

Are Your ESMs Strong?

Use these Tips & Tests to Find Out



1. **Tips for Writing Effective ESMs.** When writing your Evidence-based/informed Strategy Measures (ESMs), use these tips from the MCH Block Grant guidance and advice from the field.

Strategies that are *meaningful*. Consider if the measure:

- Is evidence-based/informed. Evidence can be based on peer-reviewed research or informed by emerging practices and expert opinion that there would be a positive, measurable, and expected result.
- Has a direct relationship to the NPM.
- Is feasible relative to state priorities and funding.
- Reflects the needs of your populations.
- Has involved stakeholder input and/or buy-in.
- Has potential for improvement over time.
- Addresses disparities, gaps, or issues to improve health equity.

Activities that are *measurable*. Consider if the measure:

- Is quantifiable (count, percentages, rate) and specific (defined indicator, numerator, denominator). Quantitative measures are recommended over “yes/no” measures to show improvement over time.
- Is well-defined, specific, and captures relevant data needed to demonstrate change.
- Is limited to the portion of the activity that Title V directs, funds, or implements.
- Has data sources that are available to measure and track the ESM over time.
- Can show incremental change over time.

Improvements that are *achievable*. Consider if the measure:

- Can show improvement over multiple assessments.
- Is sensitive to change over time.
- Is effective with multiple population groups, including vulnerable families and CYSHCN.



2. **Are your ESMs strong?** Once you have developed Evidence-based/informed Strategy Measures (ESMs), here are two approaches to test that they have potential to affect change.

SiLVeR Test. When looking at your ESMs or other strategies ask yourself if they are “SiLVeR?”

1. **Specificity.** Is the strategy specific enough to be implemented? Can it actually be done?
2. **Leverage.** How much difference will the strategy make — will it Turn the Curve?
3. **Values.** Will the strategy be adopted by the community they are targeting?
4. **Reach.** Is it feasible and affordable? Can it actually be done and when?

Process

1. Rate High - Medium - Low (best pattern HHHH)
2. Consider the strategies that rate highest in the first three and space them out over a multi-year period.
3. Strategies that rate highest on the first three criteria can be tried this year and next year.

Public Square Test. Do your ESMs have the “power” to be understood, representative, and data-driven?

1. **Communication Power.** Does the strategy communicate to a broad and diverse audience? (“public square test” — what 2 or 3 ideas would you shout out in the public square for people to understand?).
2. **Proxy Power.** Does the strategy say something of central importance about the result desired? Can this strategy stand as a proxy or representative for a number of strategies needed to affect change?
3. **Data Power.** Do we have quality, timely data? Is the data reliable and consistent?

Process

1. Rate High - Medium - Low (best pattern HHH)
2. Simple method: circle indicators with High Data. Then choose 1-3 indicators to shout in the public square. Others can be worked on once you figure out data source.

