

Theory of Change

*Upstream Action Acceleration
Collaborative Learning Meeting*

EQUAL
MEASURE

FINDING
PROMISE
FUELING
CHANGE



To know whether you are making progress, you must have a sense of what you are trying to accomplish...

Or, in Yogi Berra's words,

"If you don't know where you're going, you'll end up somewhere else."



So, lets get clear about what we are trying to accomplish...

What is a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change helps you an overarching goal for your collaborative, articulate the changes that you hope to achieve (desired outcomes) and link those to the actions and strategies that you will or have already undertaken to reach those outcomes.

It is also a process of articulating and challenging the assumptions that you are making about the ways that you are going to impact change in your communities.

It also helps stakeholders articulate the contextual factors supporting and possibly impeding the work.



The elements of a Theory of Change: The way it works

Articulating your coalition's theory of change

Stored in each of us are beliefs or theories that guide our analysis of assets and challenges and the way that we should go about leveraging these to achieve the goals we hope to see.

- ❖ Define key assets and problems/issues challenging our communities and constituencies towards improving community health
- ❖ Describe the goal of our work and the changes we hope to see (desired outcomes) in our communities through our coalition's efforts
- ❖ Describe how (strategies, actions, interventions) we hope to accomplish those outcomes



The elements of a Theory of Change

- ❖ Contextual Analysis
- ❖ Goal(s)
- ❖ Activities/Actions
- ❖ Short Term Outcomes
- ❖ Long Term Outcomes



Assumptions



The elements of a Theory of Change: The way it works

Examining assumptions about what works

While assumptions are often based on experiences from the field, sometimes they are built on intuition. Challenging these assumptions allows organizations to look more closely at their theory and reflect on the choices that they are making.

- ❖ As you work on your Theory of Change, think about the assumptions that you are making concerning why a particular intervention might work.
- ❖ Surface and discuss differences in assumptions among people in your organization.
- ❖ Challenge those assumptions – what experiences or information are they based on?



The elements of a Theory of Change: The way it works

Linking strategies, actions and desired outcomes

In order for a theory of change to be useful, a logical path must be created that connects to reasonable and measurable outcomes. The word “logical” suggests that the strategies, actions and outcomes must link together in a way that makes sense, although we also recognize that this work is not linear. The outcomes offer practitioners a target and a gauge of their accomplishments and movement toward their goals.

- ❖ Closely examine the links between our strategies, actions and outcomes and ensure that they are logical, achievable and direct.
- ❖ Identify and address gaps in our strategies – paths that might not get us where we want to go.



Setting Outcomes *Let's "break it down"*



The elements of a Theory of Change: Outcomes Defined

Outcomes are...the observable changes in individuals, institutions, conditions, services, policies, processes and products that come as a result of a program or activity.

Think out loud: What are the observable changes you expect to see as a result of this work?



The elements of a Theory of Change: Outcomes

What makes an outcome logical and reasonable?

- ✓ There is a logical connection between our activities and the outcome.
- ✓ Based on our experiences, the context of the community that we are working in, and the resources that we have, it is reasonable to believe that the outcome can be accomplished within the timeframe that we have established.
- ✓ The information collected to track this outcome will help us to know more about how our partnership might improve this work

Think to yourself: Are the changes you expect to see logical and reasonable?

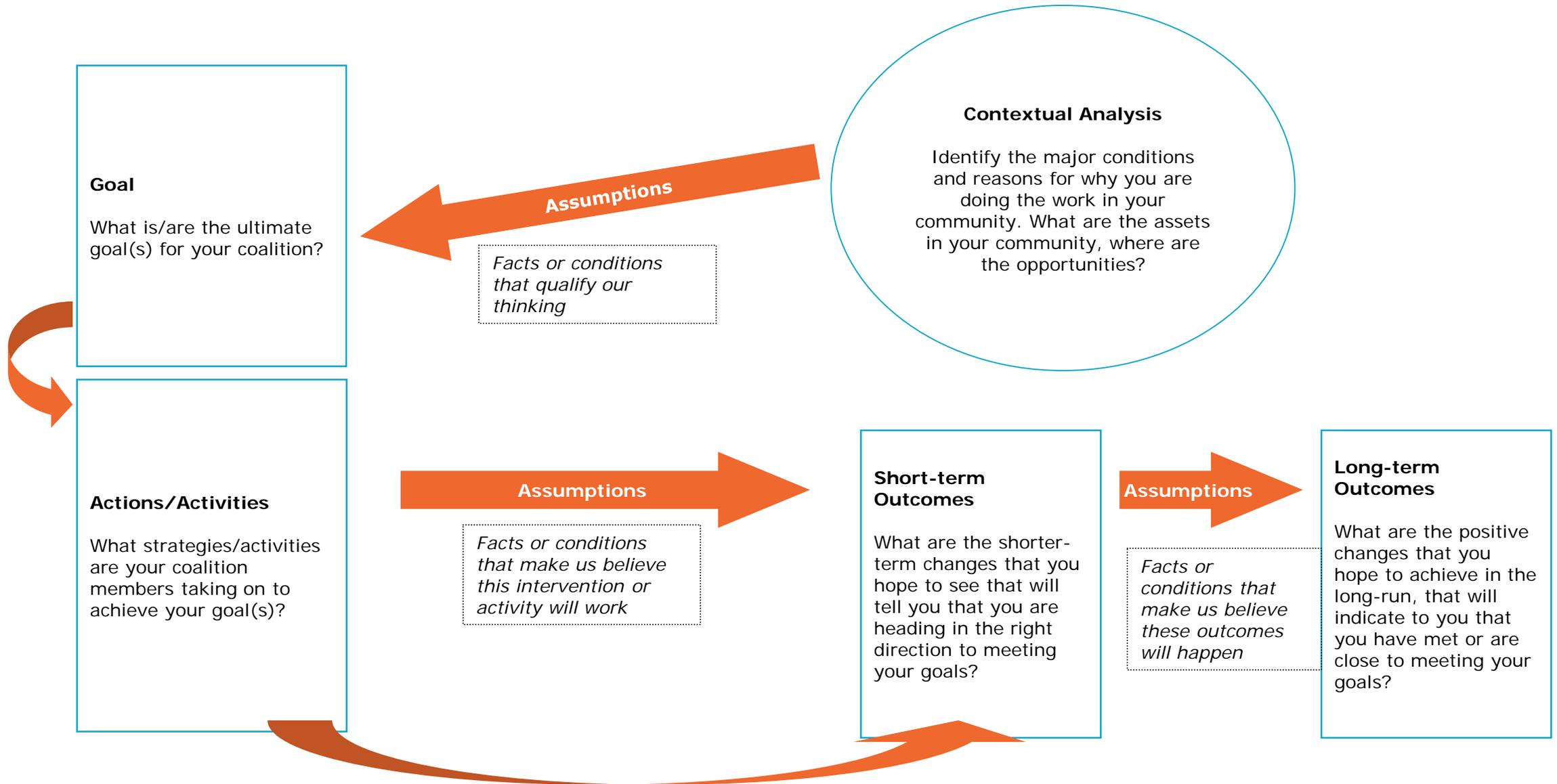
Setting Outcomes

From: Annie E. Casey Theory of Change (2004)

Outcome Levels	Sample Outcomes
Knowledge	Increased understanding of upstream approaches to social determinants of health. Increased knowledge/understanding of upstream policy change priorities.
Partnerships/Coalitions	Partners align and collaborate under shared vision and goals, without deflecting or co-opting by narrow or tangential or personal agendas. Processes, data, norms of working, and structures are used consistently to strengthen partnership.
Awareness	Shifts in how an issue is viewed/framed – for example through lenses of upstream health, equity, systemic, and multi-sector - by core partners and key community orgs and leaders. Health systems shifts to focus on upstream factors impacting community health (prevention over treatment).
Policies and Practices	Policies changed to better support healthcare and public health by addressing root causes, social determinants of health, and upstream issues Increased organizational capacity to identify and implement practices/organizational policies that can improve upstream factors impacting community health.
Community	Increased knowledge or changed beliefs about the social determinants of health and best practices for among community leaders. Shift in community norms as the community continues to demand resources and support for healthier living. Improvements in population level health outcomes.

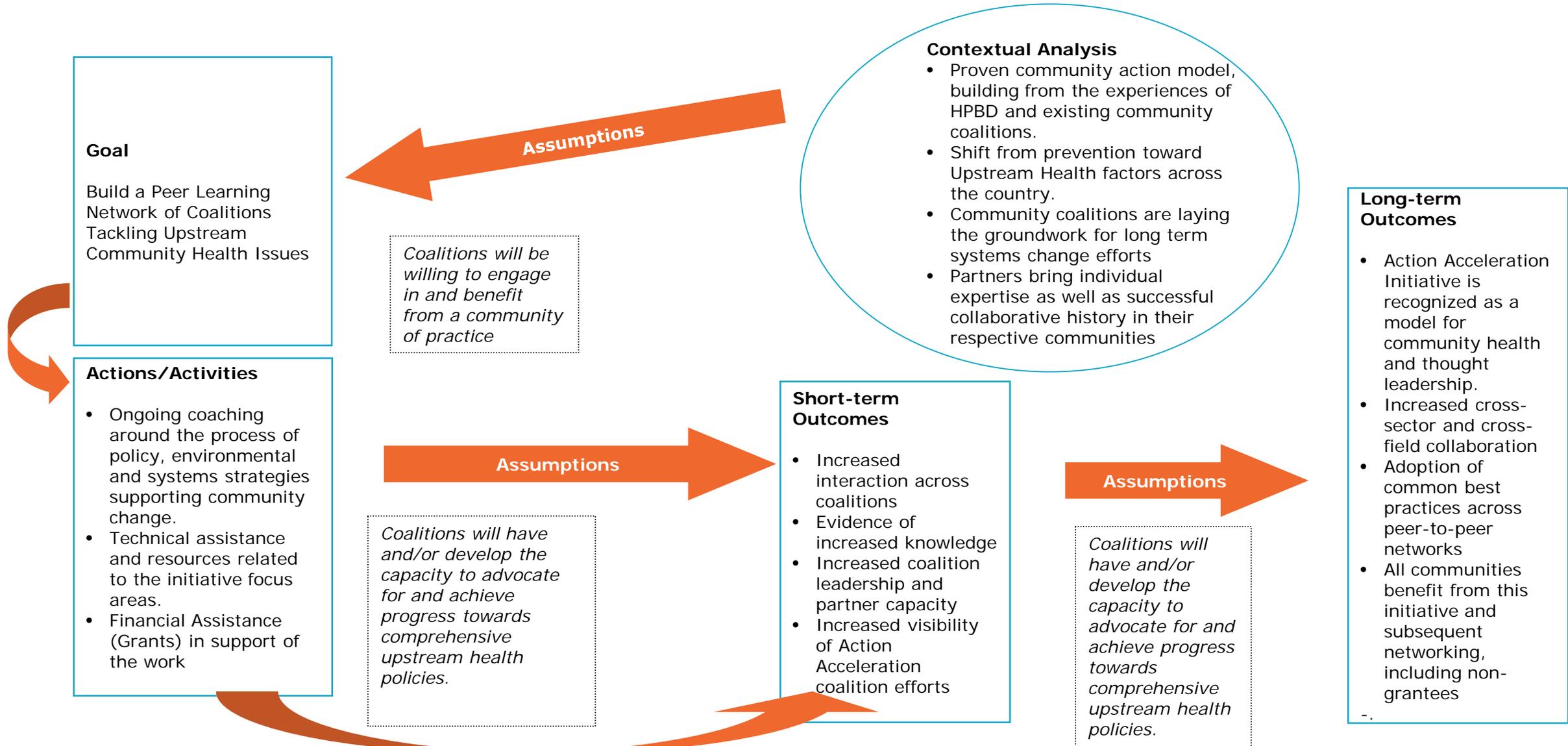


The elements of a Theory of Change





An Example Theory of Change: UAA



NJHI Upstream Action Acceleration Initiative Theory of Change

Strategy 1. Support and Elevate Effective Community Partnerships Working to Advance an Upstream Health Agenda

Support 16 existing cross-sector coalitions to adopt and implement “upstream” environmental-, policy- and systems-change strategies, and accelerate their work in areas they have already identified as priorities to improve community health

Activities

Partnership level activities:

- Build the partnership and community infrastructure needed for policy change
- Refine or strengthen current partner relationships and develop new sector engagement
- Community outreach, programming, and training designed to address needs, increase involvement, and influence systems, practice, built environment, and policy change
- Community mobilization, including leadership development
- Review policy/practice changes with target populations and develop community-driven recommendations
- Create measurable indicators to track progress on the essential elements of systems change
- Access, analyze, and use data to improve community outcomes
- Establish community-level models for service provision

Intermediate Outcomes (Years 1-3)

Overall looking for precursors to systems change:

Enhanced knowledge, beliefs, and momentum in individuals, organizations and communities

- Deepening of organizational knowledge of mission, topical, and service areas
- Change in individual knowledge, attitudes, openness and practices to engage in upstream system change through cross-sector collaboration with core partners, key community orgs, and leaders.
- Increased level of individual and organizational capacity to identify, recognize and implement policy/systems change needed to improve upstream health issues.
- Change how an issue is viewed/framed - through lenses of upstream health, equity, systemic, and multi-sector - by core partners and key community orgs and leaders.

Coalitions strengthened and institutionalized

- Partners align and collaborate under shared vision and goals, without deflecting or co-opting by narrow or tangential or personal agendas.
- Increased level of commitment/buy-in to partnership and its structures among partners including community stakeholder access and engagement
- Improved quality of relationships among partners (deeper levels of trust, interpersonal relationships).
- Increased frequency and quality of communication among partners.
- Successful projects’ credibility & capacity build changes services, supports, built environment, etc
- New investments and new sector engagement.

Enhanced relationships and strategies toward practice, policies, and systems change

- Increased number of champions supporting the work, including community advocates.
- Joined or coordinated with parallel initiatives that support and enhance the partnership’s upstream community health goals.
- Organizations and infrastructure identified as grounds for new aligned policies, practices, training, and collaboration to support upstream health.
- Increased connection to policy makers
- Increased, braided, or leveraged resources for sustainability for program, practice, policy and built environment changes.

Data and evidence valued and sought among partners

- Processes, data, norms of working, and structures are used consistently to strengthen partnership.
- Increased capacity to access and use data to decide on goals and strategies.
- Increased capacity to make a business case.
- Partners buy in to and contribute to planning around enhanced data systems, integration and sharing among partners and key entities.

Community leadership activated and strengthened

- Increased knowledge or changed beliefs about the social determinants of health and best practices for their communities among community leaders.
- Focus of core partners is aligned with expressed needs and priorities of community.
- New connections made among community leaders working across social determinants of health, and with parallel local and regional organizations.
- New resources for meeting, training, engaging with community and community leaders identified.
- Partner organizations increase their knowledge of the community change process
- Partners understand the community context in which they work, and can align strategies and tactics with communities’ strengths and resources.

Long-term Outcomes (Years 5+)

Overall looking for systems level changes and population level outcomes:

Organizational Shifts in Practice and Policy

- Core partner Institutions and non-partner organizations effectively move focus from downstream health care and prevention to upstream health issues of the community.
- New and nontraditional partners from workforce, business, education, community development and other sectors reinforce their impact on upstream social determinants of health.

Supportive Regulatory/ Legislative Policies and Funding Streams

- Policies and funding streams support healthcare and public health by addressing root causes, social determinants of health, and upstream issues.

Sustainability and Scalability Realized

- Long term funding secured and Upstream, multi-sector collaboration scaled to broaden impact on more communities, residents, and organizations citywide or regionally.

Improvements in Health

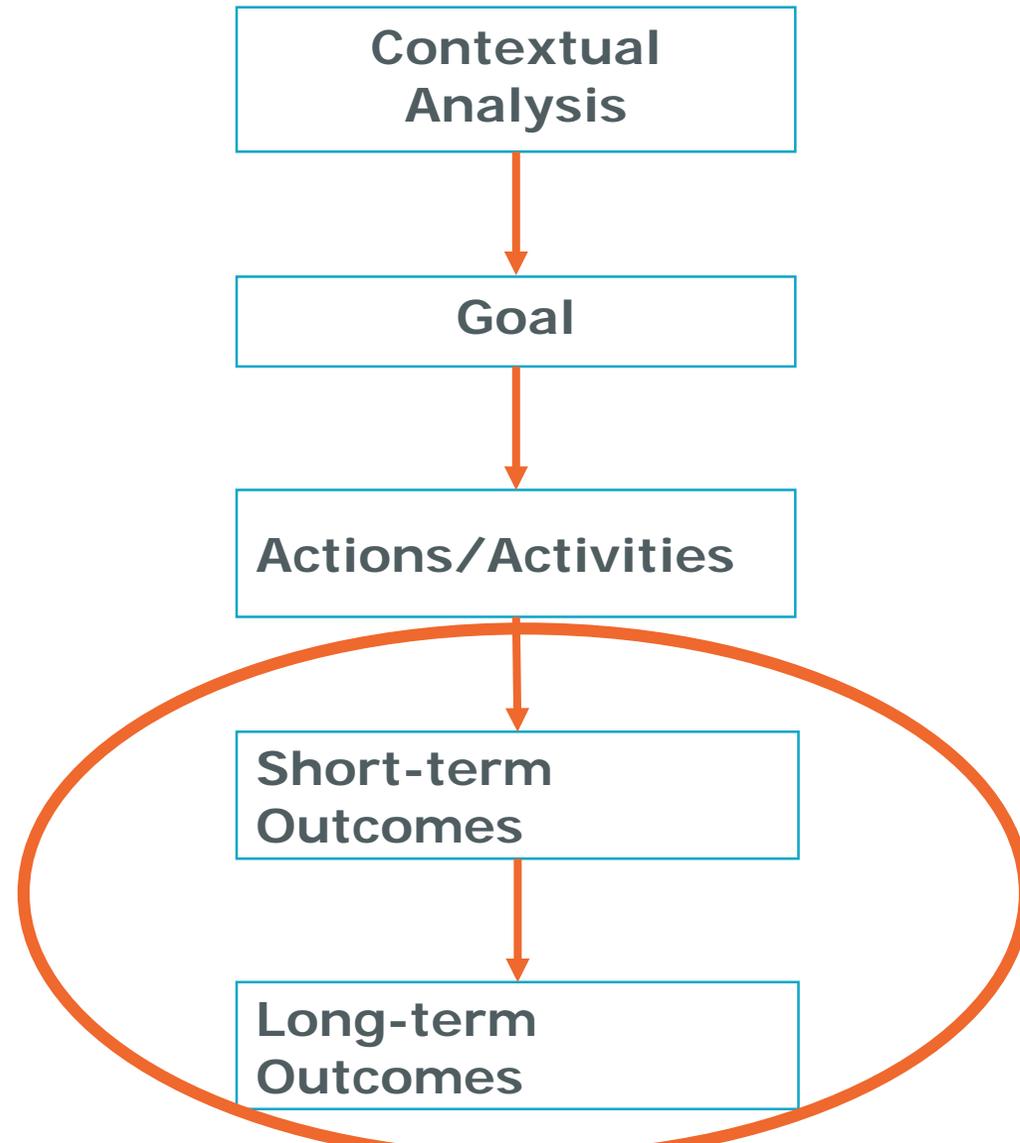
- Including reductions in: preventable disease and conditions, high utilization of health care system, chronic disease rates, asthma rates, poisoning, injuries, childhood obesity, isolation – and other social determinants of health.

Improvements in Health Equity

- across race, ethnicity, income levels, gender, age, immigration status, education level, and sexual identity.



Now it's your turn...





Break Out Instructions

- ❖ Transition to assigned break out room
- ❖ Complete short term and long term outcomes worksheets
- ❖ Share out in small groups
- ❖ Return to ballroom and hang your worksheets up by your collages for everyone to see (we will take pictures of them!)
- ❖ Collect your worksheets at the end of the day and take these back to your community to share your experience!



Break Out Room Assignments

<u>Breakout Session Assignments</u>		
Stonington (Meg)	Devon (Eve)	Oxford (Tia)
Allies in Caring	Ironbound Community Corporation	AtlantiCare
Holly City Development Corporation	United Way of Passiac County	Cape Regional Medical Center
New Jersey Conservation Foundation	Trenton Health Team	The Gateway Family YMCA
Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital	NCADD of Hudson County/Partners in Prevention	Raritan Bay Area YMCA



Questions?