

Newborn Metabolic Screening Program Initiative Action Planning Phase

Evaluation Report

Prepared for:

Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention Population and Public Health Alberta Health Services

Prepared by:

Public Health Innovation and Decision Support – Evaluation Team Surveillance and Health Status Assessment Population and Public Health Alberta Health Services

August 2011



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Executive Summary	ii
Evaluation of Phase One: Action Planning	
Newborn Metabolic Screening Program Initiative: Building a Provincial Approach	ii
Developing an Action Plan	ii
Evaluating the Action Planning Process	ii
Action Planning Activities	iii
Meeting Format and Structure	<i>iii</i>
Tools and Resources to Support Planning	iv
Impact of Action Planning Process	
Introduction	
Data Collection and Analysis Methods	
Findings	2
Participant Characteristics	
Activities of the NMS Program Initiative Action Planning	
Suggestions and comments related to the activities	
Meeting Format and Structure of the NMS Program Initiative Action Planning	
Suggestions and comments related to the meeting format and structure	
Tools and Resources of the NMS Program Initiative Action Planning	
Suggestions and comments related to the tools and resources	
Comments and Suggestions According to Role within NMS Program Initiative	
Impact of Involvement with NMS Program Initiative Action Planning	5
Positive impacts on individual's work	
Negative impacts on individual's work	
Improving Future Initiatives	
Strategies to enhance positive impacts	
Strategies to minimize negative impacts	
Lessons Learned and Comments	
Recommendations	
Appendix	
Questionnaire	8



Executive Summary

Evaluation of Phase One: Action Planning

Newborn Metabolic Screening Program Initiative: Building a Provincial Approach

The purpose of the Newborn Metabolic Screening (NMS) Program is to offer timely screening to all infants born in Alberta. Early detection and treatment reduce morbidity and mortality, and can make the difference between healthy development and lifelong impairment.

In the summer and fall of 2010, Alberta Health Services (AHS) developed a four phase strategy to build a comprehensive, enterprise-wide NMS Program as a response to a directive from Alberta Health and Wellness regarding their 2010 NMS Program Policy document

www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Newborn-Metabolic-Screening-Policy-2010.pdf.



Newborn Metabolic Screening Program Initiative, phase one delivered an Action Plan Report (Action Plan) in order to integrate and coordinate the steps on the NMS pathway and to improve NMS Program infrastructure, processes, outputs and outcomes.

Developing an Action Plan

Over a 12 week period between August and October 2010, 142 health professionals, consultants, specialists, executives and support staff across Alberta were involved in the development of the Action Plan. The creation of the Action Plan occurred within aggressive timelines and involved extensive AHS staff and external partners working together in Working Groups. The Action Plan also required numerous meetings with Integration and Steering Committee members, coordination and synthesizing by the NMS core planning group, and additional consultations, feedback and validation with key stakeholders.

Evaluating the Action Planning Process

The Action Planning Evaluation was designed to elicit feedback from phase one participants on the processes and tools used during the action planning phase. The intent was to refine the tools and processes used within the NMS Program Initiative as well as to improve participant experiences for future health promotion initiatives and projects within Alberta Health Services. Highlights of the evaluation methods include:

- Survey tool developed by the NMS Program coordination team in consultation with Public Health Innovation and Decision Support
- 135 invitations sent to NMS Action Planning participants
- Online survey tool available for three weeks (February 24, 2011 to March 11, 2011)
- Response rate: 41.5% (n=56)



 Respondents rated activities, meeting structure and format, and tools and resources on a scale from 1 – should be used again, to 5 – should not be used without significant changes. In general, ratings of 1 and 2 were considered to be positive.

Action Planning Activities

The action planning process used the following activities: brainstorming, assessing against 2010 AHW Standards, mapping current state, sorting and prioritizing actions, reviewing and validating processes, and consulting with colleagues outside of meetings. Overall, the majority (>88%) of respondents felt that the action planning activities should be used again.



Meeting Format and Structure

In order to support a provincial approach, the action planning process used many meeting formats including: face-to-face meetings, web and phone meetings, formal agenda structures, open discussions, presentations and small groups and breakouts. These meeting formats were well received (>77%). Interestingly, web and phone meetings received higher ratings than face-to-face meetings (91.5% versus 78.6%, respectively).





Tools and Resources to Support Planning

During the action planning process participants were provided with background materials, terms of reference, standardized assessment tools, current state maps and a mini-action plan tool. These tools and resources were well received by respondents (>88%).



Impact of Action Planning Process

Respondents reported positive impacts on their work due to their involvement in the NMS Program Initiative phase one. Examples included increased networking opportunities and knowledge of the NMS Program, as well as broadened provincial understanding for participants. The use of technology (i.e. web and phone conferencing) was also frequently cited by respondents to have eased attendance at meetings and increased their skills in the use of the technology. Respondents suggested continuing to use virtual tools for meetings. Improved ongoing communication, particularly around the outcomes of the groups' recommendations, was also requested by respondents.

Three quarters of respondents indicated that the action planning process had negative impacts on their work outside of the action planning; of these, 77.8% commented that this was due to the time commitment, workload, and tight deadlines to develop the Action Plan. Respondents also indicated that travel for face-to-face meetings took time away from their other work. Respondents indicated that reducing the time and workload commitments and streamlining the organization of the materials and their distribution are important strategies for minimizing the negative impacts of future work.

"A great example of collaborative work across many different portfolios."



Introduction

The purpose of the Newborn Metabolic Screening (NMS) Program is to offer timely screening to all infants born in Alberta. Early detection and treatment reduce morbidity and mortality, and can make the difference between healthy development and lifelong impairment. In the summer and fall of 2010, Alberta Health Services (AHS) developed a four phase strategy to build a comprehensive, enterprise-wide NMS Program as a response to a directive from Alberta Health and Wellness regarding their 2010 NMS Program Policy document: <u>http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Newborn-Metabolic-Screening-Policy-2010.pdf</u>

The evaluation of the NMS Program Initiative action planning phase was commissioned by the Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention (HPDIP) NMS Program coordination team. The goal of the evaluation was to elicit feedback on the process and tools from AHS staff who participated in the NMS Program Initiative action planning phase. Feedback was also elicited on the impact of the action planning on participants' work. The evaluation results will be used to refine the process and tools and improve participant experience for future health promotion initiatives and projects within AHS.

Over a 12 week period between August and October 2010, 142 health professionals, consultants, specialists, executives and support staff across Alberta were involved in the development of the Action Plan. The creation of the Action Plan occurred within aggressive timelines and involved extensive AHS staff and external partners working together in Working Groups. The Action Plan also required numerous meetings with Integration and Steering Committee members, coordination and synthesizing by the NMS core planning group, and additional consultations, feedback and validation with key stakeholders.

Data Collection and Analysis Methods

One hundred and thirty-five (135) AHS staff members involved in the NMS Program Initiative were invited to provide their feedback on the action planning by participating in an online survey. The survey questions were developed by the NMS Program coordination team in consultation with the Population Health Innovation and Decision Support (PHIDS) evaluation team. The survey was hosted by the AHS Survey Select tool. The initial invitation was sent on February 24, 2011, and a reminder email was sent on March 4, 2011. The deadline for response was March 11, 2011. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix A.

A mixture of closed-ended and open-ended questions were used, resulting in both qualitative and quantitative data. For all quantitative data, descriptive statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative responses were categorized according to theme and summarized. Note that for some questions, few comments were provided.



Findings

Participant Characteristics

A total of 56 individuals completed the survey. The response rate was 41.5%. Respondents were asked to identify their role within the NMS Program Initiative (see Table 1). The majority of individuals (58.9%) indicated their role as either a chair or member of a working group. Chairs or members of all five working groups responded to the survey

Table 1. Role within the NMS Program Initiative action planning phase

Role	n (%)
Working Group Member	29 (51.8)
Steering Committee Member	9 (16.1)
Administrative Support	6 (10.7)
Chair/Co-Chair of Working Group or Member of Integration Committee	5 (8.9)
Other (primarily self-identified as consultants)	8 (14.3)
Total	56 respondents, 57 responses

Activities of the NMS Program Initiative Action Planning

Respondents were asked to rate each of the activities used during the NMS Program Initiative action planning from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating the activity should be used again, and 5 indicating the activity should not be used again without significant changes. Table 2 below displays these results.

Table 2. Rating of the NMS Program Initiative action planning activities

Activities	Should be u	sed again			not be used t significant changes
	1 n (%)	2 n (%)	3 n (%)	4 n (%)	5 n (%)
Brainstorming (n=46)	36 (78.3)	7 (15.2)	1 (2.2)	1 (2.2)	1 (2.2)
Standardized assessments (n=45)	29 (64.4)	11 (24.4)	5 (11.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Current state mapping (n=47)	33 (70.2)	11 (23.4)	2 (4.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.1)
Sorting and prioritizing actions (n=43)	28 (65.1)	12 (27.9)	2 (4.7)	1 (2.3)	0 (0.0)
Review and validation process (n=45)	28 (62.2)	13 (28.9)	3 (6.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.2)
Consultation with colleagues outside of meetings (n=46)	35 (76.1)	10 (21.7)	1 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)



In general, the activities used during the NMS Program Initiative action planning were very well received by respondents. Nearly 90% of respondents rated all of the activities positively on the five point scale, indicating that these should be used again. However, changes may be needed as all activities had at least one respondent rating them between 3 and 5 indicating that they thought changes were needed. The standardized assessments may be a higher priority for change as 11% of respondents rated it between 3 and 5.

Suggestions and comments related to the activities

Respondents were asked to provide suggestions and comments related to the activities used during the NMS Program Initiative action planning. Congruent with the quantitative findings presented in Table 2, comments related to the activities were primarily positive. Many respondents expressed that the process was very well done, well organized, and that the activities used were effective. It was also mentioned that facilitators were well prepared, and that the web and phone conferencing technology was very helpful.

Other suggestions included that allocating more time for each activity, as well as more time between and in preparation for meetings would have been beneficial.

Meeting Format and Structure of the NMS Program Initiative Action Planning

Respondents were asked to rate each of the meeting format and structure used in the NMS Program Initiative action planning from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating the activity should be used again, and 5 indicating the activity should not be used again without significant changes. Table 3 below displays these results.

Format and Structure	Should be used again				not be used ut significant changes
	1 n (%)	2 n (%)	3 n (%)	4 n (%)	5 n (%)
Face to face meetings (n=42)	25 (59.5)	8 (19.0)	4 (9.5)	4 (9.5)	1 (2.4)
Web/phone meetings (n=47)	34 (72.3)	9 (19.1)	3 (6.4)	1 (2.1)	0 (0.0)
Formal agenda structure (n=45)	30 (66.7)	10 (22.2)	5 (11.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Open discussions (n=46)	36 (78.3)	8 (17.4)	1 (2.2)	1 (2.2)	0 (0.0)
Presentations (n=44)	25 (56.8)	10 (22.7)	7 (15.9)	2 (4.5)	0 (0.0)
Small groups/breakouts (n=44)	23 (52.3)	11 (25.0)	8 (18.2)	0 (0.0)	2 (4.5)

Table 3. Rating of the NMS Program Initiative action planning meeting format and structure

For each format, over 77% of respondents felt that the meeting format should be used again in the future. In general, the open discussion and web/phone-based meetings were most popular, as over 90% of respondents rated them positively. Changes may however be required as all formats received at least two respondents rating them between 3 and 5, indicating that they felt changes would be required for these formats to be used again. The face-to-face meetings, presentations and small



groups/breakouts received the most ratings indicating they require changes in order to be used again (about 21% of respondents rated each of these between 3 and 5).

Suggestions and comments related to the meeting format and structure

Respondents were asked to provide suggestions and comments related to the format and structure of the meetings used during for the NMS Program Initiative action planning. Comments were primarily positive and indicated a preference for web/phone meetings, as these were seen to be effective and more feasible for members to attend. This is congruent with the quantitative findings presented in Table 3 above.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of the meetings, respondents suggested reducing the use of small groups so that all participants can benefit from expert opinion. Taking the time to summarize documents will also help keep participants informed and be effective at meetings.

Tools and Resources of the NMS Program Initiative Action Planning

Respondents were asked to rate the tools and resources used in the NMS Program Initiative action planning from 1 to5, with 1 indicating the tools and resources should be used again, and 5 indicating the tools and resources should not be used again without significant changes. Table 4 below displays these results.

Tools and Resources	Should be used again				not be used ut significant changes
	1 n (%)	2 n (%)	3 n (%)	4 n (%)	5 n (%)
NMS Program information/ statistics/background (n=45)	35 (77.8)	9 (20.0)	1 (2.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Terms of reference (n=45)	26 (57.8)	14 (31.1)	4 (8.9)	1 (2.2)	0 (0.0)
Standard assessment tool (n=46)	30 (65.2)	11 (23.9)	4 (8.7)	1 (2.2)	0 (0.0)
Current state map (n=47)	35 (74.4)	9 (19.1)	3 (6.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Mini action plan tool (n=43)	25 (58.1)	13 (30.2)	5 (11.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Table 4. Rating of the NMS Program Initiative Action Planning tools and resources

The tools and resources were generally well received by respondents, as all were rated positively by more than 88% of respondents. The background information and statistics were particularly popular, with 97.8% of respondents supporting the use of these resources in the future. Current state mapping was also popular among respondents, with 93.6% of respondents rating this tool positively. However, all tools and resources received at least one rating between 3 and 5, indicating some changes may be required for future use. The terms of reference, standard assessment and mini-action plan tools received the most ratings indicating they require changes in order to be used again (about 11% of respondents rated each of these between 3 and 5).

Alberta Health Services Newborn Metabolic Screening Program

Suggestions and comments related to the tools and resources

Respondents were asked to provide suggestions and comments related to the tools and resources of the NMS Program Initiative action planning. Comments indicated that the tools and resources were very helpful, particularly the statistics that were provided. This finding was supported by the quantitative results in Table 4.

Other suggestions provided by respondents included blending the action plan and assessment tools into one, as redundancies exist between the tools; and sending all documents by email instead of hard copy.

Comments and Suggestions According to Role within NMS Program Initiative

Respondents' suggestions and comments related to the activities, meeting format and structure and tools and resources of the NMS Program Initiative action planning phase were examined to determine if there were any patterns according to respondent identified role in the initiative. There were no patterns of responses observed. This was likely due to small sample sizes from some groups.

Impact of Involvement with NMS Program Initiative Action Planning

Respondents were asked how their involvement in the NMS Program Initiative action planning positively and negatively impacted their work. Summarized comments for each question are provided below. Comments were provided from 45 respondents.

Positive impacts on individual's work

Thirty-nine (86.7%) respondents provided comments related to the positive impacts of their involvement in the NMS Program Initiative action planning. There were 16 respondents who commented that they increased their knowledge of the overall NMS Program and gained an appreciation of the challenges and stakeholder issues. For example, one participant commented that the experience 'gave a broader understanding of the complexities of the NMS program'.

Thirteen respondents commented that the NMS Program Initiative action planning provided excellent opportunities for networking with AHS employees from diverse backgrounds. This was said to be very beneficial to their work.

Ten respondents also commented that the action planning provided greater connection to AHS staff throughout the province and 'gave a broader provincial view' of how things were being done. One respondent commented that they 'learned about different departments/programs within AHS'.

There were seven respondents who provided comments related to the meeting format and structure. These comments indicated appreciation for and preference to using web and phone conferencing technology for meetings. Respondents indicated that the use of such technology made it easier to attend meetings and also equipped them with new skills, which will be transferrable to other domains of their work (mentioned by an additional 5 respondents).

Six respondents provided general comments indicating that the experience was positive for them; one respondent commented that their involvement with the NMS program action planning initiative was 'hugely beneficial...professionally'.

There were also five respondents who commented that they acquired knowledge of methods and tools for planning that will be useful in other areas of their work.

Negative impacts on individual's work

Services

Alberta Health

There were 35 respondents who provided comments regarding the negative impacts in their work due to involvement with the NMS Program Initiative. Thirty respondents commented that the time commitment, tight deadlines, and workload of the action planning had a strong negative impact on their individual work. Many respondents noted that it became difficult to balance work for the NMS Program Initiative with other domains of their work, and that this significantly impacted their work-life balance. Many indicated this was a stressful undertaking.

The remainder of comments related to the negative impacts of NMS Program Initiative involvement included that travelling to meetings took time away from other work. Concerns were also raised related to the need to understand the big picture of the initiative and the need for consistent and up to date technology available across the province.

Improving Future Initiatives

Respondents were asked to provide comments and suggestions related to improvements for future initiatives. These are summarized below.

Strategies to enhance positive impacts

There were 25 respondents who provided comments relating to strategies for enhancing positive impacts of future initiatives. Eight respondents provided general positive comments, indicating that the process was 'well done' and a 'great learning experience'.

Comments provided by five respondents included suggestions for ensuring engagement with appropriate experts and stakeholders to recognize and benefit from the existing knowledge and expertise in future initiatives.

Five respondents provided suggestions relating to improving the communication in future initiatives, suggesting timely and consistent communication throughout the initiative, as well as follow-up on the outcomes of recommendations made by participants.

Additionally, four respondents commented in favour of the use of technology for meetings and three respondents commented on the need for more time and more appropriate timelines for work to be completed.

Strategies to minimize negative impacts

There were 24 respondents who provided comments or suggestions for minimizing negative impacts of future initiatives. Fifthteen respondents provided comments related to reducing the time commitment and meeting frequency, expanding the timelines and creating an appropriate time frame for planning as mechanisms for reducing the negative impacts of future initiatives.

Other comments in relation to strategies for minimizing negative effects of future initiatives were related to the organization of the NMS Program Initiative (7 respondents). Respondents provided suggestions such as reducing the number of documents sent, especially if they duplicate previously sent items, keeping the tools user-friendly, and communicating with participants about the status of the work and outcomes both during and following the action planning.



Lessons Learned and Comments

There were 20 respondents who provided additional general comments. Eleven respondents provided general positive comments related to the process of the NMS Program Initiative action planning. Such respondents indicated that the process was 'well planned', and 'a good process'. Respondents expressed appreciation for HPDIP leadership, and indicated that the NMS Program Initiative action planning phase was an overall success. For example, one respondent commented that it was a 'great example of collaborative work across many different portfolios'.

Other comments reiterated that the NMS Program Initiative action planning was a large project. As such, more appropriate timelines were needed and appropriate stakeholders should be engaged.

Recommendations

It is anticipated that the information obtained in this evaluation and the resultant recommendations will inform current and future phases of the NMS Program Initiative as well as other initiatives within Alberta Health Services. Recommendations include:

- Provide more time for action planning processes.
- Continue to facilitate and coordinate action planning processes by engaging a variety of stakeholders and seeking their expertise and input.
- Reduce workload expectations for participants or provide relief.
- Continue to provide web and telephone conferencing technology for meetings.
- Expand the use of electronic formats for the organization and distribution of materials.



Appendix

Questionnaire

the Newborr for future in Steering Cor within AHS I questionnair this survey. 1. What was yo C Member	y will ask you to provide feedback on your experience during the action planning phase of rn Metabolic Screening (NMS) Initiative. We would like your input to improve the process initiatives and projects. Results will be complied and shared with the NMS Provincial ommittee and related areas of Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention (HPDIP) Population and Public Health. All individual responses will be kept confidential. This aire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. We appreciate your time to complete
the Newborr for future in Steering Cor within AHS I questionnair this survey. 1. What was yo O Member	rn Metabolic Screening (NMS) Initiative. We would like your input to improve the process initiatives and projects. Results will be complied and shared with the NMS Provincial ommittee and related areas of Health Promotion, Disease and Injury Prevention (HPDIP) Population and Public Health. All individual responses will be kept confidential. This are will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. We appreciate your time to complete /.
C Member	
	or of the Steering Committee
C	of the Steering Committee
Member	er of the Integration Committee as a Specialist
C Chair (o	or a co-chair) of a Working Group/Member of the Integration Committee
C Member	er of a Working Group
C Administ	strative support
C Anther m	role (please specify)

	Page 2
Working group membership	
2. In which Working Group did you take part? Please select all that apply.	
Registration	
Sample Collection	
Sample Transportation	
Sample Analysis	
Transfer of Care	



					Pag
NMS Initiative action p	lanning				
Thinking about your experi components from 1 to 5, w used again unless significa	ith 1 being "shou	ild be used aga			
Activities					
	(1) Should be used again	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) Should NOT be use again withou significant changes
Brainstorming	С	С	С	С	C
Consensus building	0	0	C	0	C
Standardized assessments	с	С	С	С	С
Current state mapping	C	C	C	C	0
Sorting and prioritizing actions	с	с	с	С	C
Review and validation process	С	0	C	C	0
Consultation with your colleagues outside of meetings	С	С	С	с	С
Other (please specify in the next question)	0	C	С	C	C
If you have any energific su	agestions or com	ments related	to the activitie	e plaze list	them below:
If you have any specific su	aggestions or com	iments related	to the activitie	s, please list	them below:
If you have any specific su		iments related	to the activitie	s, please list	4
		iments related	to the activitie	s, please list	4
	ure (1) Should be used				(5) Should NOT be use again withou significant
Meeting format and structu	ure (1) Should be used again	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) Should NOT be use again withou significant changes
Meeting format and structu	ure (1) Should be used again C	(2) C	(3)	(4) C	(5) Should NOT be use again withou significant changes

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

Presentations

Small groups/breakouts Other (please specify in

the next question)

C

C

C

Alberta Health Services

Newborn Metabolic Screening Program NMS Program Initiative Action Planning Phase Evaluation Report - 10

					4
					*
Tools and resources					
	(1) Should be used again	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) Should NOT be used again without significant changes
NMS Program information/statistics/background	С	С	С	C	с
Terms of reference	С	0	С	C	С
Standard assessment tool	С	C	С	0	С
Current state map	С	C	0	C	C
Mini action plan tool	С	С	С	0	С
Other (please specify in the next question)	C	С	С	C	С
If you have any specific suggestion below:	s or comments	related to t	he tools and r	esources, p	lease list them

Alberta Health Services

Newborn Metabolic Screening Program

		Page 4
	Impacts of involvement	
	How did your involvement with NMS Initiative action planning:	
).	Positively impact your work? (For example, utilizing technology to facilitate provincial meetings, increasing connections with other AHS areas)	
		•
		-
0.	Negatively impact your work? (For example, balancing other aspects of your work, increasing str levels)	ess
		_
		4

	Page
Suggestions for future projects	
From your perspective, what could be done to:	
. Enhance the positive impacts of future projects?	
	4
	2
Minimize the negative impacts of future projects?	
. Minimize the negative impacts of future projects?	
. Minimize the negative impacts of future projects?	



Other "lessons learned"	Page 6
13. Any other "lessons learned" 13. Any other "lessons learned" or comments from the action pl	annino?
	4
	*

Pag	je 7
Thank you	
Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your input will be used to determine ways to improve planning for future initiatives or projects. Please click on "Done" to send in your answers. Your browse will close automatically when your survey has been submitted.	er

www.albertahealthservices.ca