



Creating Change in Policy and Practice at the Community, State, and National Level through Comprehensive System Building

Christopher Botsko
Deputy Director of Policy, Planning, and Evaluation
Community Health Systems
Altarum Institute
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Presenter Disclosures

The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose

Overview of Presentation

- ▲ What are comprehensive system initiatives?
- ▲ How do these initiatives produce change (with a focus on system elements)?
- ▲ Challenges
- ▲ Conclusions

Data for this presentation

- ▲ Early childhood system building initiatives at the National, State, and Community Levels
 - Early Childhood Comprehensive System Initiative technical assistance and evaluation
 - Work with the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation’s Smart Beginnings initiative (community-level system building) including assessment of similar initiatives
- ▲ Other system-building initiatives (veterans and their families, comprehensive women’s health initiative, obesity prevention coalitions)

What is a comprehensive system approach?

An approach that covers all the key service sectors and/or institutions that address the needs of a defined population or social issue

Examples of Comprehensive System Initiatives

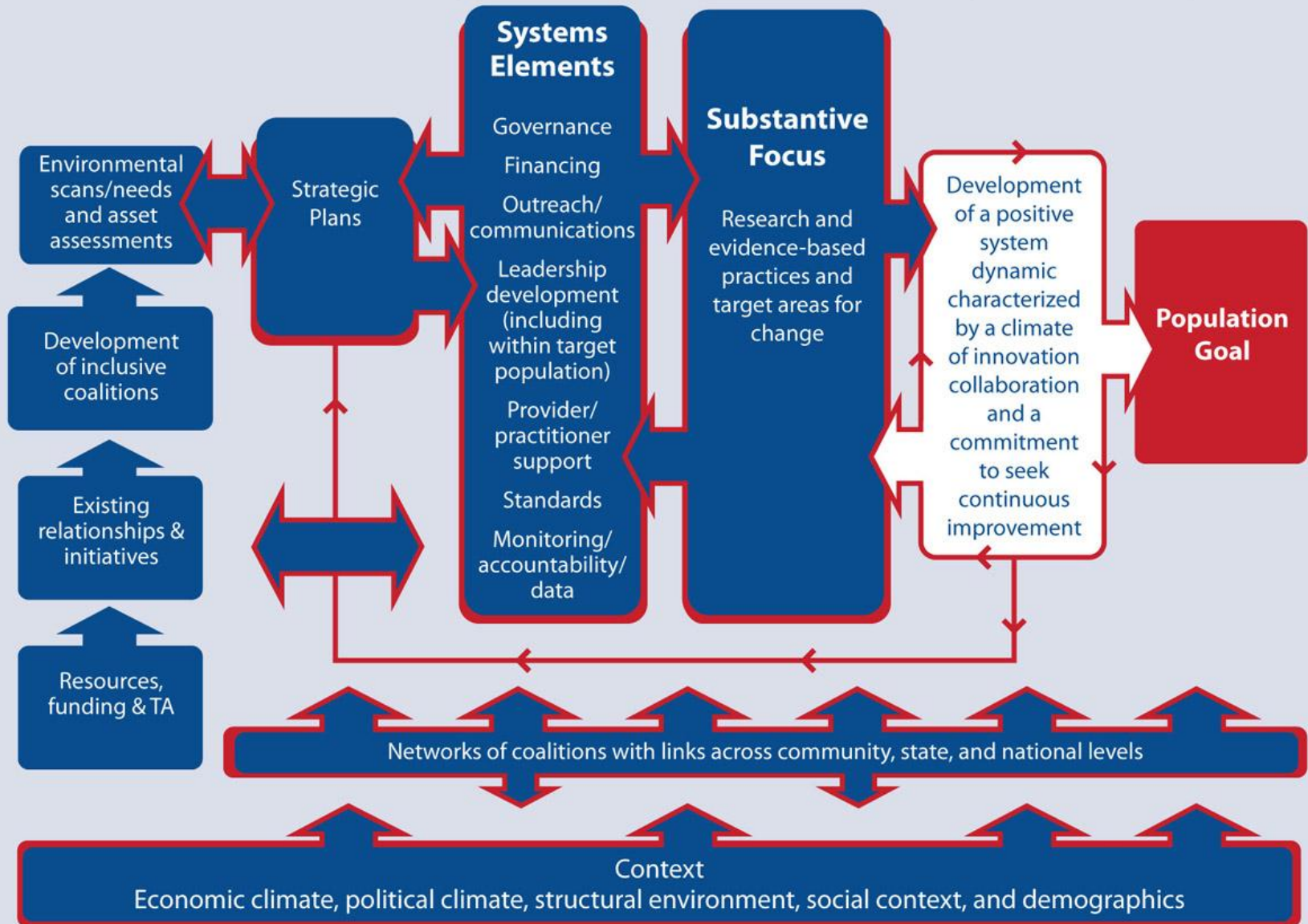
- ▲ Early childhood initiatives addressing the needs of young children ages 0-5 or 0-8
- ▲ Obesity prevention and intervention initiatives
- ▲ Initiatives addressing the needs of returning veterans and their family members
- ▲ Systems of care addressing prevention and intervention related to mental health, substance use problems, or other conditions

Why employ a comprehensive systems approach?

- ▲ Challenges related to particular sectors or problems are often related to systems components (elements that cut across sectors and services)
- ▲ Fragmentation appears to reduce access and effectiveness (of communication and interventions)
- ▲ Opportunities exist to improve infrastructure and quality of services through collaboration
- ▲ Duplication of efforts is ineffective

**How do these initiatives
produce change?**

Comprehensive Systems Initiative Theory of Change



System Elements

Governance

Includes both governance of collaborative efforts and overall system



Strategies:

- ▲ Innovative use of public-private entities to foster change
- ▲ Interagency Councils
- ▲ Governmental reorganizations (not much known about the usefulness of this strategy)

Financing

Strategies (from common and relatively easy to less common and more challenging):

- ▲ Pursuing collaborative funding opportunities (system building or substantive)
- ▲ Mapping or scanning the financing of the system
- ▲ Redirecting, blending, braiding



Outreach and Communications



Covers a wide range of activities

- ▲ Outreach to target populations
- ▲ Engagement of influential leaders including the business community and political leaders
- ▲ The development of a common message and the effective dissemination of research and evidence

Leadership Development

Strategies:

- ▲ The development of leadership within the coalition or network through peer learning and through coaching and TA
- ▲ The development of leadership among the target population



Standards

Strategies:

- ▲ The development and implementation of evidence and research-based standards for programs and program staff
- ▲ The creation of standards and associated processes for getting people to the most appropriate services



Provider/Practitioner Support

Strategies:

- ▲ Supporting providers and practitioners as they develop the knowledge and skills to effectively implement standards
- ▲ The creation and implementation of a systematic approach to professional development



Monitoring/Accountability/Data

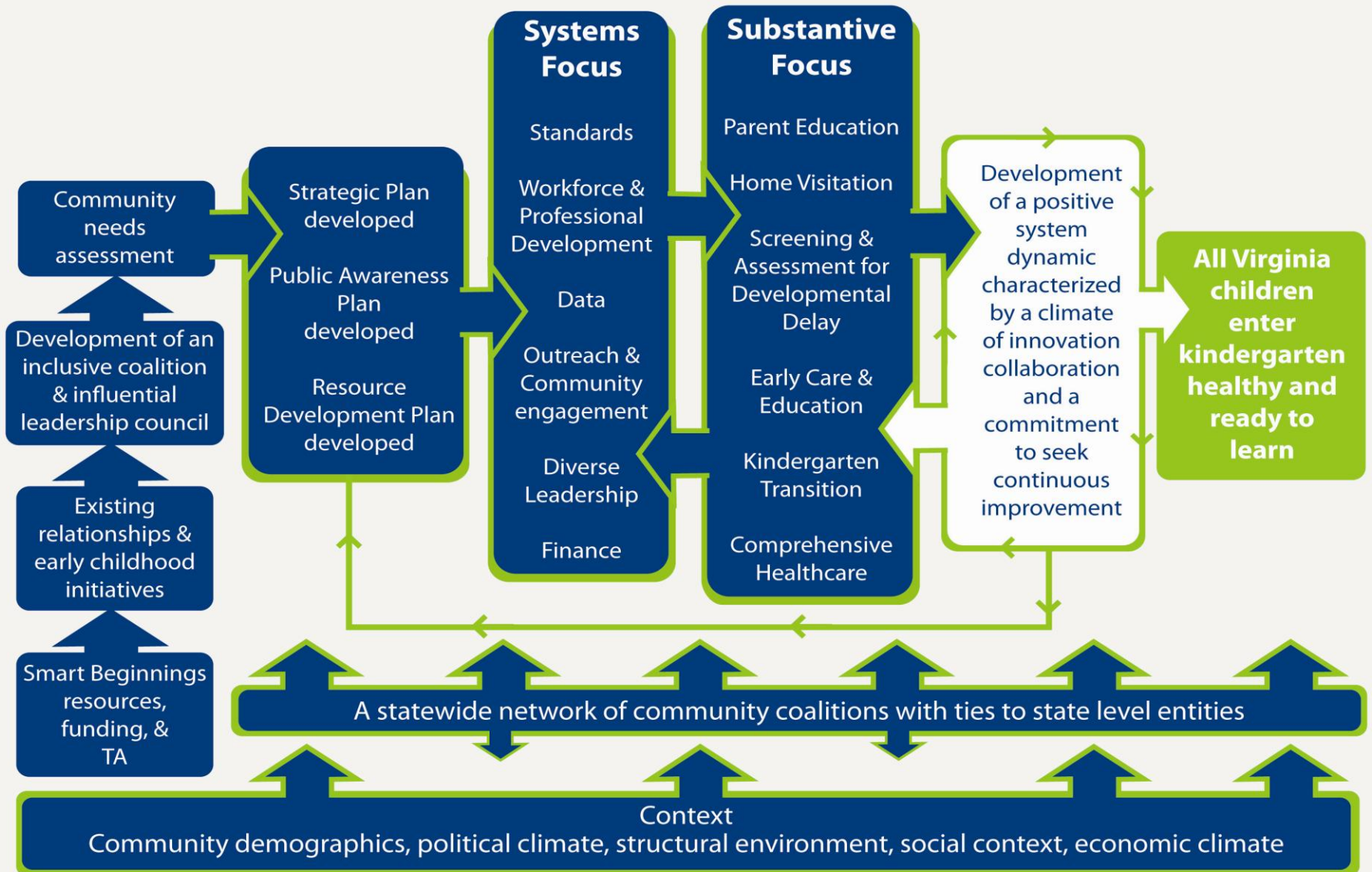
The development and use of data to monitor effectiveness of strategies and the system:

- ▲ Population indicator approaches
- ▲ Formal evaluation of strategies or initiative
- ▲ Monitoring of and compiling of results from system building initiatives



**System change largely occurs
when systems elements are
addressed within substantive
focus areas**

Smart Beginnings Theory of Change



Challenges

Sustainability and Continuity

- ▲ The need for long-term funding focused on system building and infrastructure
- ▲ How long?
- ▲ Piecing together multiple opportunities

“We need this money and resources for services or other priorities”

- ▲ Compounded in difficult economic times
- ▲ Progress on strategies versus progress on systems change

“We want to see results.” What counts as results

- ▲ Population outcomes versus infrastructure outcomes
- ▲ Building (and building and building) a case for investments in infrastructure and system building initiatives

Conclusions

- ▲ Comprehensive system building is a promising strategy that is embraced by providers and practitioners and target populations
- ▲ Our understanding of what it is and how it works is very much in the formative stages
- ▲ More attention needs to be paid to the structure of and support provided for the assessments phase of comprehensive system initiatives. Public health professionals are often a valued resource for this.