

Developing a Turn-the-Curve Plan for the Common Metrics Initiative

Using the Results-Based Accountability Framework

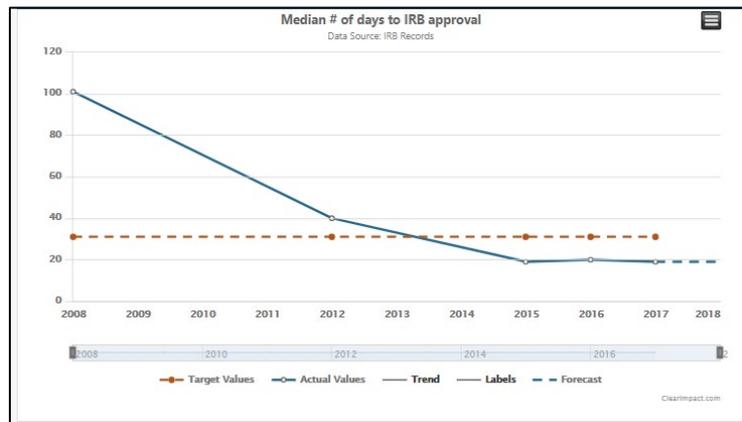
A Turn-the Curve plan is a strategic plan or progress report that answers the five questions below:

Question	Answer
1. How are we doing?	Annually, hubs enter data values for each metric. These values create a line graph known as the “curve”.
2. What is the story behind the curve?	This is the analysis of the important factors that influence the curve.
3. Who are partners that might have a role to play in turning the curve?	These are the individuals and the roles they might play in turning the curve.
4. What works to turn the curve?	These are the ideas that hubs brainstorm that have the potential to turn the curve.
5. What do we propose to do to turn the curve?	Specific strategies and actions that hubs have selected to implement to turn the curve in the right direction.

The following are step-by-step instructions for developing a turn-the-curve plan.

Step 1: How are we doing?

Annually, hubs enter data values for each of the common metrics into the Scorecard software. These data points create a line graph that shows a trend, or “curve”, that is headed in a certain direction. The curve enables hubs to see their progress for selected performance measures for each metric.



(Sample graph for IRB metric with the curve trending in the right direction)

The curve represents the trend for the metric. For the IRB Duration metric, hubs want the curve to be trending toward lower numbers (fewer days to IRB approval). For all of the other metrics, the desired direction for the curve is toward higher numbers (increase in the number of individuals in clinical research for the Careers metric or an increase in the number of patients for the Informatics metric). To develop the story behind the curve, conduct the analysis below.

Step 2: What is the story behind the curve?

In this step, hubs identify the factors that have had the greatest influence on the curve (both positive and negative). The goal is to determine the factors that are driving the curve and then identify strategies to address those factors.

1. Identify the factors that have had the strongest influence on the metric.
2. Identify the root causes – the systemic factors that, if successfully addressed, will yield sustained improvement on the curve over time.
3. Organize the factors into positive and negative categories. Hubs are encouraged to use the analysis tools that they find most informative – force field analysis, root causes, etc.
4. Include both current and anticipated factors.
5. Prioritize the list based on how strongly each factor will influence the curve.

Note: Please do not include a description of the graphed data, as it is shown in the line graph created by the data values. Also, do not include any other information that is not a description of a factor that will influence the curve.

Format for the story behind the curve narrative.

- The narrative should resemble an executive summary.
- Create bolded headings for **Positive** and **Negative** factors
- Place the identified factors under the appropriate headings using bulleted lists.

Step 3: Who are partners who might play a role in turning the curve?

It may be possible to address a factor in the story behind the curve by working collaboratively with individuals outside of your hub, or expanding a relationship with a current partner. In this step, explore options for new partnerships or expanded collaborations.

- Identify potential partners who might have a role to play in turning the curve for the metric.
- Include a brief description of the potential role each partner might play.
- Include current partners who will have a different or expanded role to play in turning the curve.
- Think outside of the box – including nontraditional partners with whom you would not typically engage.
- Use the factors identified in the story behind the curve when considering partners and the role they might play.

Note: Do not include current/existing team members as partners, unless they are taking a different or expanded role.

Step 4: What works to turn the curve?

Before selecting strategies to address the factors affecting the curve, it is important to explore a full range of options. This exploration includes challenging assumptions about current work processes and resources. Brainstorm a variety of options, even those that seem completely “off the wall”.

- List the most impactful strategies to turn the curve, regardless of their feasibility.

- Identify “no cost/low cost” options – those that can be pursued with existing resources.
- Identify activities you could stop, or reduce to make resources available for more effective activities.
- Confirm that the options under consideration address one or more of the factors identified in the story behind the curve (step 2).
- Prioritize the list of options – consider how each of the options addresses the factors you identified in step 2.
- Determine if additional research or evidence is required to identify strategies that may be effective in turning the curve. If more research is indicated, make a list of topics that need to be addressed when exploring additional options.

Step 5: What do we propose to do to turn the curve?

When selecting strategies, apply four criteria:

Leverage: *How strongly will the proposed strategy impact the trend for the metric going forward?* Given that resources are finite, decisions with respect to the dedication of resources to a proposed strategy must be based on the expected impact of those resources. The strategy that is proposed should address the most important factors identified and have the greatest potential impact on the curve.

Feasibility: *Is the proposed strategy feasible? Can it be done?* Assess the feasibility of each strategy identified, then consider both leverage and feasibility. A strategy with high leverage and high feasibility is a prime candidate for implementation.

Specificity: *Is the strategy specific enough to be implemented?* Does it include a timeline that addresses who, what, when, where and how?

Values: *Is the strategy consistent with our organizational values?* Assess and ensure that each strategy is consistent with your organization’s values.

Developing Actions

The actions provide the timeline and specific steps for implementing the strategies that were selected to have the greatest impact on the curve. The actions drive the hub’s work. Actions provide an assessment tool for the hubs to show their efforts to turn the curve.

- Determine the actions that will be needed to implement each strategy.
- Write a description that provides specific information about the action that is to be taken.
- Each action should be assigned to a specific individual/department/group.
- Each action should have a definitive start and end date.