APPENDIX B: SMART GOALS

SOUTH DAKOTA CARDIOVASCULAR COLLABORATIVE

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

About this Appendix

What is a SMART goal? SMART is an acronym for the components of the goal. Basically, a SMART goal should include these criteria:

- S – Specific
- M – Measurable
- A – Attainable or Achievable
- R – Relevant or Realistic
- T – Time-Bound

"SMART goal setting helps structure goals and makes it easier to track progress by creating more clarity."

SMART goals create more clarity for the workgroup and transparency for the organization. It helps everyone better understand the goal and how it will be known if the goal was met or not. The SMART goal method helps ensure success by providing a sense of direction and organization.

Specific

SMART goals should be clearly defined to ensure all team members and stakeholders understand the plan. Goals that are specific are much more likely to be accomplished. To ensure the goal is specific consider these questions – note that all may not apply to your project:

- What do we want to accomplish? Describe an observable action, behavior or result that will indicate the goal has been met.
- When do we want to achieve this goal?
- Why do we want to achieve this goal?
- Who is the intended target population?
- Who will do the work?

Answering these questions and linking the goal to a value, such as a number, a percentage or amount, will help quantify the goal. Be specific about the goal. The more specific the description, the more likely you will achieve it.

Measureable

A SMART goal should have criteria for measuring progress, impact or success. This will help with tracking progress. Consider existing goals that may be a requirement, such as HEDIS measures or goals of a grant. There may be existing measures and targets that are required for a specific program or grant. The focus should be on how much change is expected.

To make a goal measurable consider these questions:

- How much/many and in what direction will the change occur?
- How will we know if we have reached our goal?
- What data will be used to prove the target has been met?
- Where will the data come from and how will it be obtained?
- If the objective cannot be directly measured, is there a proxy measure that can be used? For example, "A1c" is often used as a proxy for well-managed diabetes.

The goal should be something concrete that can be measured. Rather than "improve blood pressure in people with diabetes," try something like "improve blood pressure in adults with diabetes ages 18-75 by 75%."

There should be a starting point or "baseline" to which the end point will be compared. This should include how it will be measured, for example, lab or claims data, etc.

Attainable or Achievable

A SMART goal should be achievable and attainable, yet at the same time, be a stretch goal to challenge the team to work beyond what is comfortable.

To ensure the goal is achievable consider these questions:

- Is this something that can actually be achieved given your time, capacity, resources, and circles of influence?
- Do you have the resources and capability to achieve this goal? If not, what do you need? What potential barriers might be encountered along the way? Or, does the goal need to be adjusted?
- Have others done this before? Are there examples from organizations like yours that have tried something that we can learn from?
- Does the goal have support from leadership as well as other key stakeholders?

Relevant or Realistic

A SMART goal should be realistic in that it can be achieved given the available resources and time allotted to accomplish it. It should also be relevant to the intended outcome.

To determine if the goal is realistic and relevant consider these questions:

- Is this goal relevant to your overall mission?
- Will this goal help you accomplish what you have been tasked with?
- Is the goal realistic and within reach?
- Is the goal reachable given the available time and resources?
- Are you able to commit to the goal?

A realistic goal takes into account the practical situation and the work in which everyone is involved.

Time-Bound

A SMART goal must be time-bound in that it has a start and finish date. If the timeframe has not been determined there will not be a sense of urgency and motivation to achieve the goal in a timely fashion. The time frame should not be too soon as to prevent the opportunity to measure any success nor too far, potentially causing procrastination.

- Define the timeframe in which you expect to reach this goal. Is there a beginning and end date?
- Is the timeframe reasonable?
- Should it be sooner or further into the future?