

Welcome to the Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality's (AHRQ) Practice Facilitation Forum!

This email is the first step in our plan to create a learning network for individuals who have an interest in practice facilitation to learn from and interact with others. Using this listserve, each week we plan to share perspectives on questions and answers submitted by learning forum members, as well as resources, research articles, and events of interest.

The first question, with an answer from Dr. Michael Parchman, is below.

The basis for this Forum and the first resource we'd like to share with you is the Practice Facilitation manual, which AHRQ recently released. It is available for free download at ["Developing and Running a Practice Facilitation Program for Primary Care Transformation: A How-To Guide."](#)

Please also take a moment to read the information outlined below to learn how to manage your accounts for this listserve.

We look forward to learning with and from all of you!

Regards,

David Meyers, MD
Director
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Questions from the Field

Q: Is there evidence about the effectiveness of practice facilitation in primary care settings?

A: Yes, there is a growing evidence base for the effectiveness of practice facilitation in primary care settings. A systematic review and meta-analysis of practice facilitation from 23 studies was published in January of 2012 in the *Annals of Family Medicine*.¹

Here are the key findings:

- Primary care practices were almost 3 times more likely to adopt evidence-based guidelines through practice facilitation compared to control practices (OR 2.7; 95% CI, 2.18–3.43).
- Practice facilitation studies that reported an intervention tailored to the context and needs of the practice were more effective than studies that did not report tailoring (overall effect size for these practices = 0.62; 95% CI, 0.48–0.75; $P = .05$).
- Fewer practices per facilitator and more frequent facilitation visits were associated with larger effect sizes.

These latter findings support the importance of an on-going longitudinal relationship between a facilitator and a practice, and highlight the difference between educational outreach/academic detailing and the type of sustained facilitation that is crucial for practices to implement fundamental changes necessary to improve patient care.

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¹Baskerville BN, Liddy C, Hogg W. Systematic review and meta-analysis of practice facilitation within primary care settings. *Ann Fam Med* 2012;10:63-74.

What do you think?

If you'd like to join the discussion, please send your thoughts on the questions below or let us know what other questions you have by sending an email to PracticeFacilitation@mathematica-mpr.com.

What is the ideal number of practices per facilitator?

How often and how many visits should a facilitator make to a practice?

Should facilitation be tailored to the practice and the nature of the intervention?

How should one go about this 'tailoring' process?

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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