

AHRQ's Primary Care Practice Facilitation Forum

This email newsletter is the first step in building 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.

June 1, 2012

Perspectives from the Field

How does one evaluate the effectiveness of a practice facilitation program?

Below are some perspectives from a PF expert:

- *Diane Powers, M.A., University of Washington AIMS Center (<http://uwaims.org>)*

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

Diane Powers: The purpose of practice facilitation is to support implementation of practice change. Therefore, the primary measure of effectiveness for both the practice change itself and the practice facilitation program supporting that change is the extent to which the desired changes are implemented. A first step in measuring effectiveness is identifying the outcomes that are of interest.

1. Clinical Outcomes: If the practice change is intended to affect patient level clinical outcomes, this is the most important measure of effectiveness. Practices should identify a target for each clinical outcome that is based on the published literature and/or published best practice guidelines and is realistic and achievable. Progress toward improved clinical outcomes should be routinely measured and reviewed so that these metrics inform the practice facilitation process.

2. Clinical Processes: Practice changes not tied to patient level clinical outcomes are also important as measures of the effectiveness of the practice change and the practice facilitation program. Practices should identify specific targets for clinical processes (e.g., 80% of diabetics will receive annual foot exams) that are based on the published literature and/or published best practice guidelines. Progress toward these goals should be routinely measured and reviewed to inform the practice facilitation process.

3. Sustain and Spread: The extent to which the practice change is institutionalized as the new usual care, sustained over time and spread within the organization, is an important measure of the effectiveness of the practice change initiative and the practice facilitation.

4. Practice Facilitation Process: Not all practice change initiatives are successful. In most cases organizational factors are the primary predictors of success. Practice facilitator(s) can identify and make every effort to positively influence these organizational factors; however, the extent to which the organization is capable of cooperating with this process varies and is outside the control of the practice facilitator(s). It is important for practice facilitators to regularly solicit feedback (brief quantitative and/or qualitative data) from key stakeholders regarding the practice facilitation process and their satisfaction with both the process and outcomes of the practice facilitation. Practice facilitators should also debrief with clients at the end of a project to discuss what went well and what did not go as planned or desired to inform future efforts.

What Do You Think?

As a member of this learning community, we would like to get your perspectives on the following question. **Please submit your responses to PracticeFacilitation@mathematica-mpr.com** and we will share them in upcoming newsletters.

- **How does one sustainably fund a practice facilitation program?**

Do you have other questions? Open a discussion by sending your questions to the same address.

Event of Interest

The **CAHPS Consortium** would like to hear about survey users' experiences with the **Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Item Set (specifically, the CAHPS Clinician & Group 12-Month Survey with the PCMH Item Set, sometimes referred to as the PCMH Survey)**. CAHPS would welcome feedback about the questionnaire as well as administration guidelines.

Web conference calls have been scheduled for:

- Tuesday, June 12th at 3-4 pm ET
- Thursday, June 14th at 1-2 pm ET

If you have implemented the PCMH Item Set and are interested in providing feedback to the CAHPS Consortium at one of the two scheduled sessions, please contact the CAHPS User Network at cahps1@westat.com or 1-800-492-9261 with the following information:

About you

- Your name
- Organization
- Position
- Contact information
- Please indicate if you are unable to attend a specific session.

About the survey

- What organization fielded the survey?
- When did you use the PCMH Item Set?
- At what level was the survey administered (e.g., provider, practice site, group)?
- Please attach a copy of the survey that was fielded.

Please respond no later than Tuesday, June 5 to cahps1@westat.com or 1-800-492-9261. Three users will be invited to participate in each feedback session. You can expect to hear back from the CAHPS Consortium by Friday, June 8.

Resources

Check out the [PCPF Updates page](#) at the PCMH Resource Center (www.pcmh.ahrq.gov).

We've posted information about upcoming learning opportunities, previous editions of the PCPF eNewsletter, and slides and audio from the Practice Facilitation Webinars.

Please also 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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