

How To Create a Men's Health Report Card

The Community Voices initiative has used Men's Health Report cards to increase the level of awareness of men's health at the state level, to educate policy makers on focus areas for men's health and to begin the policy discussion around men's health.

If your organization is interested in producing a men's health report card, below are tips on how to get started, a list of data sources, what data to consider, a review of data challenges and overall recommendations for the production of a report card.

Step One: Assessing Other State Report Cards

- When assessing other report cards, make note of the following:
 - Report card formats
 - Comparison groups
 - Health indicators
 - Data sources
 - Grading methodology
 - Potential partners

Report cards will vary, but this process will provide guidance for what may be the norm in the state and what policy makers are familiar with reviewing. It will help your organization determine an outline for the report card. It may also help align the men's health report card for direct comparison to another state report card. This step will also assist in determining the target audience for the report card.

Step Two: Determine Health Indicators and Begin To Gather Data

Once the health indicators have been determined, format a tracking system by using an excel spreadsheet or a table. When gathering data, insert data into the tracking system, it will become apparent where data gathering assistance may be needed.

- Begin gathering data to determine data availability
 - Determine how far to break out ethnic groups depending on available data
 - Some data may not be publicly available
 - There are data challenges when listing various ethnic groups
 - Seek data consultation services if needed by partnering with a University or State Government agency that has access to such data and has the necessary computer software
- Public data sources include:
 - State Center for Health Statistics
 - Vital Statistics
 - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
 - HIV/STD Surveillance Data
 - US Department of Labor
 - State Department of Corrections
 - United States Census

Step Three: Determine Comparison Group

- Comparison groups may vary depending on the target audience for the report card. Suggestions for comparison groups include:
 - United States Men
 - Men in the state
 - Men in the state past to present health conditions
 - Women in the state
 - Women in the region

Step Four: Determine Grading Mechanism

Based on the grading methodology of other state report cards, determine if the report card is going to reflect letter grades and/or trends. If yes, determine what defines each letter grade. If the report card is going to define trends, then the same applies, determine what defines an improvement and a decline. When considering the methodology, think about what is easiest for readers to interpret.

Step Five: Meet with Key Stakeholders

Once data is gathered and there is a clear picture to share regarding the health of men in the state, begin to meet with key stakeholders to inform them about the report card, to share the data and to discuss possible outcomes and policy recommendations. In addition, use the meetings to discuss the grading methodology and inquire with stakeholders on possible recommendations.

Step Six: Publication

Begin to design the report card format and text. Suggestions for text to include in the report card are:

- Include a list of all data sources
- Make certain to disclose any data limitations
- Define grading mechanism in a clear, concise manner
- Denote any apparent health disparities with a symbol and define the symbol within the data disclosure
- Write a preamble to explain the intentions of the report card and provide an overview of the report card findings
- Include policy recommendations and/or policy implications
- Recognize all contributing partners
- List contact information for report card creators for individuals who may have additional questions regarding the report card
- Reference the website address if electronic copies will be available

Step Seven: Dissemination Plan

Take time to develop a dissemination plan. A dissemination plan should include answers to the following questions:

- How many report cards should be printed?
- How will the report card be disseminated to various target audiences?

- Will a press release be sent to provide coverage when the report card is released?
- Should meetings be set with policy makers to review the data and discuss policy implications?
- Should a copy of the report card be posted on a website?

Step Eight: Print and Disseminate