

e-CHIPS DO IT BETTER

4 REASONS TO AUTOMATE YOUR COMMUNITY HEALTH
ASSESSMENTS AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS



CLEAR IMPACT

INTRODUCTION

Community health assessments (CHAs) and improvement plans (CHIPs) are foundational tools public health departments use to help communities work collaboratively to improve health and wellbeing.

In our last e-book, we showed that when CHAs and CHIPs are concise, accessible, data-driven, feasible, timely, and equitable, they are more likely to lead to improved community health.

Traditional paper (or Word doc or pdf)-based CHAs and CHIPs, however, are static, two-dimensional tools in a field that is better served by dynamic and multi-dimensional tools. Once published, a paper CHA and CHIP is set in stone until the next one is published, typically in three to five years. And structurally, the paper CHA and CHIP is structured to be read from beginning to end.



**IT'S TIME TO RETHINK OUR
APPROACH TO CHAS & CHIPS.
IT'S TIME TO AUTOMATE!**





WHAT IS AN e-CHIP AND e-CHA?

An e-CHA or e-CHIP is a CHA or CHIP that is automated through the use of software. To be “automated,” the system should perform important functions for you like graphing, calculations, some data analysis, reporting, and information sharing. By doing all this for you, e-CHAs and e-CHIPs save you time and reduce error.

WHEN YOU AUTOMATE YOUR CHA OR CHIP USING APPROPRIATE SOFTWARE, YOU ARE STREAMLINING YOUR ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING PROCESSES.

INSTEAD OF CREATING SEPARATE PLANS OR DOCUMENTS, YOU CAN USE THE SAME SYSTEM TO:

- 1) COMBINE YOUR CHA AND CHIP
- 2) GUIDE INTERNAL ACTIVITIES
- 3) COMMUNICATE EFFORTS AND IMPACT TO STAKEHOLDERS
- 4) SUBMIT DOCUMENTATION FOR PHAB ACCREDITATION (IF YOU ARE A HEALTH DEPARTMENT/AGENCY).

THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS WILL OUTLINE 4 IMPORTANT BENEFITS OF AUTOMATING YOUR CHA AND CHIP THROUGH THE USE OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE.

THESE ARE:



1. ACCURATE



2. SIMPLE



3. ACCESSIBLE



4. ACCELERATE & MAINTAIN PHAB ACCREDITATION





1. ACCURATE



ACCURATE DATA = MORE EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING.

Most public health departments update their CHA and CHIP every 3 to 5 years. This is not frequent enough to facilitate continuous improvement or timely responses to unanticipated changes in the environment. Community health conditions and needs – and corresponding data – are constantly evolving and changing as new strategies are implemented, health research yields new knowledge, social structures respond to disruptions, and the availability of resources changes.

CHAs and CHIPs, and the data they report, should be updated every year at a minimum so that change is monitored and incorporated into decision making in real time. Updating the data every month or quarter is even better, depending on how frequently it is gathered.





DATA IS HELPFUL ONLY SO FAR AS IT IS TIMELY AND, THEREFORE, MORE ACCURATE.

Automating your CHA and CHIP with performance management software will help you keep data timely because it allows you to easily enter data as soon as you have it. Software should also allow you to keep track of the impact of strategies and programs over time.

This timely information then becomes the basis for timely and, therefore, more effective decision-making. The more timely the data, the easier it is to spot poor (or great!) program performance and change course when necessary.

AUTOMATION MAKES YOUR PLAN MORE AGILE AND ACTIONABLE.

Software also leaves less room for human-error when it comes to graphing and data analysis. You won't have to redo your graphs and waste time figuring out how to format them correctly in Microsoft Word. Automated graphing allows you to easily aggregate and disaggregate data and compare multiple measures on the same graph, which is an important part of, among other things, health equity work.



TRADING IN THE PAPER-BASED APPROACH TO YOUR CHA AND CHIP FOR AUTOMATION DOESN'T MEAN THAT THE PLANS WILL BE OVERSIMPLIFIED.

Data isn't just quantitative; stories, narratives, and contextual information make the data actionable. Qualitative information is essential to understanding the context behind your data so you can make the most informed decisions. The best performance systems allow you to supplement numerical data with qualitative information. This increases the value of your data and helps you identify patterns and make sense of the trends.



BENEFITS SUMMARY:

- ✓ DATA IS TIMELY AND ACCURATE
- ✓ REDUCES HUMAN ERROR ASSOCIATED WITH GRAPHING AND ANALYSIS
- ✓ RESULTS IN MORE TIMELY AND BETTER STRATEGIZING AND DECISION-MAKING
- ✓ FACILITATES HEALTH EQUITY WORK
- ✓ LINKS QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE INFORMATION



2. SIMPLE



**EASY TO READ AND NAVIGATE
= MORE LIKELY TO BE USED.**

Long form documents are simply not conducive to change. Most people find it aggravating to have to sift through 50+ pages to find the data and information they need to make effective decisions.

They want easy access to the information that matters to them most. Expectations for transparency and efficiency in the public sector are rising, so your plans should reflect this reality. Automating your plan allows you to put data at the forefront, better organize information, and simplify the overall presentation of the plan. The easier a plan is to read, the more likely the information is going to be used to drive behavior.

AUTOMATION SYSTEMS ALLOW YOU TO SIMPLIFY YOUR COMMUNICATION, PLANNING, AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BY COMBINING YOUR CHAs AND CHIPs

These are developed with different intensions but are fundamentally linked. CHAs focus on presenting current community needs, research, and health conditions.

CHIPs present the strategies, programs, and decision-making frameworks intended to impact health conditions. Putting all of this information into one system makes it easier for those reading the plan to understand current community health conditions, the determinants of these conditions, and evaluate the impact of the strategies designed to improve them.

**WHEN A SOFTWARE SYSTEM ALLOWS YOU TO LINK
QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE INFORMATION, THERE'S
REALLY NO REASON TO SEPARATE THIS
INFORMATION INTO TWO PAPER-BASED DOCUMENTS
THAT ARE HARDER TO NAVIGATE.**



THE BEST SOFTWARE SYSTEMS WILL ALLOW YOU TO ORGANIZE INFORMATION IN A WAY THAT MAKES SENSE TO YOU AND YOUR STAKEHOLDERS.

They should offer customized organization of your data measures and advanced formatting of your qualitative information. You should also be able to link programmatic-level performance data to community-level health data, so people can easily see which strategies are intended to impact which community health condition(s).

Take a look at Buncombe County's Community Health Improvement Process [performance scorecard](#) to see how they've used automation to present a simplified CHIP that outlines community priorities, community health data, contextual information, and improvement strategies.

[CLICK
HERE](#)

TIP: click on the “+” next to each measure and the buttons underneath each graph to see the accompanying information. You can learn more about Buncombe's CHIP process [here](#).

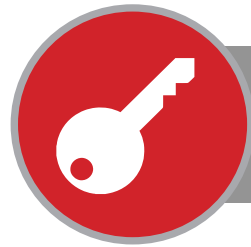


BENEFITS SUMMARY:

- ✓ EASIER TO ORGANIZE
- ✓ EASIER TO FIND THE INFORMATION THAT MATTERS MOST
- ✓ MORE LIKELY TO BE READ AND UTILIZED
- ✓ COMBINES CHA AND CHIP INTO ONE EASILY-ACCESSIBLE PLAN
- ✓ INCREASES TRANSPARENCY AND EFFICIENCY IN INFORMATION SHARING



3. ACCESSIBLE



MORE TRANSPARENT =
MORE RESOURCES + SUPPORT.

YOU PROBABLY FACE A LOT OF DEMANDS WHEN IT COMES TO COMMUNICATING YOUR EFFORTS AND IMPACT.

Your stakeholders, managers, and the public all want access to timely information. Funders want access to timely and accurate performance data to evaluate the return (in health outcomes) on their investments. Automating your CHIP and CHA makes it easier for these stakeholders to access and understand the information they need. e-CHIPS and e-CHAs are easier to navigate and are thus more effective tools for public communication.

E- CHIPS ARE MORE ACCESSIBLE, EASIER TO SHARE, AND EASIER TO UPDATE.

Plans that are easier to share are more likely to be utilized regularly to inform decision-making. Have you ever tried projecting a paper-based plan at a meeting? With an e-CHIP, you can easily project your performance and community health data at informational meetings, legislative hearings, brainstorming sessions, and other types of gatherings. The best software systems allow you to embed your e-CHIP right on your website and share links to your plans with the public.

In an environment where resources are increasingly limited, transparency and accountability for public health data can give you a competitive edge. Stakeholders and the public will appreciate the ease with which they can access information about the interventions and strategies you are engaging in to improve public health. But transparency isn't just about money – it may inherently lead to improvements in health. For example, in an article published in Health International (a McKinsey publication), the authors cite evidence that “transparency may be a key precondition (in some cases, the most important one) for service improvement and productivity.”¹

¹ Henke, N., Kelsey, T., & Whatley, H. (2011). Transparency – the most powerful driver of health care improvement? Health International, 11, pp. Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/dotcom/client_service/Healthcare%20Systems%20and%20Services/Health%20International/Issue%2011%20new%20PDFs/HI11_64%20Transparency_noprint.ashx





Vermont Department of Health offers an example of how agencies can meet internal and external demands for performance and community data using e-CHAs and e-CHIPs. They have become a national leader in the new culture of accountability and transparency that is growing among government agencies. The Healthy Vermonters 2020 initiative uses the Clear Impact Scorecard (a performance and impact improvement software) to capture and easily share community health data, performance data, and improvement strategies. Check out Vermont’s e-SHIP (State Health Improvement Plan), embedded on their public website [here](#).



BENEFITS SUMMARY:

- ✓ EASIER TO PROJECT AT MEETINGS
- ✓ EASILY SHARED WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND THE PUBLIC
- ✓ FACILITATES TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY
- ✓ PROVIDES COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FOR RESOURCES



4. ACCELERATE AND MAINTAIN PHAB ACCREDITATION

If you're a government organization, you may be considering or in the process of applying for PHAB Accreditation. Getting accredited is extremely beneficial for your organization. According to PHAB, the large majority of accredited health departments report that it:

- STIMULATES QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- HELPS HEALTH DEPARTMENTS BETTER IDENTIFY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES
- STIMULATES GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Automating your CHA and CHIP can help accelerate your path to accreditation AND simplify your maintenance of accreditation, once achieved. It simplifies the entire accreditation and re-accreditation processes by allowing you to multitask when completing prerequisites and documenting standards and measures.

HERE ARE THREE WAYS:



MEET PREREQUISITES & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS SIMULTANEOUSLY

Developing a CHA, CHIP, and Department Strategic Plan are the three prerequisites to applying for PHAB Accreditation. PHAB also requires that you implement a performance management system to monitor achievement of organizational objectives. By setting up your CHA/CHIP/Strategic Plan/Quality Improvement Plan IN your performance management system, you're eliminating several steps you'd have to do separately had you taken the traditional route.



2 MAINTAIN ACCURATE, TIMELY RECORDS AND FACILITATE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The work of health improvement isn't done when accreditation is achieved. It's a continuous process of evaluating current health conditions, developing effective policies and programs, and monitoring and improving performance and impact. This is why PHAB accredited organizations must apply for re-accreditation every 5 years and must submit annual progress reports. PHAB designed re-accreditation to ensure that health departments continue to evolve, improve, and advance, thereby becoming increasingly effective at improving the health of the population they serve. e-CHAs and e-CHIPs (as well as your e-Strategic Plan and your performance management system) facilitate this continuous improvement and evolution because they are more accurate, easier to update and share, and thus lead to more aligned and impactful strategies.

3 MEET DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS BY DOWNLOADING CUSTOM REPORTS

Organizations must submit documentation supporting the achievement of PHAB standards and measures. Accredited organizations must also submit documentation for re-accreditation. Some performance software systems, like Clear Impact Scorecard, will allow you to turn e-CHAs and e-CHIPs into custom downloadable reports that can be submitted to PHAB and other stakeholders. This will save you time throughout the accreditation and re-accreditation process.



BENEFITS SUMMARY:

- ✓ ACCELERATE AND SIMPLIFY THE ENTIRE PHAB ACCREDITATION PROCESS
- ✓ MEET THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS AND PREREQUISITES SIMULTANEOUSLY
- ✓ FACILITATE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTAIN ACCREDITATION STATUS
- ✓ EASY DOCUMENTATION



SUMMARY

NOW IS THE PERFECT TIME TO GET STARTED!

**e-CHIPs help you make a difference
in the most efficient way possible.**

**They Represent A Fundamental Shift From The Status Quo
And It May Take Some Time To Convince Coworkers And Peers
That It Is A More Effective/ Impactful Way Of Doing Things.**

Ultimately the e-CHIP/CHA offers a shift from unnecessary complexity to efficient simplicity. But simplicity doesn't mean an oversimplification of the problems or strategies designed to impact them. It's about being more disciplined and efficient in our communication so that decision-making becomes easier and our activities become streamlined.

**IT'S ABOUT HELPING YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE
IN THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY POSSIBLE.**



HERE IS A CHECKLIST OF THE MAJOR BENEFITS OF AUTOMATION OUTLINED IN THIS E-BOOK:

- ✓ Data is accurate and timely
- ✓ Reduces human error associated with graphing and analysis
- ✓ Results in better strategizing and decision-making
- ✓ Facilitates health equity work
- ✓ Links quantitative and qualitative information
- ✓ Easier to organize
- ✓ Easier to find the information that matters most
- ✓ More likely to be read and utilized
- ✓ Combines CHA and CHIP into one easily-accessible plan
- ✓ Easier to project at meetings
- ✓ Easily shared with stakeholders and the public
- ✓ Facilitates transparency and accountability
- ✓ Provides competitive advantage for resources
- ✓ Accelerate and simplify the entire PHAB Accreditation process
- ✓ Meet the performance management system requirements and prerequisites simultaneously
- ✓ Facilitate continuous improvement and maintain accreditation status
- ✓ Download and submit documentation



NEXT STEPS

GET INSPIRED

1

Many government organizations around the US recognize that E-CHIPS do it better! Check out our blog “4 Innovative e-CHIPS from around the US” to see how the e-CHIP is helping these organizations communicate effectively and make a difference in their communities.

[CLICK HERE](#)

RESEARCH OPTIONS

2

There are a lot of performance management systems out there to choose from, but not all systems are created alike.

Read our blog “Criteria for Selecting an e-CHIP Software” to learn what to look for when selecting an e-CHIP automation software.”

[CLICK HERE](#)

3

Create Your e-CHIP/CHA

Clear Impact Scorecard is one option to automate your CHA and CHIP. With a simple and intuitive layout, embedding and link sharing, and the ability to create custom PDF reports, we think it's a great choice.

It's very easy to get started. Watch a demo to see how it works.

[CLICK HERE](#)





Clear Impact provides performance management software, training and services to help government agencies, non-profits, communities, and foundations track the performance of their programs, measure the impact of their funding, and report on the progress of their missions to improve the lives of children, families and communities worldwide.

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