



# IU CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY RESEARCHERS DEVELOP METHOD FOR IMPROVING IT SYSTEMS FOR POPULATION HEALTH

Drs. Joshua Vest, Chris Harle, and Nir Menachemi of the Indiana University Center for Health Policy report that as population health becomes an increasingly important objective for numerous policies and programs, health organizations must move from focusing solely on providing individual medical care to also improving the overall health of populations.

Health information technology systems today are not ready to effectively and efficiently support the emerging demands of population health, as they were created for organizations structurally, operationally, and culturally focused on individual care delivery.

## SHIFTING HEALTH DATA COLLECTION AND SHARING

In the scholarly commentary on the health IT needs for population health, Indiana University Center for Health Policy researchers provide a framework for improving health IT systems for population health.

To optimally leverage IT resources for population health:

- **Healthcare organizations should expand data collection efforts** beyond “sick care” information to information on actual health behaviors and social determinants of health.
- **Health information exchange should include new and nontraditional partners** such as social service organizations and public health agencies to better support the expansion of data collection.

## OVERVIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK

### 1. Obtain More Data

Healthcare organizations should expand their data collection efforts to include information related to a patient’s socioeconomic status, housing stability, nutrition habits, language or location.

### 2. Share the Data

To help patients connect with care providers that offer a broader set of services, healthcare organizations can identify social service partner organizations and help them gain access to HIE networks or secure messaging accounts.

### 3. Translate the Data

Instead of analyzing data solely related to death, care costs, or care utilization outcomes, having and sharing more inclusive information provides insight into other health factors such as physical function or quality of life (which are important in population health).

### NONTRADITIONAL DATA RESOURCES CAN PROVIDE INFORMATION ON A PATIENT’S:

- Socioeconomic Status
- Housing Stability or Public Safety
- Nutritional Habits
- Social and Behavioral Factors
- Neighborhood/Geographic Context

**These factors are important for understanding and addressing population health.**

*As organizations become accountable for population health, their leaders must rethink how health data is collected and shared.*

**To read the full study, visit [go.iu.edu/1PGL](http://go.iu.edu/1PGL).**

Vest JR, Harle CA, Schleyer T, Dixon BE, Grannis SJ, Halverson PK, and Menachemi N. “Getting from here to there: Health IT needs for population health.” The American Journal of Managed Care, vol. 22, no. 12, 2016, pp.827-829.

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