AcademyHealth Blueprint

What is AcademyHealth's Blueprint?

AcademyHealth's "Modernizing Federal Health Evidence: A Blueprint" is a plan for the long haul to build a more durable federal health evidence system. It is a standing prescription that focuses on the infrastructure for producing and using evidence regardless of who is in office. The Blueprint lays out clear structural fixes to protect research independence, modernize health data, secure sustainable funding, build the evidence workforce, and put evidence to work in decisions.

The goal isn't to rebuild the system as it was but to create something sturdier and better than what came before.

Who is it for?

This resource is for everyone who depends on reliable evidence, as well as those who help produce, use, or protect it. The Blueprint combines an agency-by-agency diagnosis with cross-cutting analyses and is designed to help:

Who It's For	What It Does
Patients and the public	Understand why a strong, independent health evidence system matters to the information they receive and the care they rely on.
Clinicians and health systems	Access to timely, credible evidence and better data to inform care and practice.
Researchers and universities	Access high-quality data, sustainable funding, and the infrastructure needed to conduct rigorous, policy-relevant research.
Federal and state leaders	Strengthen the institutions, data systems, and processes that produce and use health evidence.
Congress, funders, and advocates	Advance the legislative, funding, and administrative changes needed to make these improvements durable.

Why Does the Blueprint Matter?

Robust federal health evidence helps determine what we know about diseases and treatments, how safely medicines and vaccines are used, how health systems perform, and where additional funding and resources are needed. A durable, protected evidence infrastructure helps ensure those decisions are informed by reliable data and research.

How is it Actionable?

The Blueprint addresses necessary reforms for the federal health evidence enterprise (NIH, CDC, FDA, CMS, AHRQ, NCHS, ASPE, VA) as a whole and the states, territories, tribes, and partners the system depends on. It is intended to be useful across administrations and to outside actors who can advocate for these reforms. Key recommendations from the Blueprint include:

- **Make federal health guidance more transparent:** Require guidance to clearly state what is known, how confident the evidence is, what remains uncertain, and when it will be revisited.
- **Protect the integrity of federal health statistics:** Give NCHS statutory protections for its staff, funding, and statistical releases, and establish multi-year funding to modernize the nation's vital statistics system.
- **Strengthen the independence of federal research:** Protect research awards from political interference and establish statutory protections for the leadership and scientific functions of NIH, CDC, AHRQ, and other evidence agencies.
- **Modernize federal health data:** Set minimum standards for the timeliness, completeness, interoperability, and privacy of federal health data, while improving researcher access to data held across agencies.
- **Make evidence part of how government operates:** Require agencies to publish evaluation plans for major initiatives before they launch and publicly report how evidence informed major decisions.

Each recommendation in the Blueprint considers:

1. What officials can do now under existing authority
2. What new leadership can do with the authority it already holds
3. What only Congress can make durable

Goals of the Blueprint:

1. **Protect the independence of federal health research:** Ensure research and the federal science workforce is free from political interference.
2. **Modernize the nation's health data infrastructure:** Ensure health data is fast, up-to-date, and able to solve pressing research questions.
3. **Secure sustainable and accountable funding for evidence generation:** Steadily fund key research and systems that aren't subject to political or private pressures.
4. **Build and sustain the evidence workforce:** Protect the people and systems in place making this work possible.
5. **Embed evidence in policy and practice:** Build strong connections between evidence and the decisions it informs.

Why AcademyHealth:

AcademyHealth has a long track record across the health evidence enterprise. Our role as a convener and evidence translator gives us a close view of what the system can do and where it is vulnerable. Recent results include restoring federal research grants, efforts to protect and document impacts of canceled AHRQ grants, and more. Learn more about AcademyHealth here.

Get Involved:

- Explore the Blueprint at blueprint.academyhealth.org.
- Access our promotional toolkit to share with your networks.
- Review and provide feedback so AcademyHealth can build on and improve existing recommendations