

# 2015-2020 NBDPN STRATEGIC PLAN

Approved by the NBDPN Executive Committee in  
December 2014.

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## BACKGROUND

The National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN), a membership organization founded in 1997, became a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization in September of 2000. The NBDPN's leadership, recognizing the importance of long range planning, developed its first strategic plan in 2005 and renewed the plan in 2010. In May 2014, NBDPN formed the Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC), with input from the Strategic Planning Advisory Council (SPAC), to develop a new organization strategic plan for 2015-2020.

Strategic planning improves the alignment between mission, programs, resources, and relationships. Through this planning process, the Steering and Advisory groups determined **what** the NBDPN intends to accomplish and **how** its resources will be directed toward accomplishing these goals over the coming months and years.

The SPSC identified three GOALS:

- Governance – strengthen organizational effectiveness
- Surveillance & Data – promote stewardship and utility of data
- Communication & Training – improve communications both internally and externally

Through discussions with key organizational leaders as well as previous experience, the SPSC realized that the new strategic plan should prioritize and focus on core GOALS in order to maximize the organizations' strengths, efficiency, and sustainability. Each GOAL includes PRIORITY AREAS (see Figure 1). Also, three OVERARCHING THEMES were identified:

- Promote workforce development
- Advance science application to support birth defects surveillance and education
- Leverage relationships and expertise among members, affiliates, and other strategic partners

Additional tools were developed in order to analyze current status and future directions. As per the prior strategic planning process, the NBDPN leadership reflected on the organization's existing qualities and available resources as of 2014. This included identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) to examine the internal and external factors that could affect the organization's success, progress, and sustainability.

The NBDPN Strategic Plan for 2015-2020 is more succinct and focused than the prior five year plan, with the hope of aligning and clarifying the work of the committees and groups. No activities were selected that could not be implemented by a Committee or Group. There is an increased emphasis on member services, increasing visibility, advocacy,

## NBDPN MISSION

The mission of the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) is to establish and maintain a national network of state and population-based programs for birth defects surveillance and research. The NBDPN assesses the impact of birth defects upon children, families, and health care; identifies factors that can be used to develop primary prevention strategies; and assists families and their providers in secondary disabilities prevention.

To fulfill its mission, the NBDPN pursues the following goals:

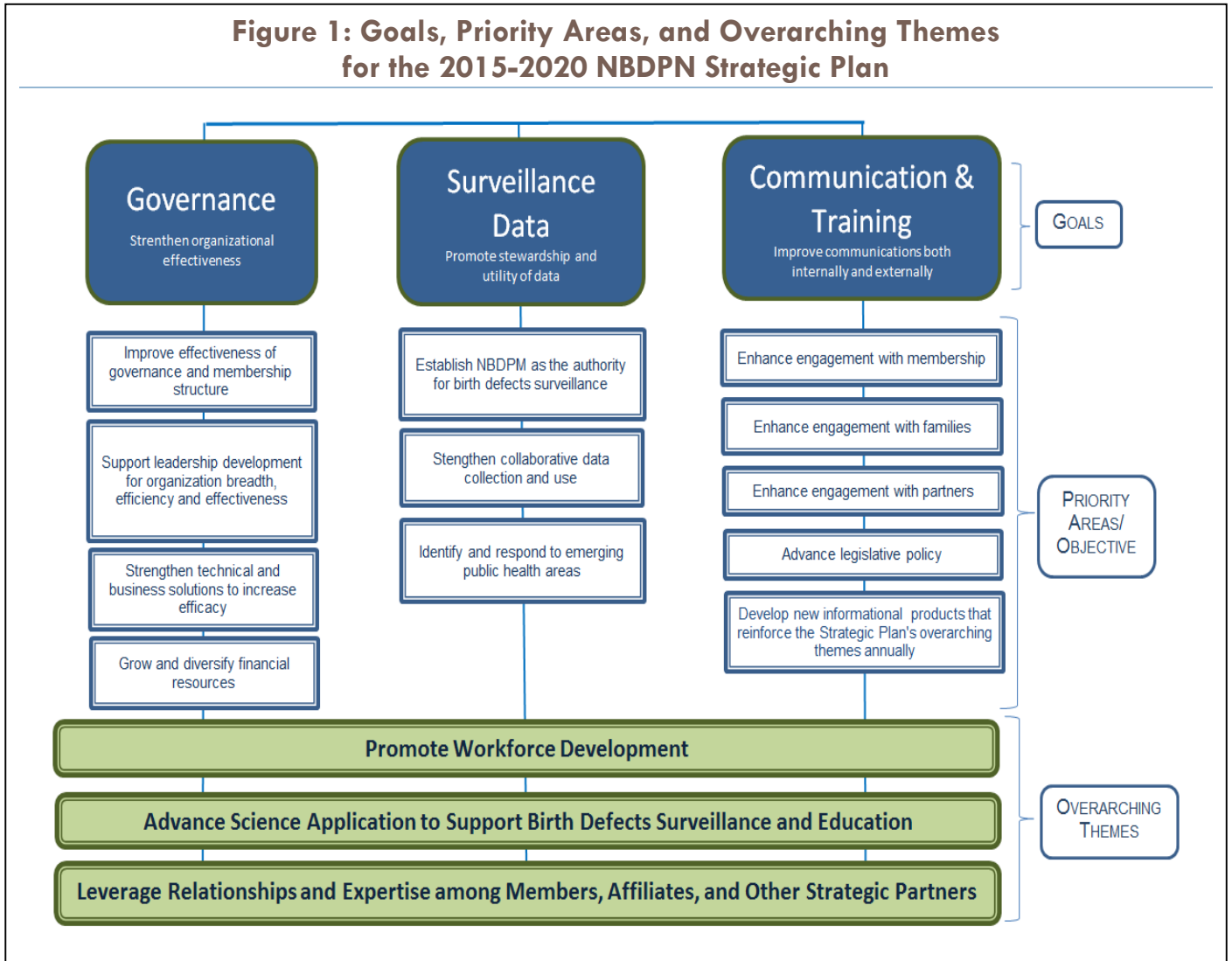
- **Improve access** and application of information about the prevalence and trends of birth defects
- **Increase collaboration** between members within the birth defects community
- **Advance science** through birth defects surveillance and its application to public health efforts and resource allocation

## VISION

BIRTH DEFECTS SURVEILLANCE  
ADVANCES SCIENCE AND ITS  
APPLICATION TO BIRTH  
DEFECTS PREVENTION.

and financial sustainability. Activities planned to support each objective take into consideration government efforts, opportunities for impact, capacity, resources, and available measurement strategies. Each objective is approached through a variety of activities that will lead to capacity building, revenue diversification, outcomes measurement, marketing, and responsiveness to validated member needs.

**Figure 1: Goals, Priority Areas, and Overarching Themes for the 2015-2020 NBDPN Strategic Plan**



The 2015 – 2020 NBDPN Strategic Plan was approved by the Executive Committee on December 17, 2014. The SPSC is charged with developing an implementation plan to monitor progress. Questions or comments about the NBDPN Strategic Plan can be sent to [nbdpn@nbdpn.org](mailto:nbdpn@nbdpn.org).

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE 2015-2020 NBDPN STRATEGIC PLAN

### Goal 1: Strengthen NBDPN governance to attain recommended nonprofit standards and ensure effectiveness and sustainability.

**Objective 1: Improve Effectiveness of Governance and Membership Structure to support the mission of the NBDPN:** Develop a governance structure that meets or exceeds the standards for incorporation in the state of Delaware, and 501(c)(3) corporations promoted by Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Standards and the Standards for Excellence Institute.

**Measurement:** Standards met, Governance Board in place.

**Activities:**

- a. Strategic Planning group to develop the transition team and leaders to assume the responsibilities of transition.
- b. Establish transition team to:
  1. Identify best method for NBDPN to develop a governance-focused Board.
  2. Develop Board expectations profile.
  3. Recruit Board and new members:
    - i. Use BoardSource or other non-profit identify skills, characteristics, and qualities of desired Board members and number of Board members needed. Develop necessary Board attraction and candidate screening tools.
    - ii. Develop and implement a Board member recruitment plan using existing and new networks (e.g. alumnae, website, E News, LinkedIn, and annual meeting).
  4. Develop timeline for transition to new model that takes advantage of natural transition points and voting requirements.
    - i. Draft bylaw revisions.
      1. Sent to attorney.
      2. Target 2016 EC call to vote on draft bylaws, followed by membership vote to occur before annual meeting.
    - ii. Potential Board members by May-September 2016.
      1. Some people on EC could transition to places on the Board.
    - iii. Slate for Board membership in October 2016.
    - iv. Voting will fall during the usual timeline (November 2016) for NBDPN elections
- c. Develop, disseminate and implement appropriate NBDPN structure (as per needs/gaps in 1.a.) to the membership in meeting the standards as decided on by the Board and transition team.
- d. Identify and use nonprofit resources appropriate to the size and scope of the NBDPN related to governance, policy development, Board recruitment, etc...

**Objective 2: Support leadership development for organization breadth, efficiency, and effectiveness and support the mission of the NBDPN:** Increase the knowledge and skills of NBDPN leadership in governance and leadership succession annually. Provide a venue to regularly update the membership on Board activities. Strengthen the relationship between the Board and the general membership.

**Measurement:** Smooth transition to new leaders, biennial (every other year) member survey of leadership, successful policy development, and planning.

**Activities:**

- a. Identify and ensure access to educational opportunities for leadership based on most pressing needs.
  1. Examples include: leadership coaching, technical assistance, and/or advice as needed (e.g. BoardSource).
  2. Allocate financial resources to Board and leadership development.
- b. Develop a system for identifying and mentoring potential future leaders.
- c. Develop processes or systems for transparency and accountability.

**Objective 3: Strengthen technical and business solutions to increase efficiency and support the mission of the NBDPN:** Increase efficiency of administrative oversight functions.

**Measurement:** Increase efficiency of administrative oversight functions.

**Activities:**

- a. Explore resources available through the Delaware Association of Nonprofits and other resources for office support, fiscal management, D&O insurance, liability insurance, policy templates, etc...
- b. Identify and implement the best model for minimizing the organizational burden and increase the efficiency in regards to cost of day to day financial management, insurance, federal and state reporting, membership management, and specific policy development.
- c. Generally monitor practicality, efficiency, and cost savings of administrative model chosen and annually report to network.

**Objective 4: Grow and diversify financial resources to support the mission of the NBDPN:** Increase and diversify financial resources, maintaining appropriate minimal annual revenues (current \$8,000 to \$10,000).

**Measurement:** Increase in annual unrestricted revenue, sponsorships, and/or grants.

**Activities:**

- a. Maintain an average of 200 paid members annually to meet basic revenue needs.
  1. Enforce rules of membership to include timely payment of dues.
  2. Improve visibility of the benefits of membership.
- b. Develop annual revenue generation to be shared with membership.  
Maximize fund raising activities at in-person annual meeting with a minimum goal of \$5,000 (e.g. raffle, silent auction, book signing, T shirts, photo ops, formal dinner, or award banquet).
- c. Explore a variety of small fundraising activities (e.g. annual giving campaign, designated gifts for memorials, retirement, etc...).  
Provide incentives for multi-year membership packages and 'bring a friend' memberships, as well as enhanced membership levels.
- d. Secure professional assistance to research and/or pursue sponsorships/grants.

## Goal II: Promote stewardship and utility of birth defects data in states and nationally.

**Objective 1: Enhance our leadership role as the authority for birth defects surveillance.** Advance national standards development for birth defects surveillance. Serve as a collective voice for population-based birth defects surveillance in the United States.

**Measurement:** Technical tools, standards implementation, agency accreditation, and program certification.

**Activities:**

- a. Advance national standards development for birth defects surveillance through tool development and evaluation rating methods for data quality and utility.
- b. Update the “Guidelines for Conducting Birth Defects Surveillance” manual.
- c. Develop and distribute technical tools for birth defects surveillance.
- d. Participate in international (e.g. ICBDSR), federal (e.g. CSTE), state, or other partners’ meetings (e.g. MCH Epidemiology; AMCHP) to promote birth defects surveillance.
- e. Contribute to public health agency accreditation standards to include birth defects surveillance.
- f. Develop state program certification for national standards.

**Objective 2: Strengthen collaborative data use.** Turn data into action.

**Measurement:** Completed data repository procedure, data submissions, use of state data in publications

**Activities:**

- a. Develop guidelines and procedures to establish a data repository and receive data submissions for use in multi-state collaborative projects.
- b. Increase functionality of queryable database (e.g., Peristats) for public use.
- c. Respond to data requests for national performance measures (e.g., Healthy People 2020).
- d. Develop and implement impactful collaborative projects for distribution (e.g., publications).

**Objective 3: Identify, address, and evaluate response to emerging public health concerns.** Apply knowledge and technical expertise.

**Measurement:** Development of resources/tools to address emerging public health needs.

**Activities:**

- a. Develop process for timely identification of emerging public health concerns (e.g., critical congenital heart defects).
- b. Explore novel data linkages to identify and answer emerging public health concerns.
- c. Identify needs of the population living with birth defects.

### Goal III: Strengthen internal and external promotion and communication activities to raise visibility, retain current members, and attract new members.

**Objective 1: Enhance engagement with membership:** Increase member engagement with the NBDPN to ensure relevance and sustainability annually.

**Measurement:** Membership survey and website utilization.

**Activities:**

- a. Update and implement a Promotion and Communications Plan annually that includes quarterly actions that support release of predictable products/events/reports/services and an easy way to integrate opportunistic communications/marketing efforts.
- b. Using Google Analytics, measure the reach and effectiveness of member communication tools and strategies (e.g. newsletter, E-News, annual report, member only website areas) quarterly and set targets for improvement.
- c. Provide benefits for member retention and reminders for renewals.
- d. Engage members.
  1. Provide a wide range of engagement opportunities to members, including one-time tasks, to maximize member involvement.
  2. Re-design the members-only section of the NBDPN website to improve functionality and usefulness and promote content.
  3. Foster and encourage mentorship among members.
- e. Using simple online surveys (e.g. Survey Monkey) gauge perceptions at least every other year on how well the NBDPN is meeting member needs and respond to specific requests when possible.
- f. Develop new informational products that reinforce the Strategic Plan's overarching themes annually.

**Objective 2: Enhance engagement with families:** Increase engagement of those affected by birth defects to ensure relevance and sustainability annually.

**Measurement:** One new parent group outreach resource annually.

**Activities:**

- a. Maintain special parent/parent group outreach and engagement to ensure their voice is heard by members and they have a meaningful role to play.
- b. Explore feasibility of integrating resources for parents on the website and access to experts.
- c. Enhance and develop new NBDPN materials that can be used to promote the organization and population-based birth defects surveillance.
- d. Leverage relationships and expertise among members, affiliates, parents, and other strategic partners to support communications strategies.
- e. Develop new informational products that reinforce the Strategic Plan's overarching themes annually.

**Objective 3: Enhance engagement with partners:** Increase partner engagement with the NBDPN to ensure relevance and sustainability annually.

**Measurement:** Increased membership, increased member retention, increased revenue, more social media followers, and more website visitors

**Activities:**

- a. Enhance and develop new NBDPN materials that can be used to promote the organization, research, and education.
- b. Maintain and enhance partnerships across sectors (e.g., state programs, CDC, and March of Dimes).
- c. Identify specific projects/efforts around which the NBDPN can engage partners.

**Objective 4: Advance Public Policy:** Maintain public policy capacity to support current and desired federal and state policies and funding that ensure birth defects surveillance, research, and prevention continue and grow annually.

**Measurement:** Membership survey and website utilization.

**Activities:**

- a. Update the public policy plan that focuses on specific issues the NBDPN sees as crucial to birth defects surveillance, such as funding levels.
- b. Provide ways that individuals can participate in advocacy as voters.
- c. Provide those individuals interested in public policy with tools (e.g. fact sheet, letters, etc.).
- d. Participate with partner organizations in educational visits with health policy makers.
- e. Maintain a member action alert system to mobilize action when needed.