to identify Affordable Care Act Prevention and Public Health Fund NPHII grantee best practices in health information technology and public health system development, and to develop a quantitative baseline of health department performance improvement knowledge and initiatives. Findings will inform ongoing CDC public health performance improvement activities funded through the Affordable Care Act, as well as public health agency accreditation initiatives.

National Evaluation of the REACH U.S. Program's Policy, System and Environmental Changes.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) contracted with Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) and NORC at the University of Chicago to conduct an evaluation of REACH U.S., a program designed to develop effective and sustainable programs to eliminate health disparities. NORC's role is to evaluate the experiences of the 40 REACH U.S. communities and report findings related to cultural tailoring strategies; policy, system and environmental changes; Legacy communities; and dissemination and translation activities. Using existing grantee documentation and progress reports, NORC translated this information into a framework that allows for macro-level analyses of grantee's accomplishments and experiences over time. NORC conducted qualitative and quantitative analyses to understand the accomplishments of the REACH U.S. portfolio as a whole.

Evaluation of Models that Examine the Benefits of Preventive Services. This ASPE project entails assessing the capacity of economic models to examine the societal and other benefits of clinical and community-based prevention services. In response to the increasing prevalence and costs associated with chronic disease, the Affordable Care Act places renewed effort on improving access to prevention services. Existing models for community prevention interventions may not tell a consistent and comparable story in terms of which investments provide the most value to society. Hence, evaluating the state of the art in prevention modeling is a high priority. In this effort NORC is assessing existing cost and benefit models on preventive services and constructing a framework for presenting each model's key features. NORC convened a successful expert panel, and is producing a report that will include options for HHS for the development of models of the benefits and costs of prevention interventions.

An Assessment of the Sustainability and Impact of Community Coalitions Once Federal Funding Has Expired (HCAP).

For ASPE, NORC conducted a multi-method assessment that used the Healthy Communities Access Program (HCAP) experience to learn about the long-term sustainability of federally-funded coalitions. The study assessed the current characteristics of community coalitions that were funded by HHS under HCAP, the extent to which coalitions are self-sustaining after federal funding has ended, and the impacts the HCAP coalitions have had post-federal funding, including the types of outcomes achieved. NORC conducted a multi-method evaluation using qualitative and quantitative research methods, including a review of literature on the existing HCAP programs and coalition sustainability to develop a conceptual framework to define coalition sustainability.

Other Projects

Evaluation of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Common Ground Initiative

Development and Evaluation of the Hurricane Recovery Program Community Resilience Pilot

Evaluation of the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) Beta Test

Evaluation of Tribal Health Professions Opportunities Grants (HPOG)

The Birth Cohort Evaluation to Advance Screening and Testing for Hepatitis C (Best-C)

Impact and Process Evaluation of the Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) Program

About NORC at the University of Chicago

NORC is an independent research organization headquartered in downtown Chicago with additional offices on the University of Chicago's campus, the D.C. Metro area, Atlanta, Boston, and San Francisco. Since 1941, NORC's leadership and experience in data collection, analysis, and dissemination—coupled with deep subject matter expertise—has provided the foundation for effective solutions. Learn more at www.norc.org

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