

STEP 5: EVALUATE ACTIVITIES

No matter what your resources, it's a good idea to step back periodically and take a look at how and whether your program is working. This process of evaluation is well worth the effort.

Evaluation can help you:

- Make sure your program is on time, on budget, and reaching your audience.
- Identify any program components that are not working so that you can make necessary improvements.
- Identify program activities that are successful so that you can celebrate achievements and share best practices.
- Make sure that cooperating organizations are doing what they promised and are satisfied with their roles.
- Provide evidence that you have reached your objectives.
- Strengthen future programs.

In Step 1, you set SMART Objectives for your GSW activities. Using these objectives, develop indicators to measure your progress. For more information visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief3.pdf>

Here are a number of methods to gather information to assess your indicators:

Monitor Your Program Timetable

Check periodically to ensure that deadlines are being met and resources used efficiently.

- Are activities taking place when scheduled? If not, examine procedures.
- Do you need to make schedules more realistic or to assign more people to a certain task?

Monitor Materials Dissemination

Track the number of materials being distributed to your audience at the various spots you chose for dissemination, such as health fairs or local merchants. For example, how many of the brochures left at the pediatrician's office have been taken? If the number seems low, try to make adjustments. Are they in an out-of-the-way spot? Could they be moved to a higher traffic area?

Track and Analyze Media Coverage

Scan newspapers and monitor radio and television programs to track your program coverage.

- How many articles, editorials, or letters have been published by the newspapers you contacted?
- How often has a radio station used the live announcer copy you sent?
- How many newsletters published an article about the GSW?
- How many people visited your website during the GSW? How many people downloaded materials from your website during the GSW?

If media coverage seems low, call your media contacts to remind them of the importance of your program. Ask whether they need different formats or other kinds of information.

Monitor Audience Response

To learn whether you are reaching your audience, you could track the number of people who respond as a result of your activities. Measures might include:

- The number of people who participated at your GSW events.
- The size of audiences at presentations.
- The number of callers who reference your materials.
- People's answers to a brief KAB (knowledge, attitude and behavior) survey about appropriate antibiotic use at an event.

Keep track of the kinds of questions people ask to help you design future activities that meet audience needs.

Monitor Partnerships

- Number of medical organizations, businesses, non-profit organizations, etc. involved in activities.
- Total value of corporate and foundation support received.
- Total value of in-kind support.
- Number of events financed.

Obtain Feedback

Ask for feedback from partnering organizations, volunteers, and other participants. Give them a chance to comment on their involvement with your organization or a particular GSW activity. A brief evaluation form (a.k.a., satisfaction survey) could ask:

- What worked particularly well?
- Which areas need improvement?
- How can improvements be made?
- What would they be willing to do next?

Use Evaluation Results

Whatever form of evaluation you choose, be sure to use the results. Modify procedures and look for more effective ways to distribute materials, shift resources, attract media or make other refinements as necessary. Above all, share your successes and lessons learned. Writing and speaking about your program is a good way to make other community groups and professionals more aware of antibiotic resistance.

What Next?

After the initial push during GSW, many organizers find that the initial enthusiasm for the program wanes. Appropriate antibiotic use education in your state will require sustained attention. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of your accomplishments, think about how your state's needs and interests may have changed, and consider the following activities:

- Publicize your successes and visibly show your appreciation to your sponsors and participants.
- Approach potential sponsors who were not able to help before. Tell them about your successes and ask for a commitment in the next phase of your program.
- Broaden or repeat the activities that seem to work best.
- Focus on integrating appropriate antibiotic use education into existing programs.
- Publicize your results and plan for ongoing activities, including next year's GSW event.