

TEMPLATE FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health

44648 Mound Road, #114 | Sterling Heights, MI 48314-1322
Phone: 586-739-9940 | Fax: 586-739-9941 | Email: teryle@nosorh.org
www.nosorh.org



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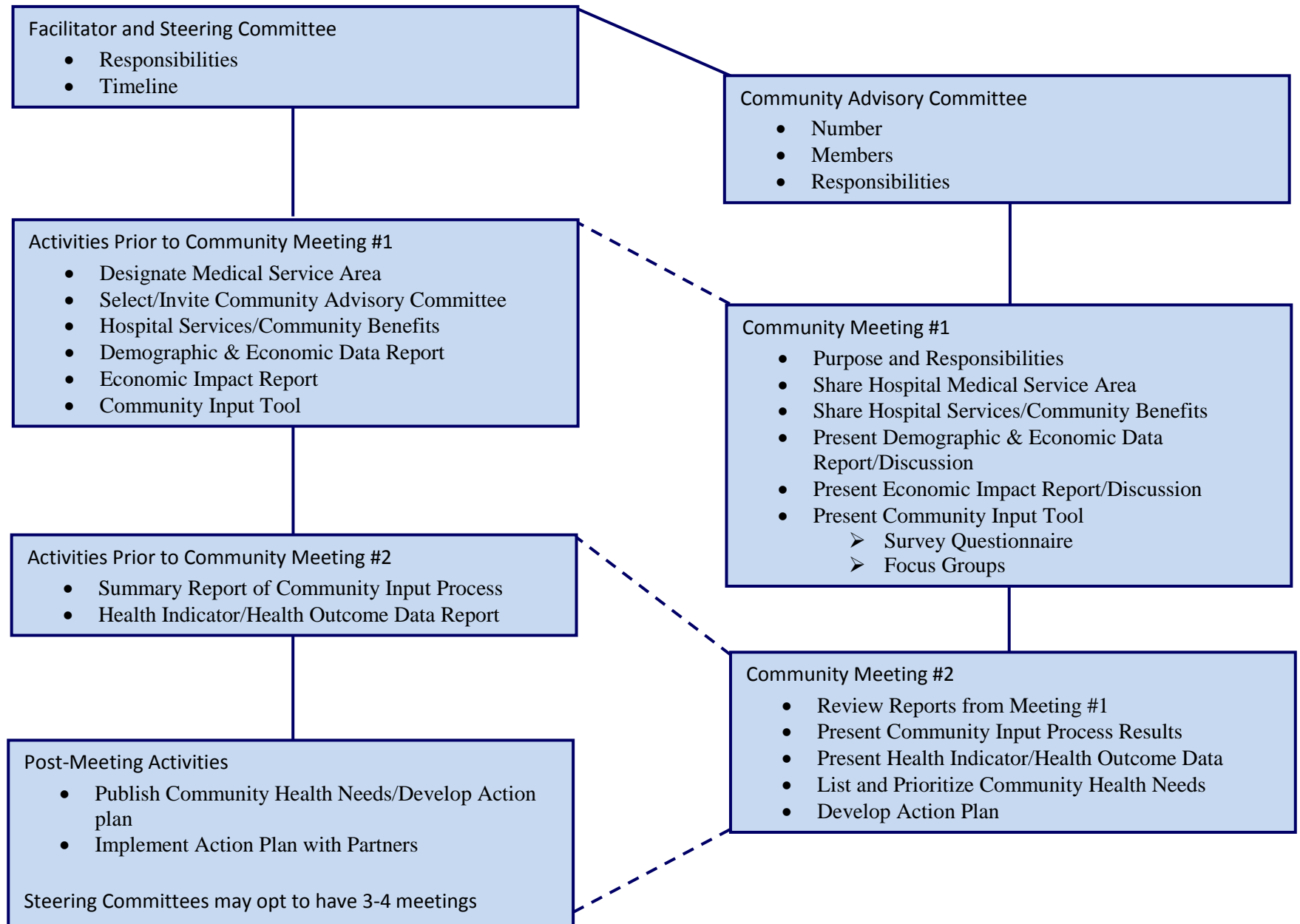
I. Executive Overview

“The 2010 Affordable Care Act” requires that all 501(c)(3) hospitals conduct a community health needs assessment. The purpose of this template is to provide a relatively quick, non-intensive process to complete the requirement for rural hospitals. The template is designed for state level professionals such as state offices of rural health, state hospital associations, state cooperative extension agencies, health departments, or consultants to facilitate the process in rural hospitals at no or low cost to the hospitals. The template is also relatively easy to adopt if hospitals desire to conduct the assessment themselves. All data sources and materials for implementation are included, with additional assistance available from the National Center for Rural Health Works (www.ruralhealthworks.org).

An overview of the template is presented in **Figure 1**. The facilitator and steering committee will oversee the entire process. The facilitator could be a hospital employee or an outside professional from a state agency or a consultant. The steering committee is a small group (three to five members) that will oversee the process. The steering committee members would typically be the hospital administrator, hospital marketing personnel, health department representative, hospital board member, or others identified by the hospital administrator. The responsibilities of the steering committee include:

- Activities Prior to Community Meeting #1
 - Designate Medical Service Area
 - Select/Invite Community Advisory Committee
 - Hospital Services/Community Benefits
 - Demographic & Economic Data Report
 - Economic Impact Report
 - Community Input Tool
- Activities Prior to Community Meeting #2
 - Summary Report of Community Input Process
 - Health Indicator/Health Outcome Data Report

Figure 1. Overview of Community Health Needs Assessment Template for a Two-Meeting Process



Post-Meeting Activities

- Publish Community Health Needs/Develop Action plan
- Implement Action Plan with Partners

The template proposes that two to four meetings be conducted. The overview shows two meetings; however, the material could be divided into three or four meetings. A three to four meeting process would enable more time for discussion and input from the community advisory committee. Community meetings work best when held over lunch with a light lunch provided. The community meetings should be held about one month apart to allow for preparation and evaluation of the materials. The two-meeting process would take three to four months, where a three-meeting process would take about five months.

The two-meeting process is illustrated in **Figure 1** and would generate four products and a community needs assessment action plan. The four products are:

1. The Economic Impact of the Hospital
2. Demographic and Economic Data Report
3. Health Indicator/Health Outcome Data Report
4. Summary Results of Community Input Process

The complete template will enable a facilitator and steering committee the ability to provide a community health needs assessment with relative ease. All data sets are identified and example products are provided.

For additional information on the template or for a CD with all information, please contact the National Center for Rural Health Works:

Gerald Doeksen, Director (Email: gad@okstate.edu)
Cheryl St. Clair, Associate Director (Email: cheryl@okstate.edu)
National Center for Rural Health Works
513 Ag Hall\
Stillwater, OK 74078
Phone: 405-744-6083