

Translating Population Health Science: Framework and Principles

IAPHS TRANSLATION COMMITTEE

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The Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science (IAPHS) is a new scientific organization that seeks to improve the health of populations and reduce health disparities. While the primary focus of IAPHS is facilitating rigorous population health research, IAPHS recognizes that improving population health requires both the generation of new knowledge and the use of rigorous science to inform important questions of policy and practice. As an organization, IAPHS aims to be at the forefront of these efforts to improve population health through greater use of evidence-based decision-making.

This aim requires engaging in three inter-related forms of research translation. First, scientists must be able to communicate with one another—integrating knowledge and methods from different disciplinary traditions—to identify the evidence available to guide decision-making. Second, scientists must be able to clearly describe, synthesize, and disseminate that interdisciplinary knowledge in ways that are accessible to a wide range of audiences, including lawmakers, administrators, community stakeholders, members of the media, and the public. Finally, scientists must be able to understand and incorporate the insights, priorities, and needs of decision-makers and integrate them into their work in ways that improve the scientific process by identifying shared research questions, alternative research hypotheses, and better ways to contextualize basic and applied research. Combining these three forms of research translation is the approach most likely to result in more informed decision-making when considering policies and practices able to improve population health.

Engaging in this translational work requires confronting the central and ongoing tension between the long-term evolution of scientific understanding and real-time needs of decision-makers seeking actionable information. The role of IAPHS is not to take on that of an advocacy organization, nor to ignore its commitment to remain consistently-engaged with opportunities to use rigorous science to improve societal outcomes. Instead, IAPHS should acknowledge this inherent tension and choose translational activities in the middle-ground—those able to promote both rigorous science and broader use of that science in decision-making. At this intersection, IAPHS will:

- **Develop** the capacity of members to communicate scientific information on population health to a wide variety of audiences, and **provide** infrastructure and support to educate and assist population health researchers in translating science into usable, accessible information;

- **Create** venues for active and ongoing engagement among population health scientists, policymakers, practitioners, and the media to learn from one another and inform each other's work, and thereby **stimulate** the development of new research questions and improved means of communicating scientific evidence;
- **Advance** greater societal understanding of the causes and consequences of population health through clear and accessible evaluation of the state of the science on important issues in population health policy and practice.