



PHILANTHROPY'S ABILITY TO ADVANCE POPULATION HEALTH

While more than 90% of hospitals agree or strongly agree population health is aligned with their mission, only 19% of health care leaders strongly agree they possess the financial resources available to support population health. Lack of financial resources and uncertainty about concrete incentive programs are significant barriers for health care organizations to engage in community health improvements. Philanthropy can provide necessary financial resources to initiate and sustain these initiatives.

There is already an attraction to elements of population health (even though it has not been historically coined as such) with donors. What makes population health difficult to grasp for the health care organization makes it attractive for the donor. First and foremost, population health aligns with a patient and donor-centered perspective. Population health gives a holistic approach to the health care problems and identifies that it necessitates attention to environment, society, etc. to truly make an impact on health outcomes. Under this umbrella, philanthropists can have a larger impact. Seed money

for hospitals' new innovative models of care are ideal funding opportunities for philanthropists with expectations to provide transformational impact – results that are measurable and scalable not just within a specific organization but have the potential to be replicable on a large scale. Population health holds the promise to provide these system level changes and to engage foundations and individuals to fund these models designed to yield social impact as well as a financial return on their investments.

There are unlimited opportunities for donors to fund population health initiatives at every interest level and financial level such as providing start-up capital for new models of care,

services and programs that are not covered by insurance, and community programming extending outside the walls of the hospital. Some population health priorities parallel the familiar acute care scope currently supported by health

care donors including purchasing capital equipment, building a new community health care clinic and purchasing a mobile mammography unit, making health care more accessible while focusing on prevention and early detection. The difference has been that these initiatives have not always fit in the organization's core priority until now. Due to the enormous scope and financial needs of many of the population health initiatives, hospitals may need to dissect components of initiatives to target donors at all giving levels.

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Philanthropy's Ability to Advance Population Health

Population health has the opportunity to identify and engage new prospects to the health care organization. Approaches such as accountable care units within the hospital are anticipated to provide a better experience and satisfaction for the patient and family by enhancing care coordination from an interdisciplinary team and engaging the patient and family in the process resulting in an increased pool of grateful patients. Other value-based models such as patient-centered medical home models have the opportunity to build stronger relationships with patients – while providing better outcomes and lower costs. Population health can also attract new donors who are currently supporting community organizations focused on prevention, education, environment, etc., that are now introduced to the hospital through a population health goal.

While there are donors who are committed to a single organization, most impact philanthropists care more about the cause, such as curing cancer, than a singular organization. Donors see the advantages of investing in projects that involve multiple collaborators. It is not a far leap for current health care donors interested in diabetes to understand the value of not only funding diabetic strips for those who can't afford them but to also understand how accessibility to supermarkets and walking trails and the inclusion of vegetables and exercise are just as important to improving a diabetic's health.

To be most successful, philanthropy professionals need to be present early in the planning of population health strategies to help identify which initiatives and projects align with private support. Philanthropy professionals will need to communicate the value proposition and translate abstract, elusive priorities to make them concrete for the donor. In addition to providing philanthropic support, philanthropy professionals can also assist the hospital with developing and flourishing community relationships and facilitate the hospital's leadership in identifying the best organizations for collaboration.

At the core, philanthropy provides an opportunity for individuals to save lives and to make lives better. Population health, with a goal of improving health outcomes, provides such a platform, and, thus, it is fundable through private philanthropy within the hospital walls as well as through the care that follows them home, as donors understand a diagnosis changes lives forever not just during the time they are in the hospital.

For Board Discussion ≡

How can the organization communicate the patient/ community impact of the hospital's population health initiative to the community and to prospective donors?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of partnering with another non-profit in seeking philanthropic support?

About the Author:

Amy Dorrill, FAHP, is principal consultant of the health care philanthropy consulting firm Accordant Philanthropy.
