

The Governance Institute

Discussion Questions: Improving Community Health

As healthcare leaders consider their current community health efforts and initiatives, they can ask the following questions:

1. What do the terms “community benefit” and “community health” mean to our organization? How are they incorporated into our mission?
2. How do community health initiatives help our organization respond to payment reform and the movement towards population health management?
3. What policies, structures, and infrastructure (e.g., resource allocation, staff, leadership accountability, board-level committee) do we have in place to ensure the right culture and resources to make a difference in community health? What needs to be removed, improved, or put in place?
4. What are our short- and longer-term goals related to community health? Are they focused on underserved communities and ways in which the organization can make a meaningful difference? How do these goals fit into the strategic plan and help our population health management efforts?
5. Do the charter and work accomplished by our board-level community health/benefit committee meet the necessary requirements and will they allow us to meet short- and longer-term goals?
6. Is our full board sufficiently engaged in discussing community health concerns and making decisions related to the organization’s role in improving community health?
7. What community partnerships should we pursue in order to help meet our community health goals, and what roles should we play (lead or supporting) in those partnerships?
8. How are we measuring the success of our programs, and are the metrics we are using appropriate?
9. For health systems: What is the role of our local/community board vs. the system board in determining goals and decision making regarding community health programs?