

Help Me Grow (HMG) Crisis Response System Enhancement: Proactive Outreach & Facilitation Strategy

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Introduction

In response to COVID-19, the HMG National Center partnered with Spring Impact¹ and the Childhood Prosperity Lab² to elevate strategies being deployed within HMG systems across the country. The highlighted strategy herein represents the tactics that several affiliates³ used in their COVID-19 responses, and aims to elevate universal practices for crisis response work moving forward.

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Summary

Communities in crisis often experience major disruptions to daily life, including gaps in the availability of critical services for families' health and wellbeing. In these moments of crisis, families also often experience increased need for support, particularly around the social determinants of health.

The **Proactive Outreach and Facilitation Strategy** outlines how HMG systems can better support families, by actively reaching out to providers, partners, and families to identify and fill critical service gaps in communities.

Relationship to HMG Core Components

- Child Health Care Provider Outreach
- Family & Community Outreach

For more information on these Components please see [here](#). More details on this system enhancement's relationship with the Core Components are below.

¹ Spring Impact is a nonprofit social enterprise born out of a frustration of seeing social organizations constantly reinventing the wheel and wasting scarce resources. Using a combination of successful and tested commercial and social sector principles while drawing on extensive practical expertise, we help organizations identify, design and implement the right scale model and strategy, enabling them to solve social problems at scale.

² Childhood Prosperity Lab (the Lab) seeks to help children flourish, thrive and succeed by building the capacity and transforming the culture of organizations serving and working on behalf of children. Childhood Prosperity Lab helps non-profit organizations, companies, government agencies, foundations, and networks enhance their support of children, families, and communities by helping them utilize new strategies, tools, and resources to advance their efforts and ensure they reach their desired level of impact.

³ A special thanks to all the affiliates who contributed to the development of these insights: HMG Long Island, HMG North Texas, HMG Pierce County, HMG Washington, HMG Alameda County, and HMG California.

Affiliate Highlight



HMG Pierce County was able to proactively seek input and plan with its partners in order to best understand emerging community needs, and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 for families.

Context:

Prior to the pandemic, HMG Pierce County had developed strong relationships and trust with its partners, as well as strong Action Team dynamics structured around the four components of Help Me Grow.

Action:

At the outset of the pandemic, Pierce County Action Teams increased their meeting frequency to support discussion and action around the pandemic. Through these meetings the system leveraged its existing assets, including a Health Care Liaison who was embedded within the local health department, to begin proactive outreach to providers. These meetings went beyond a desire to update the resource directory, but rather made space for real-time problem identification and formation of potential solutions.

As one example, the discussions surfaced an upcoming disruption to the vaccine schedule in the community due to a significant reduction in families attending well child visits. During the system's now weekly check-ins, the Family and Community Outreach Action Team was able to discuss and determine a plan of action including proactive outreach to the community to inform families of new clinic procedures to ensure safety, and the need to maintain routine vaccine schedules.

In order to support proactive outreach to families regarding vaccinations, the system leveraged existing listservs of community partners, e.g. children's museums and libraries. Additionally, the system disseminated key communications in areas where parents of young children were already receiving their information.

Key Takeaway:

The application of the Proactive Outreach and Facilitation Strategy can look very different depending on the context in which it is being applied, but the principles and core components remain the same.⁴

Through proactive action and review HMG Pierce County was able to identify and act on challenges, and in the case of childhood immunizations, with demonstrable progress, could lessen the severity and overall impact of the crisis.

Detailed Definition of the System Enhancement

Objective of the System Enhancement: Diminish the disruptions and impact of crisis by actively engaging partners and providers to fill gaps in service to families.

⁴ HMG Long Island also deployed this system enhancement, but focused on the strong relationships of its leadership to proactively reach out to community agencies who were well suited to fill identified gaps and work towards solutions.

Core Components of the System Enhancement:

<p>Convene stakeholders regularly</p>	<p><u>Develop and maintain strong relationships with system partners</u></p> <p><u>Meet regularly across working groups to review data, facilitate action and discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage quantitative data (e.g. CAP data) and qualitative data (e.g. partner experiences) to inform system action, particularly within working groups • Helpful Hint: Open discussions to include all those interested in supporting crisis response. For example, HMG Pierce County invited new partners into Family & Community Outreach meetings by having guest presenters share about their agency's services and COVID response in each meeting. Many of these presenters have become regular participants
<p>Proactive outreach & information gathering (outset of crisis)</p>	<p><u>Assess and leverage strongest relationships internal to HMG system to coordinate proactive outreach</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine optimum outreach methods and process for gathering insights • Helpful Hint: This could be for child health care providers or community partners <p><u>Gather feedback beyond quick checklist of questions, engage in free form discussion to identify trends</u></p>
<p>Gap analysis & action plan</p>	<p><u>Analyze responses to identify key trends, e.g. gaps in service and/or promising practices</u></p> <p><u>Develop action plan with relevant stakeholders and partners.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene partners to review findings of proactive outreach and additional data • Facilitate group to decision towards proactive problem solving, determine next steps and action based on findings • Identify HMG system's roles related to insight • For example: Pierce County's Health Department received 27 responses on why families reported not coming in to visits (top response was fear of contracting COVID-19). The system shared these results and identified with action team partners what messaging was needed in the community • Helpful Hint: HMG Pierce County isn't directive, but rather guides invested stakeholders to determine action steps towards filling identified gaps. Other systems may choose to take more directive approaches as it aligns with their internal strengths and operating practices <p><u>Communicate decisions and actions to relevant stakeholders to promote action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example HMG Pierce County began sending weekly newsletters for COVID response to all stakeholders with relevant information to share with families e.g. flyers promoting attending well-child visits

	and new diaper bank locations
Proactive outreach and implementation	<p>Relevant stakeholders will implement and update the group on progress in order to facilitate discussion and iteration to approach as is needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive of proactive outreach to families as is required

Structural Requirements of the System Enhancement:

Strong relationships within HMG system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared objectives across partners, as well as strong relationships and trust
Convening Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures in place to convene and facilitate active discussion across partners in times of crisis, i.e. virtual or in-person

Common Measures of Success

A Logic Model or Theory of Change in an intentional effort to define and relate social enterprise activities to impact results. Key components of these frameworks include concepts such as: inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact. The outputs described here are the initial indicators a system might review on the path to measuring and understanding its impact. **Key note:** As a result of the rapid response nature of this enhancement strategy, an exact logic model is still under development.

Output Indicators:

- Utilization of CAP and referred services
- Qualitative and quantitative measures around strength and health of partnerships

Readiness Assessment for Implementing Affiliates

Overview:

This exercise will help you to assess your HMG system's readiness for implementing the described solution, and enable you to make more informed decisions in what may be involved in preparing for execution.

This is not meant to be a prescriptive answer of 'yes, ready to implement' or 'no, not ready to implement'. The outputs of this exercise **are not** meant to prohibit a system from implementation. Rather this is a lean planning tool to support more robust thinking and application in rapid response.

Instructions:

To complete this test, read each question and then write the number which most accurately represents the current situation in your system. We suggest you make a note on why you have scored each answer so that you can reference back to it later as you continue to plan and develop your operations.

- Is there an ambitious yet realistic strategy for responding to the crisis? i.e. defined scope of the problem, need, and the potential response?
 - Limited to no strategic thinking in place on how to respond to the crisis and community needs
 - Good understanding of the size of the problem and need, as well as a sense of how your system will seek to address it, i.e. a strong sense of how

your system fits into the larger ecosystem of actors, as well as what your contribution will be

- 3) Detailed understanding of the problem you are seeking to address backed up by research and data. Theory of Change as well as ambitious SMART targets in place for helping to solve identified challenges with a realistic plan

Your Score & Why: _____

2. Is there cultural alignment, i.e. does new/altered response align with mission? Are you avoiding mission creep or consciously pivoting to redirect resources out of perceived necessity?

- 1) Proposed strategy does not align with values and overall mission of your HMG system
- 2) HMG system and stakeholders are open to expanding services to encompass proactive outreach and facilitation strategies
- 3) System is actively engaged with proactive outreach or facilitation activities to some degree. Stakeholders interested in investing time and resources towards implementing the strategy

Your Score & Why: _____

3. Do you have a clear financial strategy and funding for implementing the solution?

- 1) No dedicated funding or pathway to reallocate resources
- 2) Funding and resources able to be reallocated towards emergency response activities
- 3) Funding and resources able to be reallocated towards emergency response activities, as well as dedicated funding secured to support sustained implementation

Your Score & Why: _____

4. Is there a clear project owner (individual, organization, subcommittee) with capacity to drive and deliver strategy?

- 1) There is no clear 'owner' of initiatives or decision making structure in place
- 2) There is a clear project owner with a relevant skill set. The decision making process across stakeholders is understood well enough to drive actions
- 3) The project owner is an experienced individual with previous experience in scaling and is trusted by stakeholders. The decision making structure represents a holistic set of perspectives and has been validated.

Your Score & Why: _____

5. Are the functions necessary for replication well defined and developed for delivery while ensuring quality? E.g. operations manuals
- 1) Few or no processes, systems, or values exist or they are fragmented and difficult to find.
 - 2) Most processes and documentation for delivery and replication are in place but with some gaps. Values have been established.
 - 3) Accurate documentation is in place for process, systems, training, legal agreements, procedures & ensuring quality. Values are in place, recognized and embedded across the organization.

Your Score & Why: _____

6. Is there a supply of people or partners willing and able to take on the new way of working?
- 1) There are no interested parties who are willing and/or qualified to take on this strategy or those people are difficult to access.
 - 2) There is evidence of a supply of people or organizations willing and qualified to implement this strategy.
 - 3) There is evidence of a large supply of people or organizations willing and qualified to implement this strategy.

Your Score & Why: _____

Scoring Rubric:

- No score lower than 2, and at least four 3s: Ready to implement this strategy with minimal additional planning required
- No score lower than 2, with up to three 3s: You have a promising ability to implement this strategy, with select areas to focus your preparation
- A mix of 1s, 2s, and 3s: You have more work to do to prepare for robust implementation of this strategy

Potential Risks to Implementation

Risk	Severity of Impact	Likelihood of Impact	Mitigating strategies
Competing objectives across stakeholders	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to establish shared objectives and values across partner stakeholders • Invest in activities that will establish trust in the process, prior to crises • Establish inclusive decision making processes that allow diverse perspectives but don't hinder action • Avoid implementing duplicative services
Sustained mission creep	Medium	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If system is embracing basic need supports, define the parameters around which your system might be helpful e.g. connecting to housing solutions vs. providing housing solutions • Look to connect with other stakeholders to avoid "mission creep" long term

Additional Resources

- Recorded webinar session
- Social determinants of health resources

Conclusion

The Proactive Outreach and Facilitation Strategy encompasses common practices Spring Impact observed across rapid response approaches. Its ability to leverage existing HMG infrastructure and relationships, flexibility in application, and promising outputs make it a highly compelling strategy to consider for future response efforts.