



This summary examines general trends across Evidence-based and informed Strategy Measures (ESMs) detail sheets and action plans from all 59 states and jurisdictions for the 2021 Application/2019 Annual Report of the Title V MCH Services Block Grant.

**Linking ESMs to the Evidence Base.** To ensure that strategies are *meaningful* and have the greatest potential to affect desired change, it's important that they are unbiased, significant to public health, and rooted in science, experience, and policy. They should show results that are statistically significant and lead to decisions that bring about change. Reviewing the 2021/2019 data, 40% of ESMs clearly relate to established evidence with the following breakdown:

- 128 ESMs align with **moderate evidence**.
- 8 ESMs follow **expert opinion** in the field.
- 139 ESMs are based on **emerging evidence**.
- 25 ESMs use **mixed evidence** as a basis.

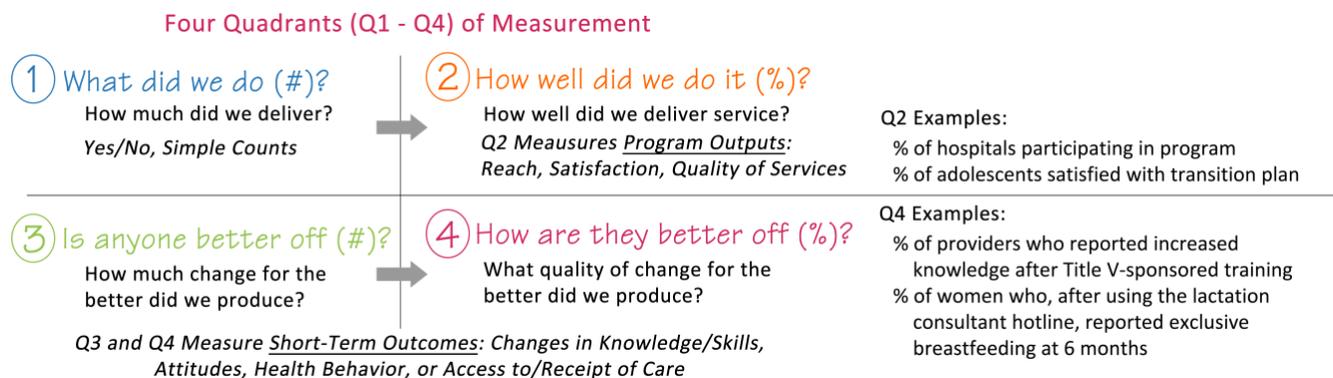
We use the [evidence continuum methodology](#) to assign levels of evidence to assist in choosing the most effective strategies to meet your needs: **evidence-based strategies** (moderate and scientifically rigorous evidence) have the most research behind them to show effectiveness. **Evidence-informed strategies** (mixed and emerging evidence and expert opinion) also have good potential to work, even if they haven't been researched as thoroughly.



Of the remaining ESMs where there is not a direct link to established evidence:

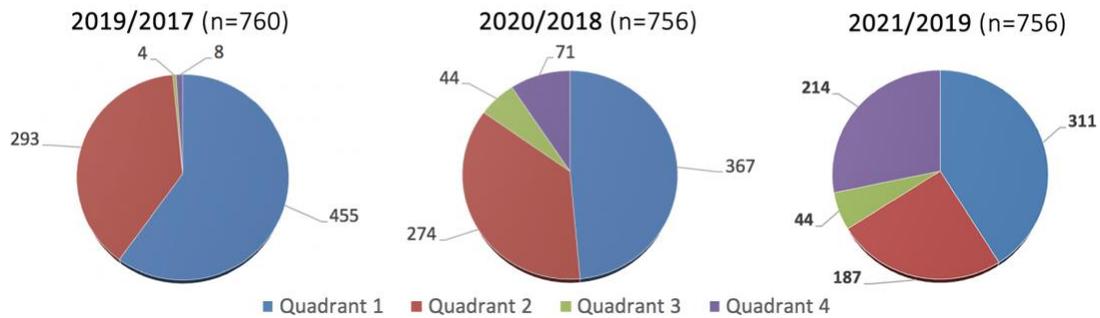
- 33 do not align with activities to advance the National Performance Measure (NPM) directly.
- 236 measure strategies do not align with the established evidence. However, our understanding and documentation of "what works" is growing, so many of these strategies may align with the science as it expands.

**Measuring ESM Impact.** To ensure that strategies are *measurable* in addressing issues early and *moveable* in advancing National Performance Measures (NPMs), a system of translating the evidence into practice is needed. The **Results-Based Accountability (RBA)** framework is one way to strengthen ESMs through a quality improvement process. Title V agencies have made significant progress in strengthening ESMs from measuring "what did we do?" (Quadrant 1) to measuring program outputs that address "how well did we do it?" (Quadrant 2) and eventually to short-term outcomes that answer "how are people better off?" (Quadrants 3 and 4).



**Summarizing National ESM Progress.** Over the past three years (2018–2020), there has been a noteworthy shift from tracking the level to which activities were completed to a more meaningful assessment of how strategies are impacting MCH populations. This progress can be summarized visually below. Most notable is the increase in ESMs that report changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, health behavior, or access to/receipt of care (Quadrant 4 measurements).

## Distribution of ESMs by RBA Quadrant



**Digging Deeper.** According to RBA, the most effective strategies have “proxy power,” that is, they should serve as an indirect measure of and be strongly correlated to the desired outcome. The most effective ESMs measure activities that show progress in advancing NPMs – is your strategy effective and does it have potential to bring about measurable change? Some additional observations for the 2021/2019 ESMs can be made. These observations could be useful in strengthening your ESMs over this five-year cycle.

General Findings and Common Areas for Growth	
Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreased from 62% in 2019/2017 to 44% in 2021/2019.</li> <li>Yes/No measures decreased from 22% to 1%, but 86% of Q1 ESMs are still simple counts.</li> <li>Simple counts can often become measures of reach by strategically determining a denominator.</li> <li>Use Q1 ESMs sparingly – move beyond counting activities.</li> </ul>
Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decreased from 39% in 2019/2017 to 25% in 2021/2019.</li> <li>Q2 ESMs are powerful in showing program outputs; reduce Q1 ESMs and <i>increase Q2 ESMs</i>.</li> <li>Q2 ESMs titles should be descriptive and indicate that they are measuring a percent, not a number.</li> <li><b>In addition</b> to Q2 ESMs, consider adding ESMs (i.e., Q4) that measure how Title V affects those you serve.</li> </ul>
Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased from 0.5% in 2018 to 6% in 2020.</li> <li>Q3 ESMs are easy to convert to Q4 by identifying the proper denominator.</li> </ul>
Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased from 1% in 2019/2017 to 28% in 2021/2019.</li> <li>ESMs that track intermediate outcomes are good (e.g., % of adolescents who received a transition plan), but may be too downstream to track the direct impact of your strategy. Consider adding a more short-term measure to track outcomes like increased knowledge, skills, or attitudes (e.g., % of providers who indicate that they will develop transition plans after taking part in a Title-V funded training) to understand if your strategy is having an immediate effect as intended.</li> </ul>

**Planning Next Steps.** The MCH Evidence Center is here to support you. You can access the following resources to help you identify evidence-based/informed strategies, align your strategies to advance your NPMs, and create meaningful measurements for your strategies. You can also [contact us for technical assistance](#).

- [MCHbest Database](#). Access over 100 evidence-based/informed strategies and approaches to model your ESMs on.
- [NPM Toolkits](#). Access these 15 toolkits for detailed explanations of the evidence, sample ESMs and promising practices, learning opportunities, and additional resources.
- [ESM Development Guide](#). Review all the resources the MCH Evidence Center has to offer, including a summary of the science for each NPM, sample strategies, a planning process for aligning ESMs to NPMs, and additional resources.
- [Developing Stronger ESMs](#). Follow the full RBA process to assist in developing new or reviewing current ESMs.
- [The Role of Title V in Adapting and Implementing Strategies](#). Read about common strategies that Title V supports.
- [Turn-the-Curve Strategy Tool](#). Use this tool to develop new strategies that align with your population needs and advance each NPM.
- [ESM Quadrant Measurement Tool](#). Use this tool to develop strong ESMs to measure your strategies.
- [ESM Checkup Tool](#). Use this tool to review your current ESMs to make sure they are as strong as possible.