



IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES MODEL: GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP: INTRODUCTION

PHCPI is a partnership dedicated to transforming the global state of primary health care, beginning with better measurement. While the content in this document represents the position of the partnership as a whole, it does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any partner organization.

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CORE PRINCIPLES

The [WHO building blocks of a health system](#) states that governance and leadership includes “ensuring strategic policy frameworks exist and are combined with effective oversight, coalition-building, regulation, attention to system-design, and accountability” [1].

Good governance is considered a [core component of resilient health systems](#), and while governments are the primary drivers of governance, non-state actors - from practitioners to civil society - are critical in making sure that health systems achieve goals of improved health status, improved health system responsiveness to people’s expectations, and reduced financial risk to users of the health system [2].

In settings [where good health governance is a major focus](#), there are important aspects to responsibilities and relationships between health beneficiaries and users, political and government decision makers, and health service providers, including [3]:

- **Evidence-based** policymaking
- **Efficient and effective** service provision arrangements, regulatory frameworks, and management systems
- **Responsiveness** to public health needs and the preferences of beneficiaries’/citizens’ - while also managing their differences
- **Transparency** in policymaking, the way resources are allocated, and performance
- **Responsible leadership** to address public health priorities
- The legitimate exercise of beneficiaries’/citizens’ **voice**
- **Institutional checks and balances**
- Clear and enforceable **accountability**

WHAT COULD YOUR COUNTRY ACHIEVE BY FOCUSING ON ADJUSTMENT TO POPULATION HEALTH NEEDS?

When done effectively, improvements in adjustment to population health needs can contribute to an array of downstream effects, including:

- Population health management
- Access
- Facility organization and management
- Availability of primary health care services
- High-quality primary health care
- Effective service coverage
- Improved health status and responsiveness to people
- Improved equity, efficiency, and resilience of health systems

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE POLICIES

Primary health care (PHC) policies are decisions and plans that are made by governments with input from other stakeholders in order to accomplish specific health care goals. PHC policies promote, support, and establish PHC system orientation, financing, inputs, and service delivery mechanisms. This ensures quality and improves and develops PHC functions and outcomes. In higher performing systems, PHC policies can also help bring together these functions. PHC policies and leadership are closely connected. Without leadership within and outside the government to promote and establish the policies and goals of the health system, it is unlikely that PHC system policies or reforms will be established successfully.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Quality management involves three elements that must all be in place in order to enhance quality across a health system. They are quality planning, which includes the goals and process to create an environment focused on improvement; quality control, where established processes are monitored to make sure they are working the right way; and quality improvement, which includes the actions people take to make health services more effective, safe, and people-centered [4].

Quality management infrastructure typically involves developing and implementing national quality policy and implementation strategies. These can be part of the formal health sector national plan or developed as a self-contained document. The creation of the policy document will usually be led, or supported, by the ministry of health. It involves a range of participants from public, private, and non-governmental institutions. Ideally this process will also include the development of an implementation strategy with a detailed agenda for necessary actions, as well as legislation and regulatory statutes that support the policy and strategy.

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

In the context of primary health care, social accountability is a measure of whether a country is held accountable to existing and emerging social concerns and priorities based on need. Social accountability offers a set of approaches and tools to promote citizen engagement and monitoring to improve system performance, effectiveness, and responsiveness to public needs. Because different countries, regions, or even communities face different breakdowns in primary health care, this set of approaches provides a mechanism for citizens and civil society, together with service providers and government, to identify and seek solutions to the specific problems they observe with their local health system.

WHAT ARE THE FIRST STEPS?

The following principles should be prioritized, either at the same time or one after another, to improve the design of health systems that support and sustain good governance and leadership in primary health care.

Step 1: Strengthen primary health care policies and leadership

National stakeholders must work together to define the scope and mechanisms of quality PHC policies in their context, and then to develop and implement those policies. It is important to have both high-quality policies on PHC but also high-quality policies on *quality itself*. This reflects the central role of PHC in health care service delivery. Foundational to the development of a national quality policy and strategy is [consensus on how PHC policies and priorities are defined and how quality is measured in the local context](#) [5]. Stakeholders,

including those in state and non-state and health and non-health sectors, need a shared vision to develop and enact policies promoting equitable access to high-quality primary health care.

This must be in place to ensure the success of the quality management infrastructure, which relies on the framework of PHC policies and the engagement of stakeholders at every level to be established successfully .

Step 2: Strengthen quality management infrastructure

In order to ensure access to quality, person-centered health systems, national health policies, strategies, and plans must be accompanied by a strong, transparent quality management infrastructure that integrates standardized care plans, diagnostic protocols, training programs, and accreditation systems [6]. This step follows and coincides with the institutionalization of PHC policies and leadership.

Step 3: Ensure social accountability mechanisms are integrated throughout the system

While designing PHC policies and accompanying quality management infrastructure, stakeholders should regularly assess and build mechanisms for social accountability. Specific social accountability strategies will differ based on context, but at the most basic level, they should include opportunities for community members to identify and seek solutions to problems observed in their local health systems. Processes for both surfacing and responding to these concerns should be designed from the outset and integrated as much as possible into PHC policies from the local to the national level.

RELEVANT TOOLS & RESOURCES

Many tools and resources focused on developing health system governance and leadership structures have been created over the last decade, particularly from the World Health Organization and through projects funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Below is a compilation of the most useful documents within the context of our defined scope of PHC policies and leadership, quality management infrastructure, and social accountability.

Tags: PHC policies; Quality management infrastructure; Social accountability; Governing for quality; Financing quality; Policy strategy; Roles and responsibilities; National quality strategy

INSTITUTIONAL ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS GOVERNING THE QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE: COUNTRY EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES, AND LESSONS LEARNED (USAID HEALTH FINANCE & GOVERNANCE PROGRAM, 2016)

This report documents experiences, challenges, tested solutions, and practical ideas for countries as they strengthen governance, improve quality health services, and pursue UHC. It elaborates on critical components of governance for quality health care, specifically looking at: policy strategies, regulation, non-state actors, political will, reliable data, continuous improvement, knowledge sharing, and financing links. The report provides examples of experiences, challenges, and lessons learned in establishing an institutional architecture for governing for quality service delivery.

Tags: PHC policies; quality management infrastructure; governing for quality

DEFINING INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS WHEN LINKING FINANCING TO QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE (USAID HEALTH FINANCE & GOVERNANCE PROGRAM, 2018)

The guide is for planners and policymakers. It explores how payers can use health financing levers to drive health sector performance. It contains strategies for payers to leverage power to enhance the quality of care, describes possible institutional arrangements among payers and other actors, and proposes processes to establish or improve institutional arrangements in a country.

Tags: PHC policies; quality management infrastructure; financing quality

GOVERNING FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF UHC (USAID HEALTH FINANCE & GOVERNANCE PROGRAM, 2016)

These country case studies explore how Ethiopia, Mexico, Uganda, Ghana, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Tanzania have progressed toward prioritizing and governing to improve quality health service delivery. There are key lessons on quality reforms - including successes and challenges in promoting quality of care - and descriptions of key inputs and processes to governing quality of care including regulation, law and policies, leadership and management, and planning.

Tags: PHC policies; quality management infrastructure; policy strategy

[STRATEGIZING NATIONAL HEALTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A HANDBOOK](#) (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2016)

This handbook provides approaches for developing national health policies, strategies, and plans. It explores key elements of national health planning, drawing on country experience, existing work, and literature reviews. It can be looked at as a whole or as independent chapters, which include priority setting, strategic and operational planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and cross-cutting themes such as law and regulation and intersectoral planning.

Tags: PHC policies; quality management infrastructure; policy strategy

[AA40 TECHNICAL SERIES ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE - PRIMARY HEALTH CARE: TRANSFORMING VISION INTO ACTION: OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK](#) (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2018)

Overview: This framework discusses the policy and operational levers that represent key elements of health systems and that can be used to accelerate progress on primary health care. It provides resources for countries to use, actions that can be taken, and indicators to track progress. The goal of the framework is to assist countries in efforts towards improving PHC through governance at the national and subnational level, by individuals, and global partners.

Tags: PHC policies; quality management infrastructure; governing for quality

[GLOBAL LEARNING LABORATORY FOR QUALITY](#) (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2019)

The WHO Global Learning Laboratory (GLL) for Quality UHC provides a platform for users to engage one another through webinars, learning pods, and other approaches to discuss critical areas in quality, including through national quality policies and strategies. The GLL includes a national quality policy and strategy area for “consideration of focused policies and strategies to facilitate quality integration across all levels of the health system.”

Tags: PHC policies; quality management infrastructure; policy strategy

[PRIMASYS CASE STUDIES](#) (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2017)

Covering key aspects of PHC systems, the PRIMASYS case studies explore policy development and implementation, financing, integration of PHC into comprehensive health systems, scope, quality and coverage of care, governance and organization, and monitoring and evaluation of system performance. The knowledge generated through these case studies can be translated into the development and implementation of national PHC policies, programs, and health systems reforms.

Tags: PHC policies; quality management infrastructure; roles and responsibilities

[HANDBOOK FOR NATIONAL QUALITY POLICY AND STRATEGY: A PRACTICAL APPROACH FOR DEVELOPING POLICY AND STRATEGY TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF CARE](#) (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2018)

This handbook describes eight essential elements to be considered by teams developing national quality policy and strategy, including national health goals and priorities; local definition of quality; stakeholder mapping and engagement; situational analysis; governance and organizational structure, among others. The handbook explores arguments for developing national policy and strategy on quality of health care, the process required to do so, and tools to support the process.

Tags: PHC policies; quality management infrastructure; policy strategy

[HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES: FRAMEWORK FOR COUNTRY ACTION](#) (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2014)

Overview: HiAP is a systematic approach to taking health implications into account for decisions across sectors, in an effort to improve population health and health equity. This framework is the founding statement and “starter’s kit” on health in all policies (HiAP), including guidance on six key components to its implementation and suggestions on the roles and responsibilities of government structures and health authorities. The framework provides examples of HiAP in practice in different country contexts as well as implementation recommendations.

Tags: PHC policies; quality management infrastructure; policy strategy

[WHO NATIONAL HEALTH PLANNING TOOL](#) (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2010)

This online repository of WHO tools is designed to assist national and sub-national health authorities in elaborating health policies, strategies, and plans. It contains diagnostic tools for assessment, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as tools to support priority setting, identify effective strategies, costing scenarios, resource planning and budgeting, and programming and implementation. This is useful for a deeper look at tools developed by WHO and other sources for national health planning efforts.

Tags: PHC policies; quality management infrastructure; governing for quality

[AA40 TECHNICAL SERIES ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE - QUALITY IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE](#) (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2018)

This report makes the case for quality improvement as a core function of PHC, providing perspectives of different levels of the health system on improving PHC quality, and citing a number of principles and interventions that can form part of efforts to achieve such change. This paper includes some interventions for improving quality, and encourages a learning agenda that focuses on questions around what is working, how it is working, and how it can be scaled up.

Tags: PHC Policies; governing for quality

[MONITORING THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF HEALTH SYSTEMS: A HANDBOOK OF INDICATORS AND THEIR MEASUREMENT STRATEGIES](#) (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2010)

This handbook focuses on the six core components, or building blocks, of health systems identified by the WHO: service delivery, health workforce, health information systems, access to essential medicines, financing, and leadership/governance. The leadership and governance section includes a policy index and introduces the components and related indicators. It describes possible sources of information and available measurement strategies, and proposes core and supplemental indicators that may be used depending on the country health system attributes and needs.

Tags: PHC Policies; roles and responsibilities

BANGLADESH HEALTH POPULATION AND NUTRITION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN 2016-2021 (MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE, BANGLADESH, 2016)

This document is a detailed guide to Bangladesh's health sector strategic development plan, but is applicable on a broader scale as an example of a national country strategy. It details strategies and plans that emphasize quality, effective service provision, and equity. It is a useful reference for PHC policy reform efforts, recognizing many of the key steps and pathways described for establishing strong PHC policies.

Tags: PHC Policies; policy strategy

PLAN FOR PEOPLE'S HEALTH PROTECTION, CARE AND PROMOTION 2016-2020 (MINISTRY OF HEALTH, VIETNAM, 2016)

This document is an example of a national country plan. It includes an assessment of the performance of each building block of the health system, describes the major tasks and solutions moving forward, in addition to financing needs, monitoring and evaluation plan, and the country's approach for organization implementation of the major tasks. Primary health care is fundamental to this plan; it is a useful reference for a successful plan for strengthening PHC policies.

Tags: PHC Policies; policy strategy

HEALTH SECTOR TRANSFORMATION PLAN FOR 2015/16 THROUGH 2019/20 (THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA MINISTRY OF HEALTH, 2015)

Overview: This is an example of a comprehensive national plan focusing on quality management through a national policy and strategy. It includes a situational assessment reviewing community ownership, health status, and equity. It describes a policy framework accompanied by a strategic assessment, and strategic objectives, and performance measures. This is an ambitious and detailed strategic transformation plan that could be of use for other country stakeholders looking for examples, or benchmarking opportunities for planning.

Tags: Quality Management Infrastructure; national quality strategy

QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR GHANA HEALTH SERVICE 2007-2011 (GHANA HEALTH SERVICE, 2007)

While this document was developed with a focus on improving quality assurance in Ghana, it is a useful reference as a detailed guide to developing quality management programs. With guidance to the steps for and reasoning behind developing organizational infrastructure and leadership, performance measurement, and involving the community in meaningful ways, it can be used as a toolkit for quality management efforts.

Tags: Quality Management Infrastructure; national quality strategy

QUALITY AND ACCREDITATION IN HEALTH CARE SERVICES: A GLOBAL REVIEW (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2003)

This review describes structures and activities promoting quality in health care used at national and international levels, catalogues examples of quality concepts and tools in use in health care, and analyzes the operation of national health service accreditation programs. It consolidates recommendations from

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WHO and International Society for Quality in Health Care quality assurance consultations between 1988 and 2000, and includes key questions for consideration for national quality strategy in low- and middle-income countries focusing on policy, organization, methods, and resources. to inform, support, and build the capacity and improve the quality of primary health care.

Tags: Quality Management Infrastructure; governing for quality

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPT AND EMERGING PRACTICE (MALENA, ET AL., WORLD BANK, 2004)

This Social Development working paper highlights different social accountability initiatives that were led or supported by the World Bank in the first several years of their focus on this type of work. In addition to providing a detailed account of different tools that can be used by citizens and civil society to monitor and assess policies and budgets, expenditures, and service provider performance, the working paper identified several factors that the authors assess as key factors needed for social accountability to be successful.

Tags: Social accountability

THE COMMUNITY SCORECARD (CSC) TOOLKIT (CARE, 2013)

This practitioner guide provides a detailed overview of how civil society organizations and their partners can design and implement one of the most heavily-utilized social accountability tools - the community scorecard (CSC). Based on CARE's extensive use of the CSC in different contexts and sectors, the technical guidance is broken down into five key phases (planning and preparation, conducting the scorecard with the community, conducting the scorecard with the providers, interface meeting and action planning, and action implementation and monitoring). The guide also provides samples of different components of the CSC tools that practitioners can readily adapt to their own contexts.

Tags: Social accountability

OUR MONEY, OUR RESPONSIBILITY: A CITIZENS' GUIDE TO MONITORING GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES (RAMKUMAR, INTERNATIONAL BUDGET PARTNERSHIP, 2008)

This seminal report highlights how civil society-led accountability efforts can improve the effectiveness, equity, and impact of budget execution, procurement, impact measurement, and audit and legislative oversight. The paper is designed to provide information to civil society organizations about the process associated with each of these governance activities as well as numerous case studies that present successful efforts by practitioners to oversee and improve accountability for these processes in their countries.

Tags: Social Accountability

DOING ACCOUNTABILITY DIFFERENTLY: A PROPOSAL FOR THE VERTICAL INTEGRATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY MONITORING AND ADVOCACY (FOX, ET AL., ACCOUNTABILITY RESEARCH CENTER AND U4, 2016)

Focusing on strategic social accountability rather than traditional tool-based approaches, this paper is divided into two distinct but complementary parts. The first part provides a conceptual framework for key elements to achieving vertical integration in social accountability, highlighting the need for accountability efforts to integrate participation and oversight at all levels of policy processes and implementation (local,

subnational, national, and global). The second part provides a detailed case study of one such effort to employ vertical integration into an education-focused social accountability program in the Philippines.

Tags: Social accountability

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY RESOURCES AND TOOLS (WILCOX AND SHANKLIN, USAID MATERNAL AND CHILD SURVIVAL PROGRAM, 2017)

This helpful annotated bibliography provides an extensive list of resources for different social accountability tools developed for or used in the health sector. The resources range from conceptual and theoretical frameworks for social accountability to address different problems in health to practical guidance for specific tools. Each resource is accompanied with a brief description to help the reader best identify what resources or tools may be most applicable to their needs.

Tags: Social accountability

ACCOUNTABILITY, HEALTH GOVERNANCE, AND HEALTH SYSTEMS: UNCOVERING THE LINKAGES (BRINKERHOFF, ET AL., USAID, 2017)

Overview: While not specific to social accountability, this literature review from the Health Financing and Governance project reviews the existing evidence regarding the role of accountability initiatives in improving health. The paper begins with a framework to organize different accountability efforts, including by accountability focus (democratic, performance, and financial) and actors (vertical/external and horizontal/internal). Using this framework to organize the rest of the paper, the authors provide a detailed synthesis of empirical studies in each of these categories to highlight the types of accountability most associated with health outcome changes and lessons from these cases.

Tags: Social accountability

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