



An Equity-Focused Evaluation Design for a Multipronged Intervention to Promote Planned Pregnancies

The Missouri Foundation for Health launched **The Right Time** initiative in early 2019. A one-year planning phase led to the initiative design and prospective monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework of the initiative. Aligned with the Foundation's core values, the evaluation approach purposefully considers equity as a key underlying principle. This issue brief provides a summary of the evaluation design against which the Foundation will assess its progress and contributions to health and health equity.

The Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH) supports innovative solutions to improve health in its service communities. In keeping with this pursuit, MFH is launching a six-year, multipronged effort, called The Right Time, to address barriers to access comprehensive contraceptive care services. Planned pregnancies increase well-being, financial security, and autonomy. By increasing women's ability to choose if and when to become pregnant, MFH hopes to create healthier and happier families and strengthen communities.

To design the initiative, MFH brought together several partners with expertise along its three envisioned prongs—supply (clinical), demand (communications), and social and policy environment (advocacy)—and recruited an evaluation and learning partner. Embedding an evaluation into the initiative enables the generation of substantial learning, helping to build an understanding of whether and why the program had the anticipated outputs and outcomes (or why it did not), including those related to health equity, and informing future initiatives in Missouri and elsewhere. This brief discusses how the evaluation design explicitly incorporates health equity into each component of its framework.

Benefits of incorporating equity in evaluation

By incorporating health equity into every aspect, the evaluation design of The Right Time demonstrates clear intent to assess the initiative's effects on health equity. Without purposeful incorporation of health equity, monitoring and evaluation runs the risk of misunderstanding the conditions and factors underlying the observed outcomes. These underlying factors might include for whom, where, when, and how the intervention had a best or worst effect. Exploring these factors will assist in unmasking inequities, improve the lessons learned, and lead to strong intervention and outcomes for The Right Time.





Describe the program

A logic model is a road map showing how an initiative will achieve the positive outcomes it was designed to produce.

The activities and outcomes in the Right Time logic model include social determinants of health and health equity outcomes.



Focus the evaluation design

Evaluation questions drive data collection and analysis.

The Right Time evaluation questions focus on health equity:

- How did the implementation and/or outcome vary by characteristics, setting, and over time?
- What specific elements of the initiative were associated with changes?
- What specific elements of the initiative were associated with the largest changes?



Gather credible evidence

The data collected will determine which evaluation questions can be answered.

Data collection tools for The Right Time use culturally and linguistically appropriate language makes accurate responses more likely. The Right Time will also collect data from a wide variety of sources to enable rich analyses of equity and incorporate myriad viewpoints.



Justify conclusions

Rigorous analysis allows researchers to provide complete answers to evaluation questions.

The Right Time will use a range of rigorous approaches to understand the multitude of factors influencing health. Together, these analyses will allow us to assess the overall impact of The Right Time, who benefited from it most, how it influenced equity, and the complex and interacting factors that underlie inequities.



Ensure use and share lessons learned

For an evaluation to have maximum impact, its lessons must be shared.

The dissemination strategy for The Right Time evaluation will highlight health inequities, recommend strategies for addressing them, and forward the broader discussion of health equity. In this way, the evaluation could also raise the level of consciousness about health equity and encourage future evaluation designs to incorporate this lens.

Note: Steps in the framework were adapted from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health (CDC 1999).



The Right Time initiative, a multipronged intervention to prevent unintended pregnancy

Central to The Right Time is a strong commitment to equity and ensuring that women, regardless of circumstances, have the opportunity to obtain effective contraceptive care. Accordingly, a year before implementing the initiative, the Foundation engaged stakeholders from across the state to understand the social, economic, and systems inequities that might affect women's access to and use of contraceptive care. In addition, MFH also hired an evaluation and learning partner

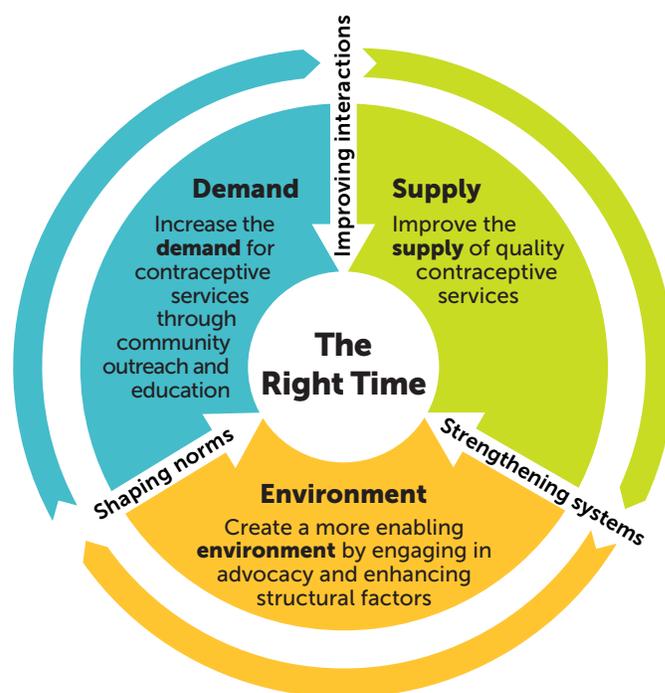
to identify populations at highest risk for unintended pregnancy within the state and enable coordination of the initiative's implementation and evaluation designs (Kranker et al. 2019). The result of the one-year planning process was the design specification of the initiative's three core components: clinical (supply), community awareness and education (demand), policy and systems change (environment) as summarized in the table below.^{a,b}

Component	Objective and design
Supply	<p>Working with health care professionals to increase the supply and availability of quality contraceptive services and reduce barriers to quality care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical assistance and funding to three cohorts of 7 health centers, including Title X clinics, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), county health departments, hospital-based clinics, and other entities providing funding to expand access to the full range of contraceptive methods in the communities served
Demand	<p>Reaching families in need of information and options, and empowering patients to make informed decisions through education and awareness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use social media (owned, paid, and earned) to promote positive messages and norms around reproductive health planning
Environment	<p>Influencing the environment to advocate for, and enhance, structural factors essential to providing accessible, high quality contraceptive care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use partnerships and advocacy to increase funding and support for the Women's Health Services Program and implement policy changes for "confidentiality billing" by insurers, stocking and reassignment of long-acting reversible contraceptives, reimbursement for contraceptives, and expansion of contraceptive coverage.

Source: Missouri Family Health Council 2018.

^a MFH's overarching approach to the initiative components was based on the Supply-Enabling Environment-Demand (SEED) Programming developed by Engender Health (EngenderHealth 2011). This type of programming has successfully lowered the rates of unintended pregnancy, abortion, and teen pregnancy; decreased the number of poor birth outcomes; and lowered state costs for reproductive health care.

^b More than 1,500 stakeholders were engaged through a provider survey for clinical assessment, stakeholder listening sessions, client focus groups, policy analysis, and statewide polling. These stakeholders included county health departments, Title X clinics, FQHCs, and other safety net providers; policy-makers; and community members.



References

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