Deep Dive – PHC Policies

Primary Health Care Policies and Leadership

Primary health care (PHC) policies are decisions and plans that are undertaken by governments with input from other stakeholders, in order to achieve specific health care goals.

- Effective PHC
- Leadership
- Policies
- Stakeholders
- Governing Principles

- Responsiveness
- Responsible leadership
- Engage with user voice
- Checks & balances
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Evidence-based policymaking
- Efficient and effective frameworks and systems
Primary Health Care Policies is a component of Governance & Leadership

System

- Governance & Leadership
  - Primary Health Care Policies
  - Quality Management Infrastructure
  - Social Accountability

- Health Financing
  - Payment Systems
  - Spending on Primary Health Care
  - Financial Coverage

- Adjustment to Population Health Needs
  - Surveillance
  - Priority Setting
  - Innovation & Learning

Inputs

- Drugs & Supplies
- Facility Infrastructure
- Information Systems
- Workforce
- Funds

Service Delivery

- Population Health Management
  - Local Priority Setting
  - Community Engagement
  - Empanelment
  - Proactive Population Outreach

- Facility Organization & Management
  - Team-based Care Organization
  - Facility Management
  - Capability & Leadership
  - Information Systems Use
  - Performance Measurement & Management Outreach

Outputs

- Access
  - Financial
  - Geographic
  - Timeliness
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  - First Contact Accessibility
  - Continuity
  - Comprehensiveness
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- Availability of Effective PHC Services
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- Effective Service Coverage
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  - Palliative Care

Outcomes

- Health Status
- Responsiveness to People
- Equity
- Efficiency
- Resilience of Health Systems

Social Determinants & Context (Political, Social, Demographic & Socioeconomic)
Primary Health Care Policies is a component of Governance & Leadership

Governance & Leadership
PHC Policies
Quality Management Infrastructure
Social Accountability

Primary Health Care (PHC) Policies

Quality Management Infrastructure

Social Accountability
What can you learn about PHC Policies from the Improvement Strategies?

**SECTION 1**
**What are PHC Policies?**

**What it is:** Learn more about the core principles and goals of PHC policies and their role in PHC improvement.

**SECTION 2**
**How do I assess my performance?**

**What it is:** Learn more about some indications that improvements might be relevant in your context and what you can achieve by focusing improvements on PHC policies.

**Vital Signs Profile:** Use the information in your Vital Signs Profile to help determine relevant areas for improvement.

**SECTION 3**
**How do I get started?**

**What others have done:** Learn from implementation approaches and challenges in other country contexts.

**How to succeed:** Consider your country context, what elements are not functioning properly, and what needs to be in place to support effective improvements.

**What to ask:** Use guiding questions to help determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms in your country context.

*Guided by the above considerations and relevant resources, start to build out an improvement plan with your CE lead and/or focal point*
Goals & Outcomes

✓ PHC policies promote, support, and establish system orientation, financing, inputs, and service delivery mechanisms to ensure quality and improve and develop PHC functions and outcomes.
PHC Policies – How do I assess my performance?

Learn more about whether you should focus on PHC Policies in the Vital Signs Profile.
How do I assess my performance?

Use the information in the Vital Signs Profile to help determine relevant areas of improvement.
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Use the information in the Vital Signs Profile to help determine relevant areas of improvement.
What are other indications that PHC Policies might be an appropriate area of focus?

- **PHC fundamentals**: Policies fall short of including the following: a defined service package, viable financing mechanism, and M&E framework

- **Policy creation process**: Policies in place were not created through a participatory process that engaged multiple stakeholders

- **Joint review**: Absence of a shared approach that includes a diverse range of stakeholders to assess the progress, outcomes, strengths, and weaknesses of a policy.

- **Evidence-based policy**: Existing PHC policies lack grounding in research-identified effective solutions or approaches, knowledge and experience, and values and goals

- **Legal framework**: PHC policies are not embedded in a legal framework

- **National Health Plan**: There is no National Health Plan or National Strategic Plan in the country, and/or PHC is not a focus of the Plan
PHC Policies - What are they?

Learn more about the core principles of PHC Policies and what you can achieve by focusing improvements in the What it is section.
What are PHC Policies?

**PHC Policies** are decisions and plans that are undertaken by governments with input from other stakeholders to achieve specific health care goals.

It refers to policies broadly as the *laws, guiding principles, working frameworks and ways of working that guide practice, service delivery decisions, and actions.*
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Why it’s important

**Improves** the design of health systems that support and sustain good governance and leadership in primary health care.

**Ensures** policies, strategies, and plans are evidence-based and translated into action.

**Establishes** systems for the effective coordination, monitoring, integration, and implementation of PHC-related policies, promoting effective and efficient PHC service delivery.
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Key steps to PHC policy reform

- **Ensure mechanisms for a participatory process** and legal framework are built into the policy reform process

- **Create a culture of shared accountability** and engage service providers and the population in the decision-making process

- **Make PHC a priority** of the National Strategic Plan and ensure the PHC quality policy is linked to the strategic vision of the National Health Plan

- **Define clear structures, roles, and responsibilities** within policies for key individuals and organizations charged with overseeing specific elements of strategy implementation
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Key pathways to developing policies that improve PHC

- **Ground PHC policy in data** and facility-based evidence

- **Strengthen policy implementation** to address health inequity with legislation and funding, clear health equity goals to guide implementation, and a learning approach to implementation, monitoring, and evaluation

- **Create demand from the bottom up** to ensure a unified vision and priority for high-quality PHC as a public right in the face of changes in political leadership

- **Aim for health in all policies** to increase accountability of policymakers for health impacts at all levels
Primary Health Care Policies and Leadership

Primary health care (PHC) policies are decisions and plans that are undertaken by governments with input from other stakeholders, in order to achieve specific health care goals.

GOAL

POLICIES AND LEADERSHIP
together contribute to effective PHC

STAKEHOLDERS

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

- Responsiveness
- Responsible leadership
- Engage with user voice
- Checks & balances
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Evidence-based policymaking
- Efficient and effective frameworks and systems

Health beneficiaries and users
Health service providers
Governments, policymakers, and technical staff
Deeper dive: Health in all policies

Strong PHC policies guarantee universal coverage and access to services that are equitable and accepted by the population. When designing national health policies, stakeholders should aim for health in all policies (HiAP) where appropriate, to increase accountability of policymakers for health impacts at all levels.

- **Establish** the need and priorities for HiAP in country beginning with the assessment of health systems and understanding of political contexts.

- **Frame** planned action within existing strategic documents or as stand-alone action plans depending on resources, evidence, and structures available.

- **Identify** supportive structures and processes both within and beyond the government, keeping an eye for multisectoral support.

- **Facilitate** assessment of health policies and encourage input from the wider community on the policy making process.

- **Ensure** monitoring, evaluation, and reporting to identify challenges and best practices.

- **Build** the capacity of individuals and institutions to promote and implement HiAP.
Derive information from **What others have done**, **What to ask** and **How to succeed** to help determine where and how you might begin to plan and enact forms in your country context.
Planning for improvement in your context

The guidance and recommendations described within the PHC Policies module are not intended to provide a one-size-fits all solution.

The considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

Sample activities

- **Consider** implementation challenges and approaches in other country contexts

- **Consider how the features of your health system**, such as how decisions get made and the role of the private sector, will impact your improvement plans

- **Identify** key elements that need to be in place to support improvements

- **Use the guiding questions in the Improvement Strategies** to spur thinking about PHC Policies in your country context and stimulate ideas for improvement

- **Start to develop** an improvement plan
Planning for improvement in your context

While the specific considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your context, you might consider…

- **What are some key challenges to PHC Policy reform?**
  - Gaps between written policy and implementation capacity
  - Quality data for decision-making
  - Generating political priority and sustained support
  - Unforeseen challenges in policy implementation

- **What are the key elements?**
  - Designated PHC institutional structures
  - Operational planning to develop a detailed framework for action
  - Joint stakeholder review of progress towards PHC-related objectives
Learn from what others have done

Policy Experimentation | Indonesia
Strengthening PHC through policy reforms backed by a legal and regulatory framework

Evidence-Based Health Policy | Malawi
Policy development informed by data to better the PHC system for young people
Indonesia: At-a-glance context

- East Asia & Pacific
- Lower-Middle Income
- Indonesian-speaking country
## Indonesia: At-a-glance context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP per capita ($PPP)</th>
<th>Human Development Index</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$12.3K</td>
<td>0.69</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Percentage of population living in rural areas</th>
<th>Percentage of population living under $1.90 per day</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>264M</td>
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Learn from what others have done: Indonesia

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Why reforms were needed</th>
<th>Approach</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Historically <strong>high levels of geographic inequality</strong> in terms of levels of poverty, in health care access, and in household burden of health care expenses</td>
<td>Beginning in 2001, decentralization in Indonesia allowed for <strong>greater policy experimentation at local levels</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong central <strong>government that did not prioritize needs</strong> or conditions of its far-flung citizens</td>
<td>Put into place by the national government, a <strong>single-payer health insurance scheme</strong> has become one of the largest in the world.</td>
</tr>
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Learn from what others have done: Indonesia

- Gradual health system reforms have been underpinned by a **strong legal and regulatory framework**
- Successful reforms have relied on a **strong political commitment and buy-in from partners** and continued comprehensive analysis of the coverage and quality of the national health system
Learn from what others have done: Indonesia

- Improved care has been limited by differences in local contextual factors like worker shortages, poor quality of care, inequitable access, and high maternal mortality.

- Despite reforms, the country has faced challenges with communication and management, in part because of the decentralized service delivery system. These difficulties potentially limited efforts to strengthen quality of care.

- This case highlights that strong political commitments and legal and regulatory frameworks are not enough to ensure positive health outcomes on a broader scale. Other considerations including equitable access, high quality care, and effective communication systems are necessary to translate PHC policies into action.
Malawi: At-a-glance context

- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Southeastern Africa
- Low Income
## Malawi: At-a-glance context

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<td>83%</td>
<td>71%</td>
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Learn from what others have done: Malawi

Why reforms were needed

- A significant youth population, with over two thirds of the population being under the age of 25
- Low rates of contraceptive use and high rates of unintended pregnancy in the young population
- Lack of access to knowledge and services regarding family planning in the community for youth

Approach

Policies were developed in conjunction with stakeholders from both government and non-governmental organizations, tailored to adolescent family planning needs.

Data and statistics on reproductive health practices were a central focus of policy reforms.

Health policies include guiding principles such as community participation, accountability, and an equity-based approach.
Learn from what others have done: Malawi

Strengths

- **Prioritizes** evidence-based policy reform
- **Links** social and health issues to create policies
- **Involves** multiple stakeholders
Learn from what others have done: Malawi

- Early analysis in Malawi found that while youth awareness of contraceptive options was high, misconceptions were common. A discrepancy also existed in family planning knowledge between youth who dropped out of school versus those who stayed in school.

- The efficacy of reproductive health policies on youth behavior is dependent on the implementation of national policy commitments in a standardized way across communities and health care facilities nationwide.

What elements should be in place to support effective improvements in PHC Policies?

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- Adjustment to Population Health Needs
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- Facility Organization & Management
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- Availability of Effective PHC Services
  - Provider Availability
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  - Patient-provider Respect & Trust
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  - Timeliness
- High Quality Primary Health Care
  - First Contact
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  - Continuity
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- Outputs
- Effective Service Coverage
  - Health Promotion
  - Disease Prevention
  - MNCH
  - Childhood Illness
  - Infectious Disease
  - NCDs & Mental Health
  - Palliative Care

- Outcomes
- Health Status
- Responsiveness to People
- Equity
- Efficiency
- Resilience of Health Systems

Social Determinants & Context (Political, Social, Demographic & Socioeconomic)
What elements should be in place to support effective improvements in PHC Policies?

Social accountability provided by a diverse group of stakeholders ensures that PHC Policies prioritize community needs.
What elements should be in place to support effective improvements in PHC Policies?

Health financing for PHC is vital to the development and operationalization of PHC Policies.
What elements should be in place to support effective improvements in PHC Policies?

Strong PHC Policies are informed by accurate evidence, which is provided by surveillance and routine collection of information about population health status and needs in order to support priority setting, innovation, and learning.
Ongoing community engagement is critical to sustained oversight of policy development and ensuring that social accountability needs are met.
The specific considerations involved in planning and implementing strategies will depend on your local context.

The questions listed may be a useful starting place to determine how you might begin to plan and enact reforms in your context.

Sample questions

☐ Who is in charge of implementing the policy, knowing if it is working, and subsequently taking action to improve upon it?
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Sample questions

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☐ Is there appetite for policy reform in the government and among stakeholders? Are there structures in place to ensure decision makers have access to quality data?
Questions to ask to help you get started

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- What are the mechanisms for engagement from civil society stakeholders? Is there demand for reform or policy development from this community? If not, what are the opportunities to strengthen awareness and involvement from these stakeholders?
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