

Scientific Underpinning

of

Preventive Medicine Associates Inc.

Community Oriented Primary Care

What Is Community Oriented Primary Care?

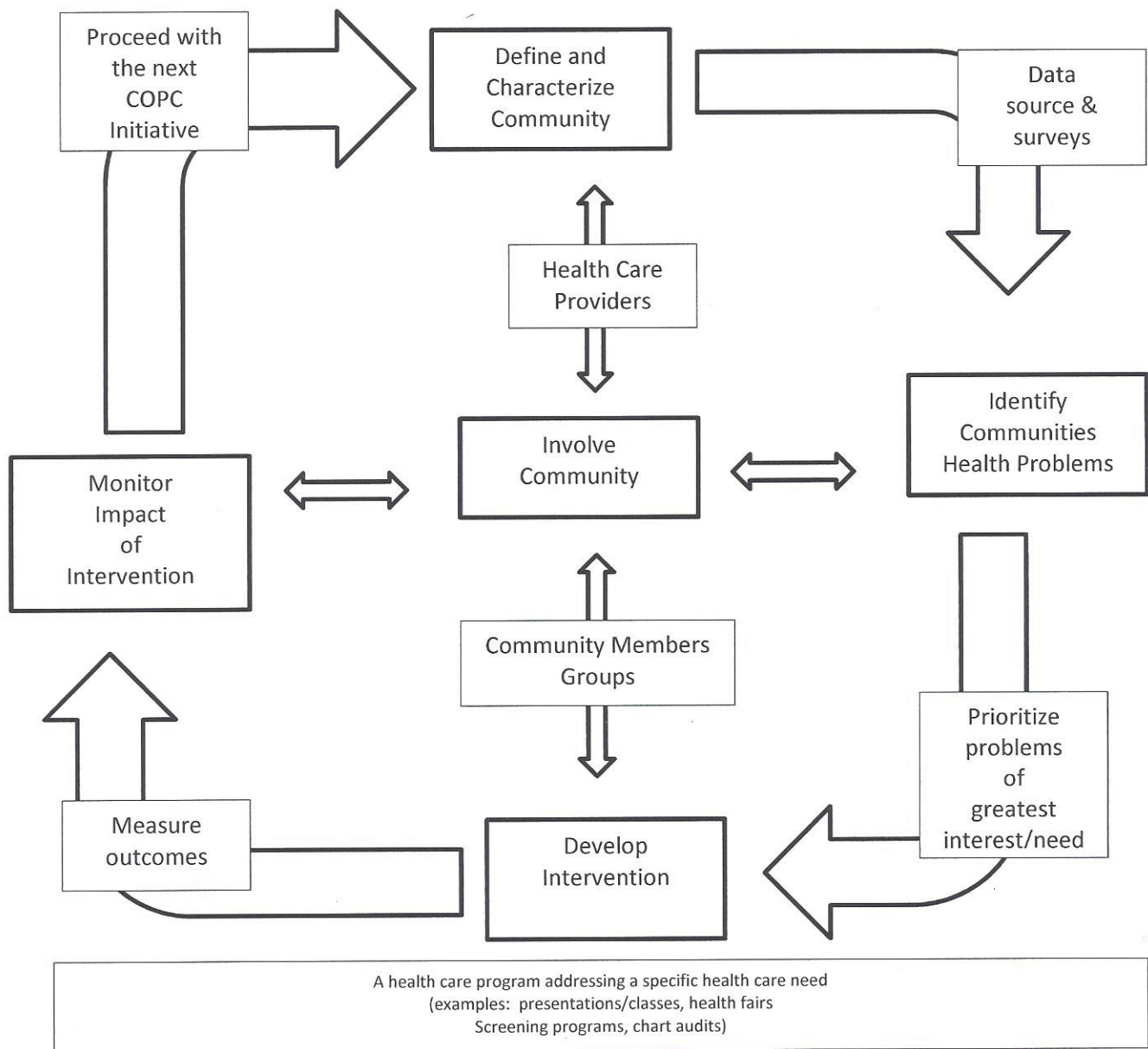
Community-Oriented Primary Care [**COPC**] describes a process for identifying and addressing health problems of a defined population. In COPC, a team of health professional and community members work together to diagnose and treat a community in much the same way as does a physician treat an individual patient. It is not necessary that primary care practitioners lead such an effort, but it is important they are involved.

COPC describes a process whereby a defined population's health needs are systematically identified and addressed. Ideally, COPC combines principles of primary care, epidemiology, and public health. One of the unique features of COPC is that the community is involved throughout the process. Traditionally in medicine, physicians do what they think patients need. In COPC, emphasis is placed on obtaining input from the community and developing programs and services that are most likely to address their needs. Thus, COPC emphasizes a true partnership between the health profession community and the population for and with whom COPC initiative is being developed.

One way to conceptualize COPC is to consider the role for the physician that is broader than the 1:1 approach generally taken with individual patients. Rather, a practitioner involved with a COPC initiative takes a 1:N view, where "N" is a population at risk for a particular health problem.

Five steps are included in the COPC model:

1. Define and characterize the community
2. Involve the community throughout the process
3. Identify community health problems
4. Develop an intervention
5. Monitor the impact of the intervention



Rhyne R., Bogue R., Kukulka G., Fulmer H. (1998). Community-Oriented Primary Care: Health Care for The 21st Century. Washington, DC: American Public Health Association.