



Governance – The Heart and Soul of the ACH Model

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Governance – Terms and Assumptions

Terms

- Sponsor/Funder
- Anchor
- Key Partner
- Partners and Participants
- Steering Group
- Governance Group
- Network

Assumptions / Precursor Steps

1. A critical need exists within the community
2. Two or three widely recognized and respected entities come together to discuss need...”*we must do something about this*”
3. These stakeholders (Anchors) agree to form an exploratory Steering Group to seek funding and undertake an initiative to address the need

Governance – Overview

What do we mean by governance?

- Governance links different key stakeholder groups in sharing responsibility and accountability towards a united vision and mission
- The Governance Group functions to set direction, make key decisions, address barriers and change and move the ACH forward...it does not conduct day-to-day operations
- As the ACH grows, the size of the Governance Group will likely increase but the governance functions themselves, will not



What do we mean by governance?

- The governance structure may vary based on community particulars, Funder or legal requirements...there is no single organizational form that your Governance Group must take...it's up to you!
- Governance will consume the most time during your planning phases and during the first months of implementation; after that governance plays a much less visible—but no less important—role transitioning from start-up mode to monitoring and oversight mode
- ACH governance represents a more formalized structure and process than the current relationships you may have with your Partners...handshakes should be replaced with MOUs, participation agreements and charter statements

Why governance matters

- A strong yet flexible governance structure is essential to a successful ACH
- Absent an effective Governance Group and governance structure, decision-making becomes inefficient and ineffective; organizational challenges become paralyzing, and vision and goals rarely get achieved
- Funders are increasingly defining minimum requirements that Governance Groups must have in order to qualify for consideration
- In short, failure is always at your door-step if you don't have a solid Governance Group and governance function

A word about leadership

- While not explicitly covered in this presentation, having solid leadership support and commitment of all stakeholders is absolutely critical to the success of your ACH
- At a minimum, leadership support and commitment should be documented via MOUs
- When we talk about leadership support and commitment, we also include those that are not in executive positions or strategic decision-making roles—i.e., the mid-level and front-line personnel
- Lack of executive and/or front-line support and commitment can, and usually will, undermine your best efforts. Be mindful of this, especially among those you have worked with previously

Governance – Overview

Functions of governance

- There is no uniformly accepted set of functions that a governance function must support, but the following six are commonly seen in most governmental entities:
 - Stakeholder and community representation and engagement
 - Flexibility for future growth
 - Organization oversight
 - Liability/risk protection
 - Succession planning
 - Financial sustainability



Some additional functions of governance

- Articulate aligned vision, goals and objectives
- Create value proposition for stakeholders
- Establish process to address unexpected challenges
- Allocate resources fairly and in a way that maximizes ACH performance
- Approve evaluation plan and review/act on evaluation results
- Resolve disputes and hold network members accountable

Governance – Activities: Eight recommended actions for successful governance

1

Secure resources and initial commitments from key entities

2

Select governance model

3

Establish formal governance structure

4

Define aligned, comprehensive AHC strategy

5

Select other Partners and Network Participants

6

Formalize Participant agreements and implement governance plan

7

Define strategy and general requirements for ACH technology / data sharing

8

Define and perform quality assurance / monitoring / oversight activities

Governance – Activities

1

Secure resources
and initial
commitments from
key entities

- Select Key Partners to join Anchors (require MOU or Letter of Commitment)
- Create **value proposition** – should be compelling a concise and highlight quantitative impact on Partners, Participants, community and residents
- Secure funds via grants, cooperative agreement or contract

**Note:* This stage may take as long as 6-12 months

***Note:* It is typically at this stage that the initial Governance Group commissions a readiness assessment to help with strategic planning

Governance – Activities

2

Select governance model

- **Board Governance Model** – Steering Group and possibly Funder form the Board Governance Group; many advantages of this form, few disadvantages
- **Administrator Governance Model** – A single entity is responsible for all governance functions; not recommended due to potential for narrow view and lack of community involvement
- **Hybrid Governance Model** – the Steering Group forms the Board Governance Group that then delegates administrative functions to (and provides oversight of) an Administrator or Backbone Organization; this model provides the best of both previous models.
 - *Note: this model may not be necessary or prudent for very small ACHs*

- Choice of model often driven by Funder requirements or legal/tax requirements
- Identify governance requirements of Participants and Funders, create shared vision
- Obtain commitment from Governance Group members

ACH Case Study: Cascade Pacific Action Alliance

(Central Western Washington State)

2

Select
governance
model

- Multi-level governance structure
 - Backbone organization – administration and proposes action
 - 58-member Regional coordinating Council – reviews and recommends
 - Board – approves
- Consensus-based decision-making- everyone is in or everyone is out
- One vote per organization; thumbs up, down, or sideways
- In addition to Board subcommittees, CPAA makes use of project workgroups, and provider and consumer advisory groups



ACH Case Study: Communities that Care Coalition

(Franklin County, Massachusetts)

2

Select
governance
model

- Multi-level governance structure
 - Coordinating Council – big picture decision-making; delegates most decision-making to workgroups; composition of the CC was partially defined by the federal Drug Free Communities grant
 - 2 Backbone organizations – each has distinct responsibilities (i.e., administration and advisement) and ability to make “small” operational decisions
 - 5 Workgroups – each with different focus; develop and coordinate initiatives
- Any member of the CCC can apply for grant funding in the name of the Coalition



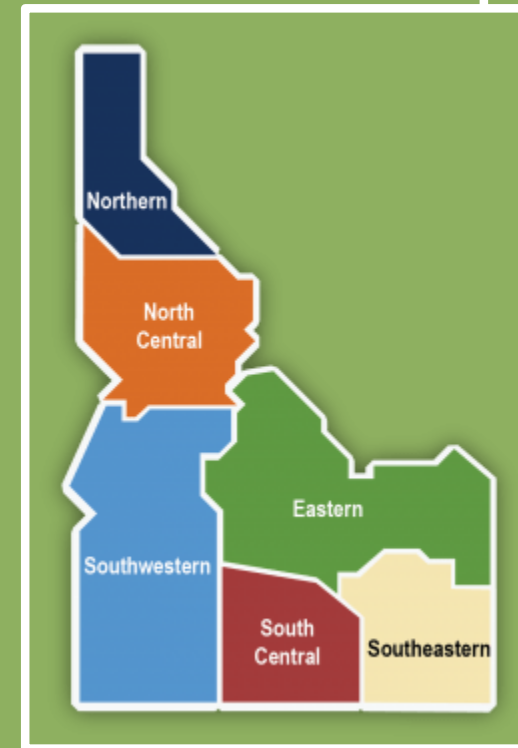
ACH Case Study: North Central Health Collaborative

(Congressional District 2, Idaho)

- Governance structure – mixture of state requirement and local decisions
 - Overseen by the Director of Public Health along with two physicians from the local provider communities
 - Public Health Department
 - Provides backbone support (convenings, shared trainings (i.e., PCMH TA))
 - Hosts convenings of local provider practices and broader medical neighborhood
- Provider practices determine priority health issues

2

Select
governance
model



ACH Case Study: Collaborative Cottage Grove

(Greensboro, North Carolina)

- Decentralized governance structure – resident-led coalition of health and non-health entities
- Each organization that receives a grant takes lead on managing and organizing activities as necessary
- Project Coordinator - connects coalition partners and residents to align the work of the clinical and social service providers and the community
- Resident-led community action teams inform partner's priorities

2

Select
governance
model



Governance – Activities

3

Establish formal
governance
structure

- Draft and finalize governance documents
 - **Bylaws** (e.g., how long Board members serve, qualifications, conducting meetings, voting, etc.)
 - **Board Charter, Mission Statement**
 - Internal policies and processes (e.g., conflicts, disclosures, hiring/firing; role of Administrator, etc.)
- Create Board Committees/Subcommittees or Workgroups
 - Staffed by Board members, other Network Participants and possibly community residents
 - Increase Board efficiency, effectiveness, diversity, inclusion, and awareness
 - Establish frequency and format of reporting to the Board
- Consider creating an “Advisory Group”

Governance – Activities

4

Define aligned, comprehensive AHC strategy

- Based on input from the readiness assessment/other inputs identify areas of need, establish a high-level strategy/approach to address the need and set a timeline
- Establish target goals and objectives and evaluation periods
 - Goals must be supported by all members of the Governance Group
 - Must define **evaluation framework** - baseline and evaluation periods as well as numerators and denominators
- Define measures of success
 - Begin with limited number and scope of measures (min 2, max 5)
 - Five criteria for measure selection (easily understood, causality (X→Y), relevancy, credible, feasible)
 - Consider categories of measures and level of measure (i.e., global, program/intervention, ROI/SROI, user experience)
- Select and retain an external subject matter expert evaluator or firm

Governance – Activities

5

Select other
Partners and
Network
Participants

- Based on the strategic plan, identify at a high-level the programs/interventions that will be required to help the ACH meet its goals
- Identify new Network Partners and Participants that have or can develop the programs/interventions needed and evaluate them for inclusion in the ACH
 - Clinical providers
 - Community-based organizations
- Define **operational requirements** for new Participants on the Network and establish measures of performance and compliance
- Select new Partners and Participants and identify **champions** at each site

Note: the addition of new Partners and Network Participants should be done gradually over time as the ACH continues to move forward...growing too large too quickly can be counterproductive!

Governance – Activities

6

Formalize Participant agreements and implement governance plan

- Establish all necessary agreements (e.g., roles and responsibilities of Network Participants, data-sharing agreements, terms of participation, etc.)
- Develop ongoing maintenance and sustainability plans
 - Working with legal counsel, develop a system for contract management
 - Working with an external auditor or firm, develop process and schedule for routine audits of important elements of the ACH, including annual review of all contracts and policies and procedures
 - Working with an external evaluator or firm, establish an evaluation plan to periodically review program data to ensure it supports ACH goals, supports the economic model and demonstrates efficiencies

Governance – Activities

7

Define strategy and general requirements for ACH technology and data integration at all Participant sites

- While this topic will be covered extensively in the July 2021 Learning Session on Data, Data-sharing and Information Exchange Technology, it is important to recognize the role the Governance Group plays with regard to this critical element of the ACH
- At a minimum, the Governance Group’s technology strategy and framework must address the following:
 - Legal requirements and considerations (e.g., HIPAA, informed consent)
 - Primary requirements and components for the technology platform
 - Market research to understand the range of available technology platforms
 - High-level criteria for selection of technology vendor and finalization of technology vendor agreement

Governance – Activities

- Establish processes to verify quality of ACH activities and implement remediation steps where necessary
 - Interventions
 - Workflows
 - Administrative policies and procedures
- These QA efforts should touch every element/level of the ACH
- Consider using an experienced external third party to conduct QA activities

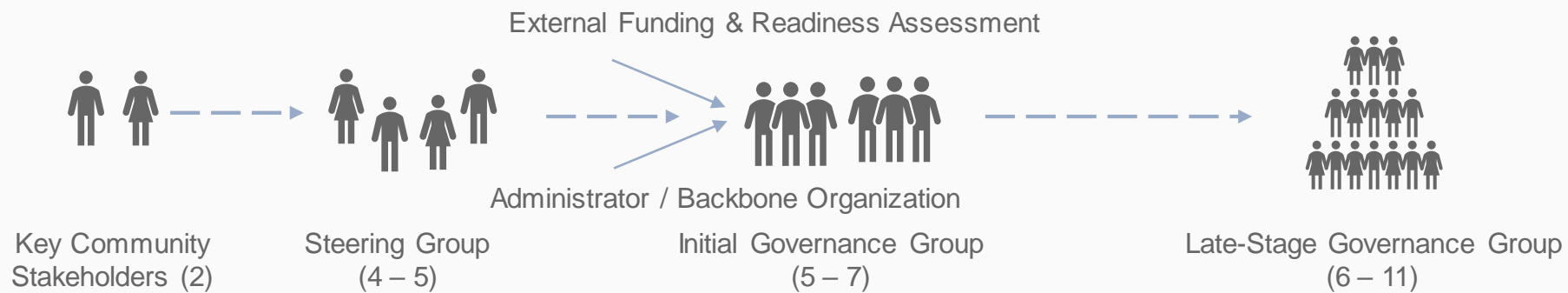
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Define and perform quality assurance activities to ensure integrity of interventions and activities across ACH

Governance – Summary

Big picture...

- Governance is integral to every other ACH element...getting this right is essential for success
- There is no one way to create your Governance Group and governance function. The key is to be comprehensive and thorough in establishing this ACH element
- Governance is a continuous evolutionary process, especially the make up of your Governance Group



Governance – Summary

Big picture...

- As your ACH grows, the size of the Governance Group will likely increase but the governance functions themselves will not change
- Separating governance from operations is critical
- Engage your legal counsel at every step of the process
- Don't be afraid to seek outside help, especially with data/technology, QA and evaluation needs
- Each of you will come to this work from different places and with different levels of preparedness and expertise...that's OK!