



HealthSTAT Progress Review Guidelines

HealthSTAT is the Integrated Performance Management System established in the Public Health and Safety Division (PHSD). These guidelines have been developed for staff to use and prepare for progress reviews.

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HealthSTAT Progress Review Guidelines

HealthSTAT is the Integrated Performance Management System established in the Public Health and Safety Division (PHSD) over the last three years. The framework used for a HealthSTAT progress review is an open forum where the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of a Program's operational planning, tracking, and implementation are candidly evaluated and monitored through structured dialogue. The purpose of the HealthSTAT progress review is to discuss what is working, to celebrate and share successes, and to discuss what is not working in order to actively problem solve and remove barriers to productivity. An additional goal is to overcome challenges and resolve problems sooner rather than later, before an issue might become a crisis. Senior leaders with the authority to make policy, budget, and procedural changes all participate in the progress review. All Programs within the PHSD are expected to use the HealthSTAT management tools (logic models and Core Activity Work Plans) to document, monitor, and improve desired outcomes specific to their goals, objectives, and mission.

These reviews are conducted by the Division Administrator, Bureau Chiefs, and other designated leaders within the Management Team once every six months to focus on an individual Program. The Management Team is collectively responsible for the success of all Division programs, and as such, each member is accountable for the success of Programs not directly under their supervision. Consequently, all Management Team members will ask questions to understand a Program's performance and the factors controlling its performance from the perspective of joint ownership. These questions are not criticisms, but are simply the means to gain understanding. The Management Team trusts in your expertise; they are just trying to be helpful.

During the HealthSTAT progress review, Program Managers and Section Supervisors report information on the most important management and policy challenges they face in achieving results, as well as accomplishments and successes achieved since the last reporting period. The dialogue is honest and direct. Decisions are based on thoughtful analysis of data and evidence about what strategies work best. Problems or roadblocks to desired performance are discussed and action plans are developed. Program Managers are then held accountable to follow-up and report back on outstanding issues. Follow-up is expected.

HealthSTAT progress reviews are an integral part of the PHSD Integrated Performance Management System. These guidelines are a resource to help all PHSD employees apply HealthSTAT tools to their work. The guidelines are based on benchmarking the State of Washington, the City of Baltimore, and others utilizing similar integrated performance management systems.

HealthSTAT Progress Review Principles

HealthSTAT is a toolset designed to hold Division Program leadership accountable to customers, taxpayers, and citizens for the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the services they provide.

Seven principles, rooted in management theory, define the HealthSTAT philosophy and practice:

1. *Engage the leader(s)* at the top of the organization. HealthSTAT stresses the personal presence of senior managers and others needed to make decisions.
2. *Do not measure for measurement's sake*. This is a waste of resources. HealthSTAT is a management tool, not a presentation. Effective performance measures require clarity on:
 - a. What it is the program is trying to influence, and

- b. How programs will use measures to manage their work and get results.
3. Develop and use timely and accurate performance data to set targets and make informed decisions.
4. Reward candor in identifying and diagnosing performance barriers and creativity and commitment to overcoming them. It is OK to identify missed targets. It is even more important to know why targets were missed and to have a plan to address barriers to meeting them.
5. When the data indicate needed action, create a plan of action quickly and clearly specify what needs to be done, who will do it, and when it will be done. These action plans are quality improvement processes taking place and should primarily focus on what can be done prior to the next HealthSTAT progress review (*typically 6 months away*).
6. Persistent follow-up and clear accountability. Program leadership should relentlessly follow up on commitments made in quality improvement plans. They should utilize standard quality improvement methodology and processes.
7. Create a continuous learning environment. Keeping with the quality improvement methodology, process improvement tools should be continuously used and monitored to get better results.

How to use performance measures in HealthSTAT

An important benefit of HealthSTAT is that it requires Programs to clearly understand and articulate how the core activities will lead to measureable results for staff and the public. HealthSTAT provides a powerful tool to help programs "tell the story" of what they do, why they do it, and what results they are, or should be getting. It is an opportunity to showcase accomplishments that all too often go unrecognized, as well as to acknowledge program deficiencies in an effort to make improvements.

The core activity work plans used in HealthSTAT are based on the understanding that both outcome and process measures are needed to measure the performance of a core activity. A sound logic model maps every core activity in a program (and the corresponding outcome and process measures) to high-level desired outcomes and becomes the foundation for how programs demonstrate effectiveness. While one program may not have complete control over high-level desired outcomes, such as those found in the Division's strategic plan or state health improvement plan, the logic model summarizes the theory (ideally evidence-based) behind how the program can influence progress towards achieving those desired outcomes.

A good logic model shows how the day-to-day process metrics, which can be measured frequently, and therefore managed, contribute to ultimate outcomes.

HealthSTAT focuses attention on how the Program executes the strategies that it can influence. If programs are executing well, but intermediate and ultimate outcomes aren't changing, we have to evaluate the assumptions in the logic model.

HealthSTAT also provides a structured forum for asking and answering important questions:

- What does this measure tell us about the results we are getting?
- How do these outcomes relate to higher level outcomes?
- How do we know if a Program or Core Activity is working?

- What resources does the program need?
- Why is this Program important to citizens?

What should be measured?

HealthSTAT progress reviews rely on data-based decision making as part of evidence-based management. Consequently, the selection, analysis, and interpretation of key performance measures are critical. Measures should be continually assessed to determine whether they contribute to the “cause and effect” sequence of the logic model and tell a Program’s story well. Perhaps an existing measure needs to be modified or new measures need to be established in its place.

Like all effective communication, reporting performance is a message that must be designed with the audience in mind. Bottom line: the definition of the “right” measures depends on the audience for reporting performance. The two most important questions to begin with are:

1. “Who will use the measure information?”, and
2. “What will they use it for?”

Next ask:

Is it actionable – can you take action as a result of what you learn from this measure?

Is it timely — reported frequently enough to enable management to take action to improve the results?

Is it relevant — something the organization can influence and is meaningful to staff? customer?

If successful, is it a predictor of the Desired Outcomes?

Programs may wish to use the four questions in “Assessing Your Performance Measures” (Appendix A) to evaluate the usefulness of the measure selected.

What should a program discuss at a HealthSTAT progress review?

A HealthSTAT progress review is a dialogue. Every HealthSTAT review should center on three basic questions around which the agenda is built.

- Are we on track with what we planned?
- Is performance getting better, worse, or staying about the same over time?
- What do we need to do differently, if anything?

The Section Supervisor, Program Manager, or other staff reporting progress will have a few minutes in the beginning to make introductory comments and introduce a topic. Once the HealthSTAT progress review is underway, the Management Team may ask very specific and detailed questions about, or direct attention to, any relevant topic (See Tips for a Successful HealthSTAT, Appendix B). It may help to review a list of sample HealthSTAT questions (Appendix C) as programs prepare for the review. The HealthSTAT review will allot only 30 minutes for each program. In general, the discussion will follow the three basic questions below.

1. Are we on track with what we planned?

Core Activity Work Plans should be kept current, and especially making sure all parts of the work plan are up to date at least one week prior to the HealthSTAT progress review. Program staff may use a PowerPoint presentation to display talking points, and complex charts, maps, or figures. However, the HealthSTAT information system should be used as the primary means of leading the discussion. A projector will be provided at the HealthSTAT progress review to display the HealthSTAT information system.

HealthSTAT Reviews will begin by discussing the present state of the Core Activity/Activities that the program wishes to review with the Management Team. This can be a brief overview of each Core Activity, or simply a high level overview of the main Core Activity/Activities to be discussed. Program Managers and Bureau Chief can decide which Core Activity(s) to review based on successes and barriers to success.

2. Is performance getting better, worse, or staying about the same over time?

The answer to this question should be demonstrated using the performance metrics residing within the HealthSTAT information system. Program staff should discuss the performance of their program's Core Activities using the most relevant metric data analyses and charts pertaining to the Core Activity/Activities being discussed. Discuss both the successes achieved and the challenges you face where help is needed to overcome those challenges. Please note that metric "analysis" does not mean to verbally describe the chart, but telling the story behind the chart. A good analysis at a HealthSTAT progress review provides an evidence-based explanation of what factors influence reported performance results. How are program actions influencing the observed results? How have challenges or hurdles perhaps resulted in lower performance than desired? What factors are driving success or not meeting expectations? Use data to answer the question "is performance getting better, worse, or staying about the same over time?"

3. What do we need to do differently, if anything?

If current methods and approaches are allowing the program to stay on schedule, and these methods are effective in achieving the desired results, stay the course. If however, obstacles have been encountered or the approach just isn't working, discuss recommendations for what needs to be done differently and how. Throughout the HealthSTAT progress review not only identify both the challenges and obstacles facing the program, but also provide recommended solutions based on analysis of the performance data and the situation. This dialogue is the opportunity to get help if possible, perhaps change direction of work, or perhaps adjust expectations if additional help is not possible. It's OK for performance to not meet targets or data indicating a worsening trend. However, program staff should have an understanding of why these results are not as expected and to offer a plan to improve results.

Following are some examples of potential topics for a Program HealthSTAT progress review. Modify these examples as needed to best tell the story of what you feel is most relevant to the program's success.

1. *Tracking existing performance measures.* Compare current performance levels with targets, and review performance over time. Analyze the data and recommend actions based on the analysis.

2. Follow up. One key to HealthSTAT is persistent follow-up. Take the time to review outstanding issues or follow-up to questions asked at previous HealthSTAT progress reviews.
3. Customer satisfaction and stakeholder engagement. Report out on efforts to learn more about customer requirements, needs, and evaluation of program activities.
4. Monitor management systems and administrative indicators.
 - a. Personnel report: budgeted FTEs, vacancies, hiring rates, use of overtime and leave, completion of appraisals.
 - b. Contract performance monitoring.
5. Progress on Program quality improvement initiatives.

One major objective of having answered all three questions during a HealthSTAT progress review is to leave with a specific action plan of who is going to do what, and when those actions will be completed.

Who should participate in HealthSTAT progress reviews, and other logistical considerations?

It is essential that the Program's leadership team is in the room. Their attendance sends a clear signal that HealthSTAT performance management is important. It also ensures that managers are at the table to make decisions. Program leadership team participants *could* include:

- Program Manager
- Budget staff
- Core Activity Managers
- Key support staff
- Persons compiling and analyzing metric and other data

Effective HealthSTAT progress reviews require solid staffing. Ensure that:

- Key Program staff that implement the programs and deliver the services under review are in attendance. They provide essential context and can verify whether proposed actions and decisions are reasonable. It is also important to acknowledge and celebrate successes.
- The analytic staff that developed measures and analysis may be needed to address technical data or measurement questions.

For maximum benefit, we recommend that Program employees be encouraged to observe and participate in HealthSTAT progress reviews for other programs in addition to their own.

What is the schedule of HealthSTAT progress reviews?

Programs will be scheduled for HealthSTAT progress reviews at the beginning of each calendar year, and each Program will normally be scheduled once every six months. The current HealthSTAT schedule can be found on the “Resources” tab near the top of every page of the HealthSTAT information system.

Common pitfalls to avoid

1. **Approaching HealthSTAT progress reviews as a presentation:** A HealthSTAT progress review is a focused, data-based discussion. Content is more important than appearance. It is important to tell a story about whether performance is improving, getting worse, or staying the same and draw logical connections about why. Program HealthSTAT progress reviews are very interactive and may not go through the material in the sequence that slides and data are presented.
2. **Approaching HealthSTAT as a policy discussion:** The Management Team may discuss high-level indicators and new approaches to set context. However, the purpose of HealthSTAT progress reviews is to focus on how well key policies and programs are being executed.
3. **Insufficient analysis:** An analysis is not a restatement of what the metric data show. It is more than just saying that the trend of a metric is increasing or decreasing. A good HealthSTAT progress review analysis provides an evidence-based explanation of why the trend is increasing or decreasing and what we can do to improve results. For example, it is not enough to assert that a program needs more funding to achieve its public health outcomes. It is important to dig deeper. Does evidence from research demonstrate that the methods we used are the most effective? How does our cost per service provided compare nationally? Does anyone else use the same method in a more cost effective manner? Are there any complicating factors at work? Use data to tell a story.

Appendix A

Resources for Assessing a Program's Performance Measures

1. **How would you rate the Program's performance based on these measures?**
 - a. Can you tell whether the program is doing well or not?
 - b. Are you able to *tell the story* with this information?
 - c. What is appealing or useful about this information?

2. **How is this information used?**
 - a. Who is the intended audience for this measure?
 - b. Do you review it regularly? Does your management team?
 - c. Who else uses this information? Would it be useful for customer, council, and/or public consumption? Why or why not? What kind of information does that audience need?
 - d. Do your employees know where to find this? Even if they do, would they go look at it? Why or why not?

3. **How do you compare to others?**
 - a. Where could you look for examples of good performance reports? Who does a good job of measuring and reporting, in your field? Who does a good job within your own organization?
 - b. What data are you missing? Why? What would it take to get it – and is it worth it?
 - c. In what areas of your performance management system (any of the points above) would you most like to see improvement?

4. **Do these measures help you make your case?**
 - a. Can you sketch out the logic model – do you know where your link is in the chain? How about your employees, your partners, your leaders – do they understand how your activities contribute to the bigger picture goals?
 - b. Is this information used to inform resource allocation decisions, or other financial decisions? How direct is the link between this information and financial decisions?
 - c. If you were the Division's Budget office and you saw this report, would you invest more or reduce the budget? Why?
 - d. How well a connected to day-to-day operation is this information? To team and individual performance expectations? Can it help you motivate your employees?

Appendix B

Tips for a Successful HealthSTAT Progress Review

PREPARING FOR THE HEALTHSTAT REVIEW

Ensure that your Core Activity Work Plans and metrics are up to date. Report the target and actual value for each measure for that measure's time period. For example, if the number of monthly brochures distributed was a metric used and the HealthSTAT review was taking place in July, then report the target number of brochures intended to be distributed in June and the number of brochures that was actually distributed. Show in a chart the trend of monthly values of this metric for the past year.

Each Program will have 30 minutes. Some of the Program-specific topics will need more time than others. We strongly recommend being brief and focusing on the most important points.

A representative from the Program will run the HealthSTAT computer/projector.

You can bring as many staff as you'd like to the HealthSTAT Review.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS DURING THE REVIEW

This is a management conversation, not a presentation. The Management Team is familiar with your Program. Be ready to dig into the data and action plans.

Be nimble! Usually the Division Administrator will ask the Program Manager to begin the review, but the discussion may start in another direction. It is rare that the conversation goes in the order of a prepared presentation.

If the Management Team asks a question about a specific measure or piece of information, get to the point by avoiding unnecessary details or background. Focus on your action plans and how they will contribute to performance. Be sure you are specific.

Pay attention to the time and respect the need to leave time for other speakers. The HealthSTAT facilitator will try to move the program staff and Management Team along to stay on schedule.

Try to avoid saying something is "complicated." Instead be ready to talk about complex topics in terms that people can grasp. Break the issue down into simple concepts and be solutions oriented.

It's ok to say you'll get back to leadership with an answer if you don't have it handy.

Do make commitments, but don't over-commit "for the next session." Once you make a commitment, you've set an expectation. (Many follow-up items can be addressed outside the HealthSTAT progress review.)

Use your judgment - in some cases it's ok to say, "no, we can't (or shouldn't) do that." Don't say yes if the request doesn't make sense.

Be ready to talk about issues from the "outside in" (e.g. what the public sees/perceives), and from the "inside out" (e.g. what it looks like from the trenches).

If there are specific ways a particular member of the leadership team can help you reach your targets and goals, this is the time to ask!

Use the data to open the door to a conversation about your analysis and action plans. And remember, the HealthSTAT progress review is only a small part of the big conversation – it doesn't all have to be said at the review.

Please be tolerant of leadership members who are just learning about how your Program works. Learning new things gives people lots of ideas they think might be new, but which you might have tried and found not to be effective long ago. The Management Team trusts in your expertise; they are just trying to be helpful.

Questions are asked in a spirit of trying to understand what the Program does so that the Management Team can help Programs achieve the PHSD's goals and to be more informed as public policy is shaped. Lots of questions or requests for different things do not indicate the team members think something is wrong or bad. They are very impressed with the work that you've done to prepare for this session and the work you do every day.

Appendix C

Questions to Anticipate During a HealthSTAT Review

Following are examples of the types of questions that could be asked during a HealthSTAT Review. Many of these questions may never be asked, but are provided here to help you better assemble information or gather your thoughts in preparation.

Analyzing gaps, trends and differences

- What is your theory about why this is happening?
- What explains the differences in regions?
- What explains the difference between last quarter's performance and this quarter?
- How are we doing compared to our historical performance?
- Why are we above or below target?
- How much variance from target should be considered "normal"? (tolerance)
- Are there cyclical factors at work? (seasonal demand, weather, FY, etc.)
- How do we compare? (to other jurisdictions; to other agencies; to private sector; to the U.S. or other states)
- Have you engaged or surveyed citizens/stakeholders? What do they think?

Improving Results

- What are your long and short term targets?
- What concerns do you have, or problems do you anticipate for the future?
- How can we improve (or simplify) this process?
- Can it get any better? Why or why not?
- What would make this activity more efficient or productive?
- What's your primary focus for innovation? What risks are you taking?
- What have you learned?

Checking for Unintended Consequences

- What are the opportunity costs in what won't be done if we invest more resources elsewhere?
- Are there any negative potential consequences of increasing results in this area?
- Have we verified our data sources?

Telling the Story

- So what?
- How does this activity contribute to higher level outcomes?
- How do you define success in this area?
- Why do we track this information? Who uses it, for what kind of decisions?
- How is this information shared with staff or stakeholders?

Making Decisions

- What do these numbers tell us?
- How do your employees feel about the (results/problem/proposed solution)?
- What do your stakeholders think about the (results/problem/proposed solution)?
- What would it take to get to (name the target: *reduce the backlog to zero; cut the red tape; improve collections by 10%, etc*)?
- What amount (or type) of resources would you need to improve this picture? How much improvement can we expect?
- What action would you recommend we take based on this information?
- Are these the right targets, or would you recommend a change?
- What do you need from me or other members of the Management Team to improve this picture?

Appendix D

HealthSTAT Room Layout – C205 (C207 Optional)

