

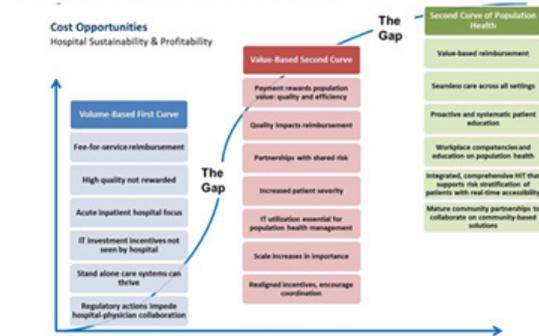
# Creating Healthier Communities: The Planners' Role(s) in Community Health Needs Assessments

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According to the American Hospital Association in their report entitled *Hospitals and Care Systems of the Future*, "hospitals and health systems in the United States face unparalleled pressures to change in the future. Industry experts have projected that multiple, intersecting environmental forces will drive the transformation of health care delivery and financing from volume-based to value based payments over the next decade. These influences include everything from the aging population to the unsustainable rise in health care spending as a percentage of national gross domestic product."

Economic futurist Ian Morrison believes that as the payment incentives shift, health care providers will go through a classic modification in their core models for business and service delivery. He refers to the volume-based environment hospitals currently face as the **first curve** and the future value-based market dynamic as the **second curve**. Progressing from **first curve** to the **second curve** is a vital transition for hospitals. This is analogous to having one foot on the dock and one foot on the boat - at the right point, the management of that shift is essential to future success." Recently, a new **second curve** has been added. Hospitals and health systems are exploring innovative ways to shift to this **second curve** through interventions focused on disease management and improving the health of a designated population, often including the social determinants of health.

## First-Curve to Second Curve Markets



Planners can play a vital leadership role in facilitating this transition in three important ways:

1. **Understand the vision of the Affordable Care Act and what it means in terms of engineering the "new" health care delivery system.** Many planners are not involved in their local Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) processes. This is often because local hospitals are not inviting them to the table. While focusing on IRS compliance, hospitals sometimes miss the "spirit of the law," to move hospitals and health systems toward population health management programs. Forcing the hospitals to measure the outcomes and impact of their intervention strategies will ultimately lead to the needs to address the social determinants of health. The CHNA and its implementation strategies should not be separate activities that hospitals do because they have to, but they should be strategic activities that are used to drive community based strategic planning and cross-sector collaboration aimed toward collective impact.

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2. **Engage in the CHNA process in your local area as a resource and information provider.** If you are not invited, don't let that stop you. While some hospitals do not invite community representatives, most have some outside representation by inviting people they know. If that doesn't include you, be proactive and volunteer to participate on the hospital's CHNA steering committee. Additionally, offer information and assistance to support the process. Many hospitals pay outside consultants to gather and report data that local planners have readily available. Planners also have some data that hospital personnel don't realize even exist, such as transportation needs data, economic trends and conditions, comprehensive plans that include land use, housing, and other information that can be highly informative to the needs assessment process.
3. **Collaborate to address significant needs, address barriers and social determinants.** Infrastructure, housing, environment, rail/trails, transportation and other high priority projects related to the social determinants of health could get broader support by working collaboratively across sectors with the healthcare system. Sharing information and "connecting the dots" about projects and priorities can enable projects to happen that wouldn't otherwise occur.

Leaders are often told, **"be the change you want to see in the world."** During these turbulent economic times, planners are encouraged to utilize their important role as researchers, analysts and project managers to help catalyze change and improve community health by helping hospitals and health systems create the new structures and processes through which that change can happen.



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