



HEALTH IMPACT

improving population health

Metric: Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) averted



Purpose of this briefing note:

This is a call to action for all programs to measure health impact using a standardized measurement approach.

Intended audience: Implementers, researchers, funders, or partners of programs that provide health services

BACKGROUND

Social franchising is a model for organizing networks of private providers that deliver quality-monitored health services known to improve health or avert disease or disability. There are more than 70 social franchises offering health services in at least 40 countries.

There is a tested and robust approach to health impact measurement that can inform decision making processes. The Metrics Working Group presents this approach in this document.

Health impact is one of six essential goals put forward by the Metrics Working Group.

To learn more, visit m4mgmt.org.

Why measure health impact?

Measuring health impact makes it possible for a program to know if it has achieved what it set out to do: improve population health.

Outputs like *clients served* and *services used* are often measured and tracked by programs. However, *clients served* does not tell the broader story of how many clients successfully completed services. *Services used* does not take into account the varying degrees of health benefits provided by different types of health services and commodities. Health impact measurement is a more robust way of estimating the public health value of a program. Measuring health impact is also an important precursor for understanding the cost-effectiveness of a program.

Why measure health impact using a standardized metric?

Consistent use of the same metric will permit comparison across years, and across programs. This type of analysis can lead to better programmatic decision making.

How can health impact be measured?

Most programs maintain records of how many health services (including referrals and diagnostic tests) and commodities are provided in a given year. These statistics can be run through a mathematical model, which attaches a country-specific coefficient (or estimate of health impact per unit of intervention) to each item. Each coefficient is based on assumptions of the health benefits provided by a particular health service or commodity within a given country. Results are expressed in the form of Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) averted. This is a summary estimate of health benefits resulting from treating an illness or avoiding unplanned pregnancies or a disease. One DALY averted means that the services provided by a franchise resulted in a year of healthy life saved.

DALYs averted takes into account the wide range of services that are now offered by social franchise programs, unlike Couple Years of Protection (CYPs), which measure the impact of family planning services and commodities only.



Are there resources to support you in measuring health impact?

Yes! The Population Services International (PSI) Health Impact Calculator simplifies this process. Insert accurate figures on how many health services and commodities were provided in a given year, and the calculator will use PSI's coefficients to generate a health impact estimation. The calculator can be found at impactcalculator.psi.org.

Generate data rapidly

Measuring the health impact of a program is challenging. Millions of dollars and several years can be spent in this pursuit. Here, we advocate for a complementary approach that can be folded into routine reporting processes. This approach can generate health impact values almost immediately, and can rapidly feed into programmatic decision making processes. The estimation of DALYs averted does just that, using routinely collected *services used* statistics. However, impact coefficients are not available for all health services.

Understand which programs and health services contribute the most to overall health impact

DALYs averted can be used to calculate the overall health impact of a program in a given year. It can also be used to measure the health impact generated by a particular health service in a given year. Programs have used this type of data to redirect resources, scale up effective practices, and understand the potential health impact of new services.

Recommendation: Measure health impact using the DALY averted metric

HEALTH IMPACT DATA USES

- Measure performance across years, programs and health service areas
- Make evidence-informed program decisions
- Measure cost-effectiveness
- Report to donors and policymakers
- More broadly, these data are useful for setting global benchmarks

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Population Service International's (PSI) information sheet, [So, What's a DALY?](#) describes how DALYs averted are used as a measure of health impact. Visit psi.org/publication/what-is-a-day.
- To use the Health Impact Calculator, visit impactcalculator.psi.org.
- Visit M4Mgmt.org to learn more about each of the six goals, the recommended metrics and how to measure performance.



The Metrics Working Group is supported by Metrics for Management. Visit www.m4mgmt.org to learn more.