

# Five Principles for Improving Population Health

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Vermont's health system partners have adopted the following key principles to integrate population health and prevention into the reforms that will shape Vermont's future health system.

## **1. Use Population-Level Data on Health Trends and Burden of Illness to Identify Priorities and Target Action.**

Consider the health outcomes of a group of individuals, including the distribution of such outcomes within the group, in order to develop priorities and target action. Focus on identified state priorities given burden of illness, known preventable diseases, and evidence-based actions that have proven successful in changing health outcomes.

## **2. Focus on Prevention, Wellness, and Well-Being at All Levels – Individual, Health Care System, and Community.**

Focus on actions taken to maintain wellness rather than solely on identifying and treating disease and illness. Particular focus should be on strategies to address mental health issues, substance use disorder, and long-term services and supports. Prevention can be woven into all levels of the health system to improve health outcomes.

## **3. Address the Multiple Contributors to Health Outcomes.**

Identify the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work, and age. These circumstances are in turn shaped by a wider set of forces, or root causes, including economics, social policies, and politics. Consider risk factors that lower the likelihood of positive outcomes while creating a higher likelihood of negative or socially undesirable outcomes. Consider protective factors that enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes while lessening the likelihood of negative consequences from exposure to risk.

## **4. Community Partners Engaged in Integrating Clinical Care and Service Delivery with Community-Wide Prevention Activities.**

Build upon existing infrastructure (Community Collaboratives, Accountable Care Organizations, and public health programs), to connect a broad range of community-based resources, and to address the interrelationships among physical health, mental health, and substance abuse.

## **5. Create Sustainable Funding Models Which Support and Reward Improvements in Population Health, including Primary Prevention and Wellness.**

Direct savings, incentives, and investments in efforts aimed at primary prevention, self-care, and maintaining wellness. Ensure funding priorities explicitly demonstrate spending and/or investments in prevention and wellness activities.