HIV/AIDS Patient-Centered Medical Homes: SWOT Analysis Exercise

**STRENGTH, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS**

The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis is a useful strategic management technique which originated from the business world and has been utilized for many years. The concept of the SWOT is to assist organizations in gaining an understanding of who they are and where they want to be. Before a Ryan White agency decides to initiate the process of becoming a patient-centered medical home (PCMH) it is important to assess resources and to identify human capital both internally and externally. The SWOT Analysis exercise allows the agency to identify specific action steps to address based on weaknesses discovered during the exercise. This exercise can be used during a regular staff meeting or with a meeting of clinic leaders. It is recommended that the SWOT Analysis be followed by the development of an Action Plan in your efforts to become a PCMH.

| Purpose: | To recognize major changes in practice transformation that would be needed to become a PCMH. |
| Purpose: | To identify the strengths and weaknesses of your agency as they relate to your current model of care and alignment with the needed building blocks and change concepts associated with successful PCMHs. |
| Purpose: | To understand the resources and capacity for change within your agency/clinic, as well as the external opportunities and threats that encompass the larger institution and community. |
| Purpose: | To set the stage for action planning by the helping the team to identify positive forces and potential barriers that will position you for a successful transformation to a PCMH. |

| Materials | Flip chart paper, flip chart markers, and tape OR a dry erase board. |
| Materials | Copies of Handout 1, “What is a SWOT Analysis?” for each person in attendance. |

| Duration: | 45 minutes |

| Advance Preparation | Consider who will facilitate the exercise. The facilitator should read “What is a SWOT Analysis?” in advance. It is important that the facilitator has a robust understanding of the purpose and goals of a SWOT Analysis to best engage and lead staff through the exercise. |

- Use a dry erase board or flip chart paper. Create a SWOT analysis in the format you choose [a chart (four columns), or a matrix (four squares)]. Label each column or square with the following headings: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. If using flip chart paper, you may want to adhere it to the wall so that your group can see what ideas come forward. |

- Think of ways to make it fun and to encourage participation. |

| Activity: | Begin by explaining the purpose of the Analysis, specifically highlighting that this is a way to identify the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats that influence the institution’s transformation into a PCMH. Explain that this exercise will allow the team to work as a unit to address areas that need additional attention as well as to highlight and appreciate team assets and successes. |
NOTE: This exercise can be done as a large group or small group exercise. If there are eight or more individuals participating, split into small groups of at least four individuals. Ask each group to select a recorder and a presenter. The recorder’s role is to take notes and the presenter will present the recorder’s notes during the report out session at the end of the exercise. Some group(s) may choose to have the recorder to serve dual roles.

- Distribute copies of Handout 1 “What is a SWOT Analysis?” and allow five minutes for each person to read the document.
- Reconvene the group and ask if anyone has questions or comments about what a SWOT analysis is or how it will be used to further PCMH development.
- Consider sharing additional examples to illustrate each category. Remind the group that strengths and weaknesses should be identified within the organization, while opportunities and threats should be identified as external to the organization. Possible additional examples include:
  - **Strengths** - great quality management team, longevity of the staff
  - **Weaknesses** - lack of leadership, no electronic medical record
  - **Opportunities** - collaboration with a medical neighborhood, peer navigators
  - **Threats** - state funding, competition with other agencies
- Give the group(s) 20-30 minutes to brainstorm and record the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats as they relate to PCMH development. Encourage them not to rule out any ideas at this stage.
- Provide a ten minute warning to the group(s) before the allocated end time for the exercise.
- Once a list has been generated, it may be helpful to refine it to the best 10 or fewer points so that the analysis can be more valuable. Come to some consensus about the most important items in each category.

**Follow-up Discussion:**

The facilitator will lead the group through a discussion after completing the exercise. Questions that may help to elicit a conversation include:

- What did you learn from this exercise?
- What additional resources do we need to assist with becoming a patient-centered medical home?
- Are there additional internal or external items we neglected to mention?
- Which weakness should we prioritize to improve?
- What are some ways we can collaborate with other agencies?
- How can we work within our limited budget and still provide the best health outcome?
- What strategies can we use to obtain leadership/and or staff buy in?
- How can we continue to show appreciation for the strengths found in our organization?
- How can we take advantage of future opportunities?
- Which item under “**Threats**” concerned you the most? Why?
- What additional training could be provided that would encourage growth in the organization?

**Next Steps:**

The HIV-MHRC recommends that the SWOT analysis be used to create an action plan and strategies for furthering practice transformation and/or PCMH recognition.
A SWOT analysis is designed to help an organization identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats as the organization is planning for new initiatives or solving problems. When planning to become a PCMH, the SWOT analysis should help an agency identify positive forces both within and outside the organization and potential barriers in the institution or in the community that should be addressed during the planning process. By identifying each of the areas, an agency can consider them in planning and address them throughout the process.

Strengths and weaknesses should be identified within your organization and include both resources and experience. Strengths may be “big picture” areas such as “Our staff readily adapts to new policies and procedures” or particular areas that relate to becoming a PCMH such as “Our agency has a system in place already that connects patients with a clinician at any time the practice is not open. This is a component of enhanced access.”

Opportunities and threats should be identified that are external to the initiative. These may be from the local community, the regulatory or fiscal bodies, or the larger society. These are often factors that your organization does not control. Examples of an opportunity could include future increases in third party reimbursement or the potential for increased coordination and communication with Ryan White funded community-based case management agencies. A threat might be the lack of knowledge of the benefits to becoming a PCMH in the community you serve or the proportion of patients who are already receiving their primary care from another agency.

Using a SWOT analysis, the internal and external factors that may impact on becoming a PCMH can be addressed as the team develops an Action Plan for your agency.