

Improving Population Health: The Challenge in Rural Communities

John Gale, MS

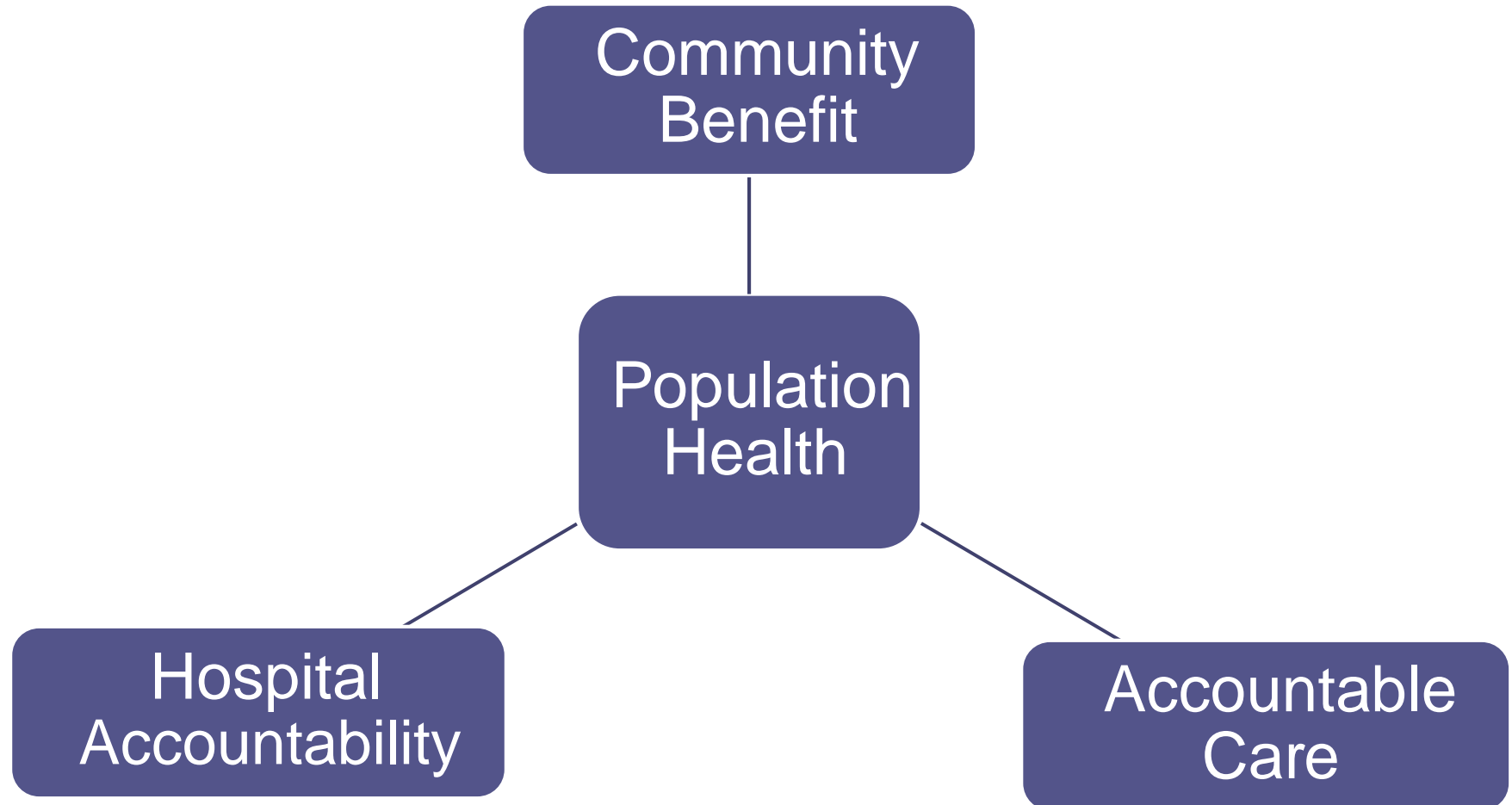
Care Culture and Decision Making Innovation Collaborative
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Learning Objectives

- Understand the population health challenges facing rural communities
- Explore the rural health care and public health infrastructure in rural areas
- Identify the challenges to undertaking strategies to improve population health
- Review the role of rural hospitals in leading collaborative population health improvement strategies

Population Health—A Unifying Link



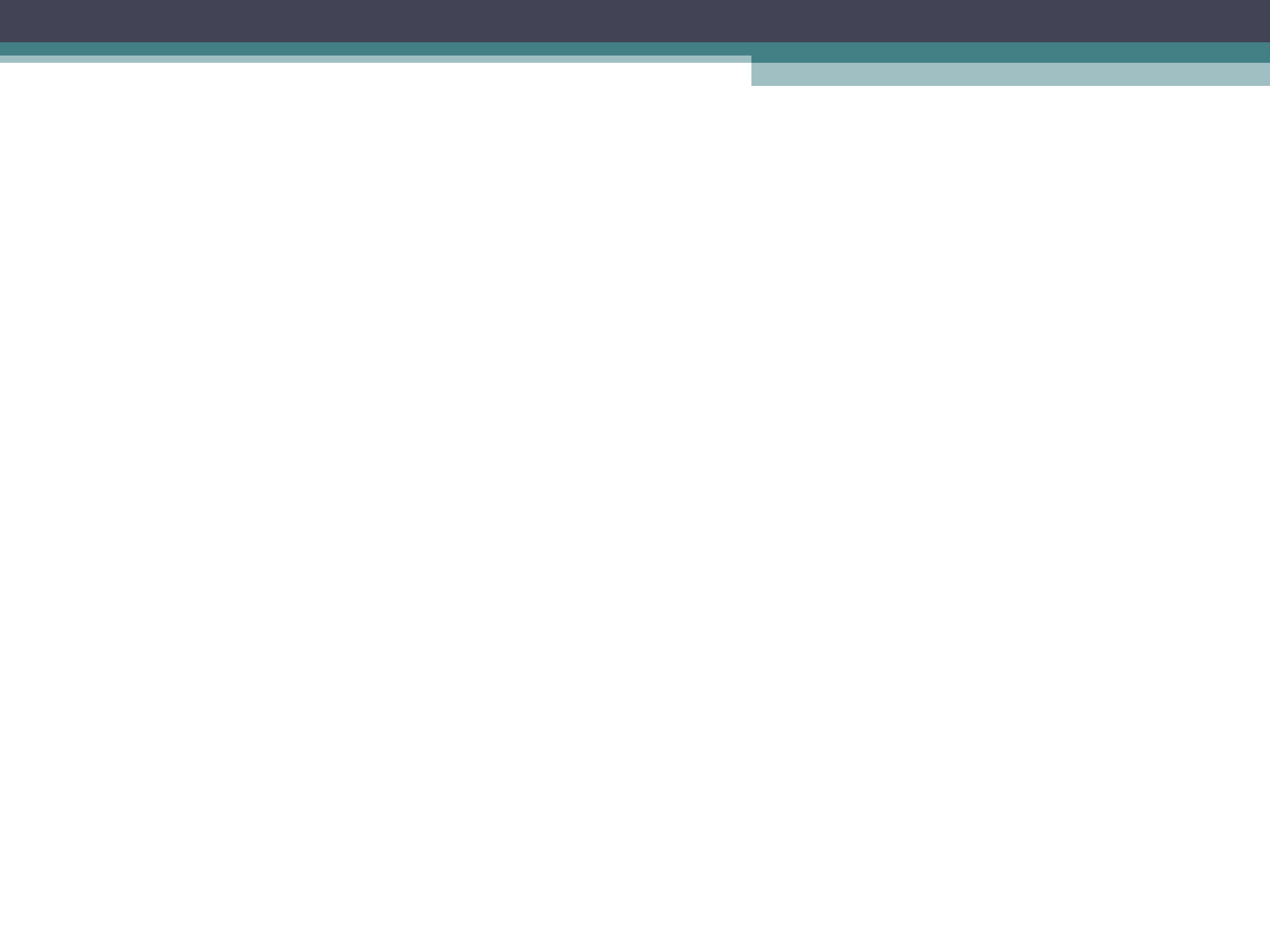
Limited Pathways and Resources

- Roots of rural poverty Cynthia Duncan 1999
 - Chronic poverty represents long term neglect and a lack of investment in rural people and communities
 - Deliberate effort to hold people back to control workers and keep them powerless, exclusion from having aspirations of getting beyond their situations
 - Examples- Appalachian coal industry/Southern plantations
- Key pathways out of poverty education, mentoring,

Disparities Experienced by Rural Areas

- Rural areas suffer from a variety of health and socioeconomic disparities
 - Greater sense of stigma
 - Higher sense of isolation and hopelessness
 - Lower education rates
 - Higher rates of poverty
 - Fewer opportunities for employment
 - Higher rates of chronic illnesses
- Influence of cultural, ethnic, religious differences

Burdens of Rural Illness



Barriers

- Volume-based reimbursement system does not provide funding for population health initiatives
- Transition from volume-based to population health reimbursement—taking place very slowly
- Determining which population health factors hospitals can address with their limited resources
- Limited financial, technical, human, and data resources
- Lack of collaborative partnerships with community organizations and providers

Provider/Hospital Accountability

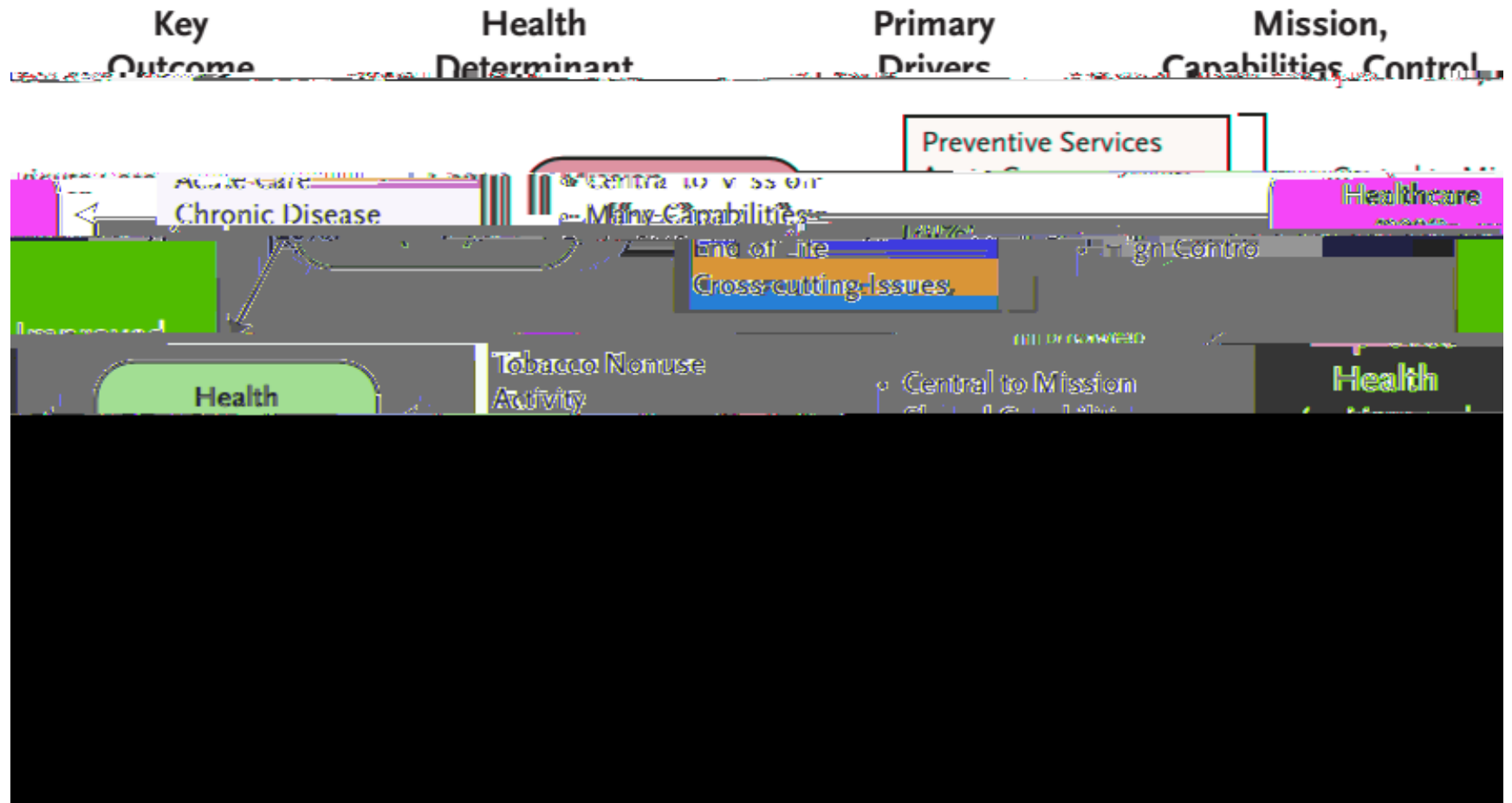
- Shifting focus from volume to value encourages hospitals to reconceptualize their missions:
 - Transformation programs hospitals assume risk for the health and health care costs of an enrolled population
 - Evolution of traditional community benefit programs into strategies for improving community health
- accountability can build on and support each other

HRET: Community Responsive Hospital

- Expanding from delivery of medical care to role of hospital in the following:
 - Community issues (substance abuse, domestic violence)
 - Critical health issues (oral health, mental health, obesity)
 - Health care equity (barriers to access, health disparities)
 - System barriers (limited public health infrastructure)
 - Community's role in process (involve residents in addressing above issues, reducing risky behaviors)

From: Where Do We Go from Here? The Hospital Leader's Role in Community Engagement (2007) by the Health Research and Educational Trust.

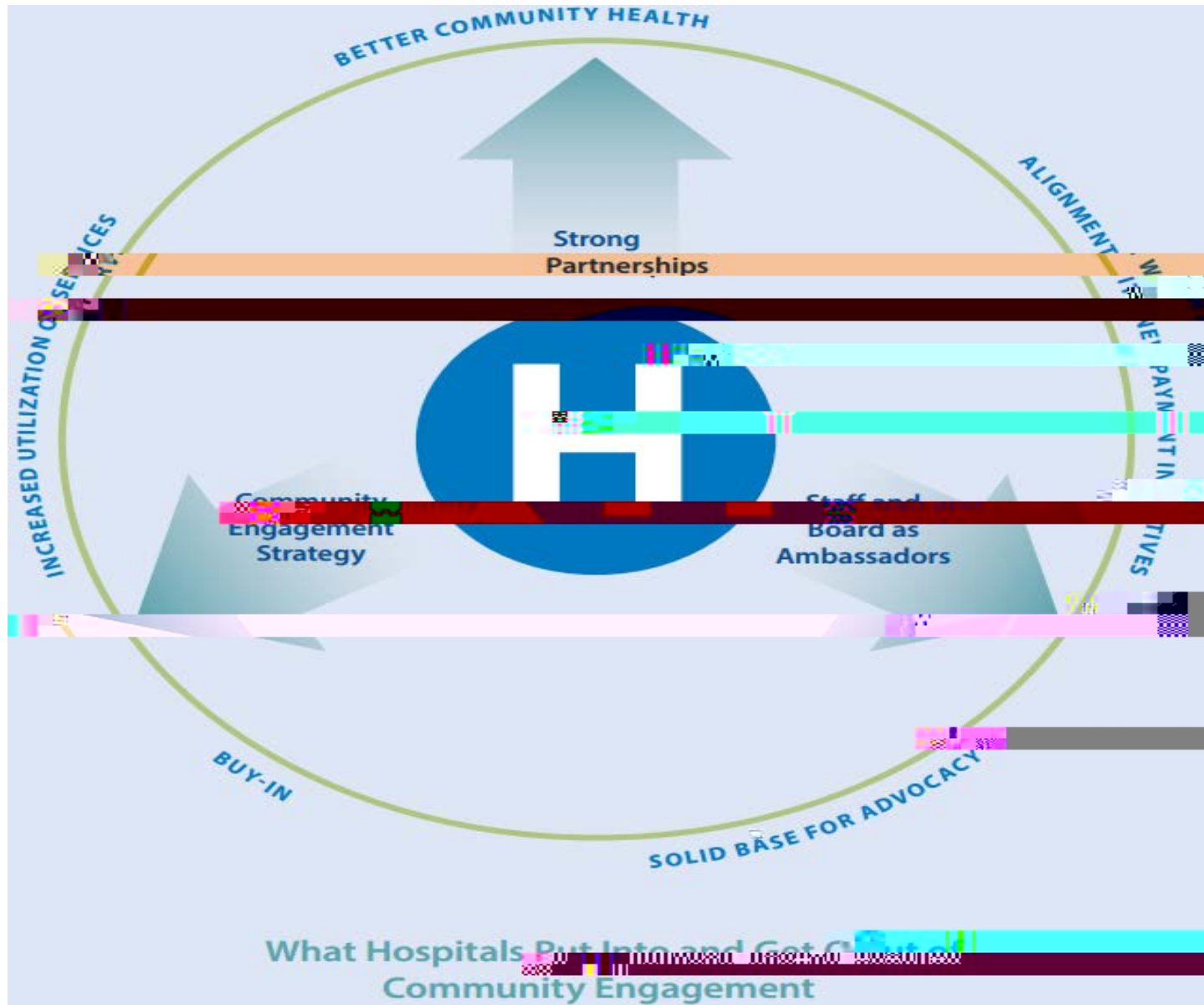
Health Partners Drivers Program



Source: Kindig, D.A., & Isham, G. (2014). Population health improvement: A community health business model that engages partners in all sectors. *Frontiers of Health Services Management*, 20(4), 3

Redefining the Blue H2014

- Washington Department of Health and Washington State Hospital Association
- Objectives:
 - Ensure access to prevention, 24/7 ER, primary care, behavioral health, oral health, long term care, home care, hospice, social services
 - Enable aging in place
 - Address rural health disparities
 - Achieve the triple aim in rural communities



Redefining the Blue H Strategies

- Promote comprehensive local community assessment, planning, and system development
 - Traditional health care and “non-traditional partners – schools, employers, economic development agencies
 - Align incentives and plans
 - Develop tools for community engagement and planning
 - Incorporate patient navigator concepts
 - Require joint assessment and planning for DOH programs

Rural Hospital and Community Strategies

- Build on Access Initiatives
- Coordinate and health prevention initiatives
- Share relationships
- Address determinants of health
- Exchange and use information for CHNAs

Contact Information

John A, Gale, MS

Senior Research Associate

Maine Rural Health Research Center

Muskie School of Public Service

University of Southern Maine

PO Box 9300

Portland, ME 04109-3000

John.gale@maine.edu

207.228.8246

