

AHRQ's Primary Care Practice Facilitation Forum

This email newsletter is the first step in our plan to create a learning network for individuals with an interest in practice facilitation. We will use this listserve to share perspectives on questions and answers submitted by learning forum members, as well as resources, research articles, and events of interest.

Perspectives from the Field

How should a facilitation program decide what activities its facilitators should focus on, and how can a key driver model help?

Below are some perspectives from Darren DeWalt, Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Other programs are likely to have different perspectives, depending on their focus, context, and other factors. How does your experience compare?

How should a facilitation program decide what activities its facilitators should focus on?

Darren DeWalt: To organize an improvement effort, it is very helpful to have a theory of how the aims will be achieved. Developing that theory will help to decide what activities the facilitators focus on. Moreover, developing measures of implementation/activity around key components of the theory can help to guide and monitor the work of practice facilitators. Many models exist to start putting the theory into place. For example, PCMH and the chronic care model have several facets of care that should be implemented to achieve the desired outcomes. Keeping facilitators and the practices focused on the key elements of the model is important for the success of the initiative. There are always a lot of things a facilitator can work on with the practice, but if the program has clear aims/goals, it will help to have a clear theory of what will achieve those goals.

How can a key driver model help?

Darren DeWalt: A key driver is a distillation of that theory into a one-page document that can guide all the participants. It takes some discipline to put together a key driver, but it will go a long way to keep the team focused on the important elements in the system we are trying to change. It also establishes a framework for building change interventions and for facilitating communication. Lastly, it becomes the framework around which we can measure implementation of your program. In the context of practice facilitation, it may be helpful to monitor progress of teams in implementing a patient registry (generally a key driver in practice QI efforts). At the practice facilitation level, measuring the key driver can help to steer use of resources. If many practices are struggling with registry implementation, and it is a key component of the theory and key driver, the program will detect this through measurement and bring in

more resources (specialized facilitators, enhanced training of facilitators, etc.) to improve implementation.

For more information, see **Chapter 4** of [Developing and Running a Practice Facilitation Program for Primary Care Transformation: A How-To Guide](#), which provides information on developing your PF approach and strategy, and focusing your facilitators on high-yield activities that are aligned with your program goals. Some of the topics in this chapter include:

- Creating a key driver model
- Incorporating a variety of QI approaches and strategies
- Outlining the stages of your strategy and key activities for each
- Deciding on the dose and schedule
- Deciding on the location of the services (onsite or remote)
- Defining the role and core activities of your facilitators

What do you think?

If you'd like to join the discussion, please send your thoughts to us at PracticeFacilitation@mathematica-mpr.com. Your responses will be compiled and shared in weekly newsletters.

Question of the Week

How can facilitators assist a practice in meaningful use of health IT tools, including registries and EHRs?

Submit your thoughts to PracticeFacilitation@mathematica-mpr.com. Your responses will be shared in next week's newsletter.

Please also let us know what other questions you are pondering by sending an email to the same address.

Upcoming Event

Practice Facilitation Webinar- Part II

Wednesday, April 11th, 12:15-1:30 EDT **Save the Date!**

Title: Hiring and Training Practice Facilitators

Description: What should you look for when you are hiring a facilitator? What type of training do facilitators need to be effective? This webinar will discuss the core competencies needed by facilitators and various staffing models used by existing facilitation programs, as well as approaches and strategies for training your facilitators.

Webinar registration link to be included in future newsletters. Stay tuned!

Resources

Please visit the PCMH Resource Center at www.pcmh.ahrq.gov to explore white papers, briefs, a searchable citations database, and other resources related to the Patient-Centered Medical Home and primary care improvement.

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