

Simple Strategies for Data Validation

Why it is Important

Working across teams, hospitals can review the quality of existing patient data and evaluate accuracy and completeness. Validating data is a process for assessing and improving data quality. The benefits of having accurate information are that it provides guidance on strategies to improve patient care and outcomes.

Because data is often self-reported on a voluntary basis, having missing and incomplete data is a common problem that can impact the accuracy of data collection. This can make it challenging to connect to vital statistics, immunization registries, or other state programs.

Validating data is a collaborative effort; include IT to be sure the data can be retrieved in a meaningful way to examine data quality.

Action Items:

Refer to this [Equity of Care's](#) frameworks (page 8) for the list of steps to validate data.

Use Sinai Health System's [Focus Group Questions](#) (Appendix A) to get feedback on data collection process. Review page 6 for more information on how to capture participation rates.

Review Greater Cincinnati's Health Council's [Best Practices](#) for validating data.

Basic and Intermediate Levels

Key Steps to Validate Data:

Accuracy – Are the data self-identified and correctly recorded? Are there differences in categorization among data sources? Patient self-reported methodology is best for REAL data collection.

Completeness – Are race, ethnicity and language data captured across all service areas? What is the percentage of unknown, other or declined data? Establish a process where data is reviewed and documented for completeness.

Uniqueness – Are individual patients represented only once? Are there multiple points where the data might be collected or recorded? How are the data consolidated? Making sure that a complete and thorough process is in place will prevent duplication of collected data or inefficiencies in the collection.

Timeliness – Are the data kept up to date? How often are the data updated? Perform monthly response rates audits to develop

benchmarks for improvements and monitor progress.

Consistency – Are the data internally consistent, and do the data reflect the patient population served? Set a target rate for participation. Start at 85% participation rate to create a benchmark for evaluating improvements. Consider a team-based competition to incentivize consistent data collection. Showcase individual staff progress to expose overall improvements in data collection.

Compare – Participate in audit processes comparing data collected through internal query vs. community data (ie state or local data). Report outcomes to executives quarterly.

Feedback – Get feedback from the hospital staff where they can share their experiences and ongoing challenges. This can help develop solutions and enhance data collection training. Use Patient and Family Advisors to provide insights on collecting REAL data.

Advanced

Build from the basic/intermediate level and incorporate sexual orientation/gender identity (SOGI).

Action Item:

Click on training presentation on page 26 of [Guide to Demographic Data Collection](#), section 6.1. It demonstrates how to collect SOGI data for validation.