

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES GUIDANCE SHEET

Goals

Goals are general guidelines or overarching ideas that explain what you want to achieve for your department. Goals are more general in idea, but can be accomplished through SMART objectives that are more tangible and measurable. Each overarching goal should have at least two SMART objectives to measure for your department's progress.

Example of a Goal: Improve health of patients on diabetic registry.

SMART Objectives

SMART objectives are used in operational planning, monitoring, and evaluation to measure achievement toward a goal. They are intended to provide clear and reproducible assessments of progress and can be used for clarifying activities and budgets. Operational objectives are made up of an **indicator** (the condition or situation to be changed) and a **target level** to be achieved within a given **time** for a given **population**. SMART objectives should be:

Specific. Key objectives need to specify the conditions that the project or organization seeks to change. The objective should be specific about the **indicator** or condition to be changed, as well as **how much**, **where**, for **whom**, and by **when** it is to be changed.

Measurable. Measurable indicators are those that can be gauged reliably. Quantifiable indicators are preferred because they can be precise, aggregated and allow further statistical analysis of the data. However, some process indicators may be difficult to quantify, and qualitative indicators should also be used, if they are verifiable and different assessments at the same time will come up with the same answer. An indicator such as "quality of health care" would not be SMART unless it was defined in a measurable way, such as a score on a ratings scale.

Achievable. While good objectives often stretch the abilities of staff, the end result must be something that can be accomplished at reasonable cost and time. For the Diabetes Department, reducing the incidence of diabetes to zero is not achievable and risks demoralizing those charged with preventing it. More achievable objective might involve increasing % of check-ins/calls to each person on patient list or increasing number of persons (% of patient list) with nutritional assessments completed by year end.

Relevant. Objectives should be relevant to the larger goals of the organization or the unit within the organization. Field staff may need particular indicators that are of no relevance to senior managers, and vice-versa. If an indicator is defined that cannot be collected at a reasonable cost using appropriate collection methods, it may not be relevant. For example, obtaining accurate and reliable information from a food diary or exercise tolerance may be too difficult or expensive to collect on a timely basis. An indicator that poorly reflects larger goals may be one measuring the building of health facilities when the real goal is to increase utilization or quality of services.

Timely. Objectives need to be achieved at the right time within the business cycle of the

organization. In an organization with a regular planning and budget cycle, progress against stated objectives should be reviewed before the next plans and budgets are established. Indicators that are only measured after a project is completed does not help management decisions during the implementation of a project.

Examples of a SMART Objective:

To improve the percentage of persons contacted (phone, mail, or in-person) from the diabetes program registry from 50% (n / 220) per month to 90% (n / 220) per month.

To decrease the A1C level from year 2021 baseline to endline by 0.5 points on average for every person on the diabetes program registry.