Improving Public Health:
Exploring Agency, Systems, & Community Health Improvement
May 10 & 11, 2011

Prioritization: Can't I Just Do What I Want?

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"I hate it when we're not sure we're inoculating against the right strain of flu virus."

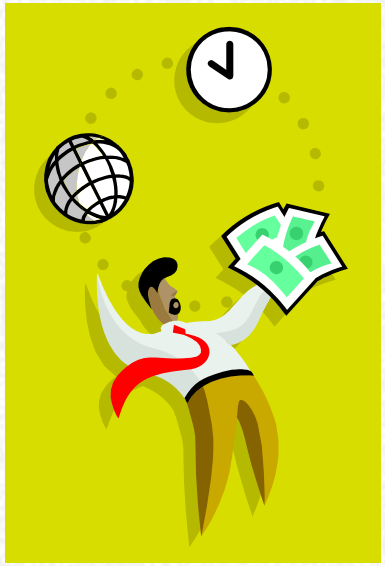
Overview

- What, who, why, and when do you prioritize?
- Select a method
  - Tools
  - Have some hands-on fun
  - Review NPHPSP example
  - Summary/questions

What is Prioritization?

- Placing a number of items in rank order based on perceived or measured importance or significance

- Assists organizations and groups in focusing limited resources



Who Does Priority-Setting?

All of us … All of the time

Why Prioritize?

- Leadership direction
- Limited resources
- Urgency
- Competing health issues to address
- Program efficiency
- Performance improvement/quality improvement project identification
- Other

When do You do Priority-Setting?

- Prioritization occurs at many stages of program and project planning and implementation
  - Developing vision, mission, goals, etc.
- Have you done this before?
  - In a public health setting?
  - How different is priority setting for QI vs. other reasons (i.e., assessment and planning)?
- Examples from the field

Selecting a Method

- How objective do you want the process to be?
- What level of participation / number of people is ideal?
  - Balance high participation / buy-in and manageability
  - Be aware of biases
- How time-intensive do you want this to be?

Priority-Setting Methods

- ‘Dotmocracy’ method (aka ‘Quick and colorful’ approach)
- Nominal group planning
- Strategy map
- Simplex method
- Hanlon (PEARL) method
- Criteria weighting
- Prioritization matrix

‘Dotmocracy’ (aka ‘Quick and Colorful’) Method: Nuts and Bolts

- Group voting process
- Options identified and posted on wall, etc.
- Participants get select number of ‘dots’/stickers
- Review criteria for voting with participants
- Participants place ‘dots’ by their choices based on criteria discussed

Nominal Group Planning: Nuts and Bolts

- Through group process, brainstorm ideas
- List all items
- Review, organize, categorize, clarify
- Review final list
- Each participant votes or ranks
- Tally the ranking or votes
- Discuss and refine, if needed

Strategy Map: Nuts and Bolts

- Select criteria
- Create a grid with four quadrants
- Label quadrants
- Categorize and prioritize

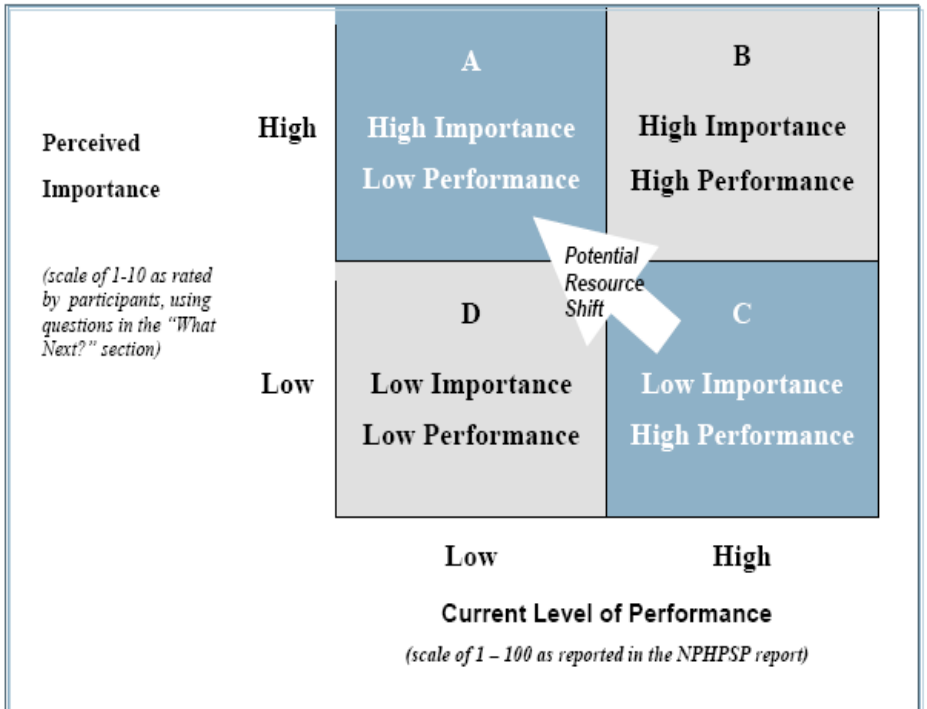


Figure 5: Identifying Priorities – Basic Framework

Simplex Method: Nuts and Bolts

- Develop a small set of close-ended questions
- Ensure all participants understand the options, the questions, and the process
- Ask participants to respond to the questions for each problem/ intervention
- Average the responses
- Rank the items

Hanlon Method: Nuts and Bolts

- Rate Item based on:
  - Size of problem
  - Seriousness
  - Effectiveness of available interventions
- Apply “PEARL”
  - **P**ropriety, **E**conomics, **A**cceptability, **R**esources, and **L**egality
- Calculate Scores
- Rank based on Scores

Criteria Weighting: Nuts and Bolts

- Identify criteria
- Determine significance / value of criteria
- Score issues according to each criteria (e.g., -10 to +10)
- Multiply significance by score
- Sum and divide by number of criteria
- Rank, discuss, and refine

Prioritization Matrix: Nuts and Bolts

- Identify decision criteria
- Weight each criterion against each other
- Compare all options relative to each weighted criterion
  - Develop a different matrix for each criterion
- Develop a summary matrix
- Compare each option based on all criteria combined.

Prioritization Matrix: Example

	Criterion Weight (1-10)				
Alternatives (1-10)	Cost (8)	Effectiveness (10)	Acceptability (5)	Implement in 12 months (6)	**Total**
Improve existing playgrounds	6	5	8	2	**150**
	48	**50**	**40**	**12**	
Remove soda from school vending machines	3	9	3	6	**165**
	24	**90**	**15**	**36**	
Restrict use of food stamps for unhealthy foods	9	7	2	3	**170**
	72	**70**	**10**	**18**	
Offer healthy lunch options in schools	7	10	4	4	**200**
	56	**100**	**20**	**21**	
Increase number of playgrounds from three to five	1	4	5	1	**63**
	8	**40**	**25**	**6**	

Priority-Setting

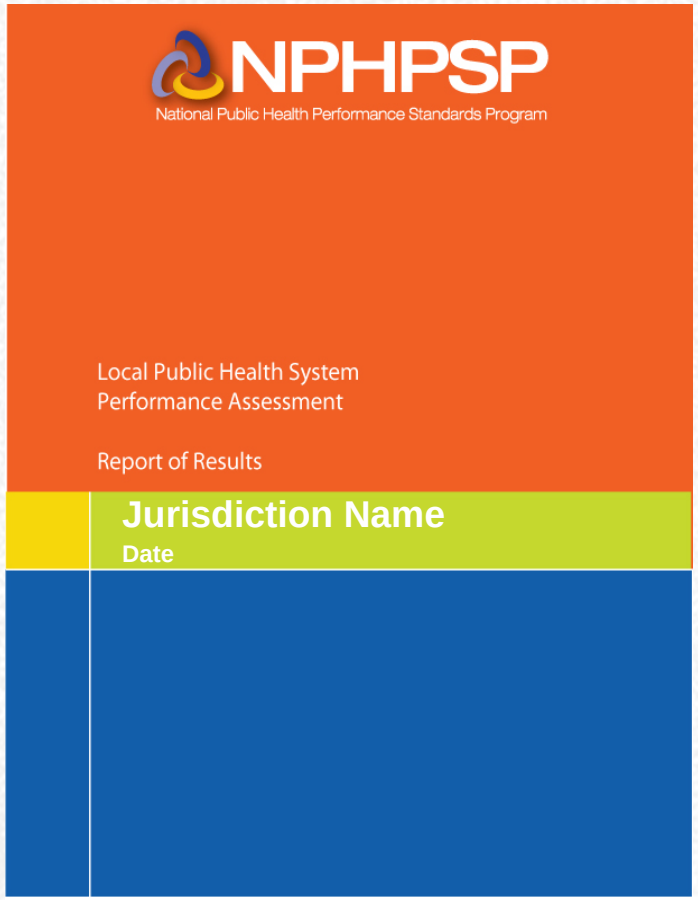
- Use priority-setting methods creatively
- Ordering priorities
  - Logical
  - Temporal
  - Impact
- Consider barriers to implementation
- Use data from assessments wisely
- Use within the context of a planning process

Let’s Have Some Fun!

- Set-up: 4 groups
- Use of Criteria Weighting Method for priority setting your afternoon in St. Louis!

NPHPSP Example

NPHPSP Reports – Optional Assessments



Optional Priority Rating Results (All 3 Assessments):

What are potential areas for attention, based on the priority ratings and performance scores?

Optional Agency Contribution Results (State and Local only):

How much does the (Local Health Department/State Public Health Agency) contribute to the system's performance, as perceived by assessment participants?

Priority Rating Results (Example)

Table 4:

Model standard by priority and performance score, with areas for attention

Essential Service	Priority Rating	Performance Score (Level of Activity)
Quadrant I (High Priority/Low Performance) These important activities may need increased attention.		
5.2 Public Health Policy Development	9	25 (Minimal)
5.3 Community Health Improvement Process	10	25 (Minimal)
Quadrant II (High Priority/High Performance) These activities are being done well, and it is important to maintain efforts.		
1.3 Maintenance of Population Health Registries	9	100 (Optimal)
6.3 Enforce Laws, Regulations and Ordinances	9	100 (Optimal)
Quadrant III (Low Priority/High Performance) These activities are being done well, but the system can shift or reduce some resources or attention to focus on higher priority activities.		
3.1 Health Education and Promotion	7	100 (Optimal)
3.3 Risk Communication	6	100 (Optimal)
Quadrant IV (Low Priority/Low Performance) These activities could be improved, but are of low priority. They may need little or no attention at this time.		
8.1 Workforce Assessment, Planning, & Development	4	25 (Minimal)
8.2 Public Health Workforce Standards	6	25 (Minimal)

Priority Rating Results (Example cont.)

- **Quadrant I** (High Priority/Low Performance) — May need increased attention
- **Quadrant II** (High Priority/High Performance) — May be important to maintain efforts
- **Quadrant III** (Low Priority/High Performance) — May shift or reduce some resources or attention to focus on higher priority activities
- **Quadrant IV** (Low Priority/Low Performance) — May need little or no attention at this time

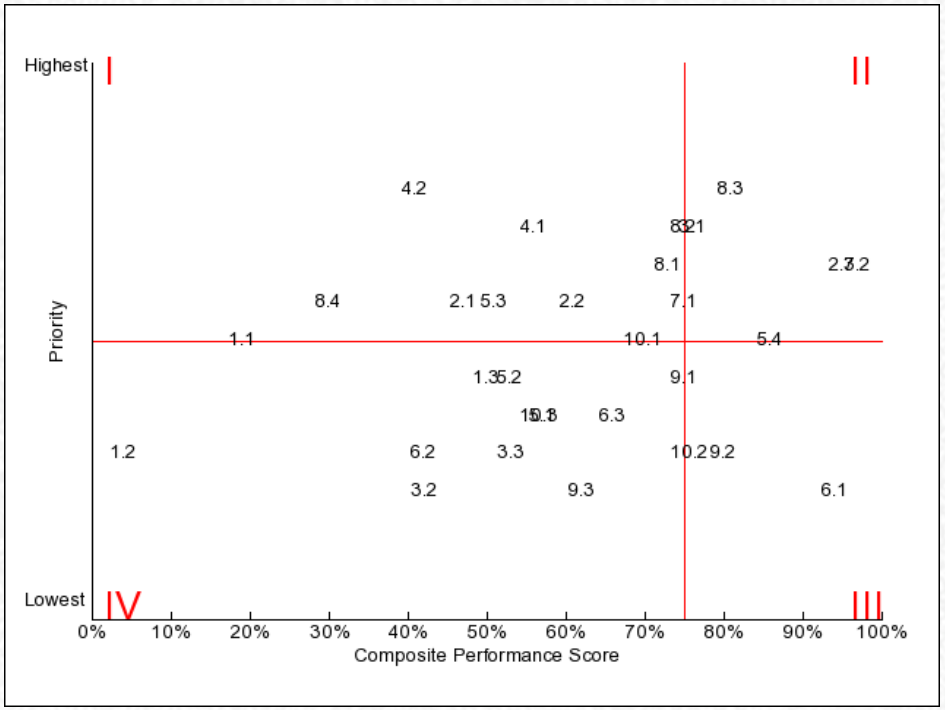


Figure 9: Scatter plot of Model Standard scores and priority ratings

Priority Rating vs. Performance

- **Quadrant I –** May need increased attention
- **Quadrant II –** May be important to maintain efforts
- **Quadrant III –** May shift or reduce some resources or attention to focus on higher priority activities
- **Quadrant IV –** May need little or no attention at this time

Perceived Priority (1-10)	High	I High Priority Low Performance	II High Priority High Performance
	Low	IV Low Priority Low Performance	III Low Priority High Performance
		Low	High
		Current Level of Performance (1 – 100)	

Source: *NPHPSP User Guide*

Summary Points for Priority Setting

- Collect background data and documentation
- Clarify goals and objectives
- Establish criteria for ‘judging’ potential options
- Determine participants for the prioritization process
- Select appropriate method
- Have needed materials for the prioritization method selected
- Implement process, follow-up and follow-through!

Questions?

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