Evaluation & Evidence at HHS

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
Presentation Outline

• Discuss HHS Evaluation & Evidence Team
• Discuss the structure and function of HHS Evaluation & Research Offices
• Discuss how we coordinate with our sister “systems” of strategic planning, performance, and statistics & data
• Discuss future work on using performance data in the context of program evaluation
HHS E & E Team Functions

• Goal: create a systematic approach and infrastructure for evaluation & evidence at HHS through
  – Capacity Building
  – Coordination
  – Collaboration
HHS E & E Team Functions

**Capacity**
- Use a learning agenda approach
- Specific project support and consultation
- Training, webinars, and opportunities for learning and networking

**Coordination**
- Liaison for Department-level requests and work groups
- Manage Evaluation & Evidence Policy Council (HHS Level)
- Disseminate cross-cutting information

**Collaboration**
- Engage with external partners such as foundations, think tanks, and others
- Engage with HHS and other federal partners
- Build a community of evaluators across HHS
HHS Evaluation & Evidence Policy Council

- Members are leads of offices that have evaluation as at least one principal function and routinely conduct or consult on evaluations and other studies

- Convened by ASPE and meet monthly

- One subgroup on research and evaluation with potential for more
HHS Evaluation & Evidence Policy Council

• Goals are to
  – Strengthen HHS capacity to use evidence and evaluation to shape our programs and policies;
  – Build a community of evaluators through this group over time to create a forum for information exchange;
  – Leverage experience and expertise across the Department; and
  – Coordinate and collaborate on areas of common interest; and provide coordinated, routine feedback to the Department and other relevant partners.
Structure & Function at HHS

• We saw a variability in structure and function of offices, and wanted to understand more
• Goal was to understand how offices are comprised and the kind of work they do and assess needs for capacity, coordination, and collaboration
• Conducted in-depth interviews with almost all components of HHS (9 operating divisions, 4 staff divisions) that have evaluation and/or research offices
Structure & Function at HHS

- Most agencies have some kind of evaluation policy in place, sometimes public
- Most have some level of independence but are not fully independent
- About half or more are de-centralized or a hybrid of centralized and de-centralized
- Many have performance offices within their office or work closely with performance and strategic planning
Evaluation & Other Systems

• Fundamental differences between performance, statistics, and evaluation as forms of evidence-building

• Need for evaluation to be policy relevant in ways statistics are not

• Performance used as a barometer for when to determine evaluations may be necessary and cannot ever provide attribution or impact
Evaluation & Other Systems

• At HHS we have routine meetings hosted by our Strategic Planning Team that involve
  – HHS Strategic Planning Team
  – HHS Evaluation & Evidence Team
  – HHS Performance Team
  – HHS Enterprise Risk Management Team

• Discuss current issues; budget items; new and emerging policies; and how we can and should be collaborating on issues such as strategic plan development
Evaluation & Performance

• Build on the work conducted by OMB in 2013

• Environmental Scan of current and gray literature of performance and evaluation models or best practices

• Outline models at HHS, then consider other federal agencies
Discussion
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