

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 listserv to share perspectives on questions and answers submitted by learning forum members, as well as resources, research articles, and events of interest.

Please join the discussion by sending your thoughts to us at PracticeFacilitation@mathematica-mpr.com. Your responses will be compiled and shared in weekly newsletters.

April 6, 2012

Perspectives from the Field

What are the core competencies needed by practice facilitators? How do you select your educational approach and training strategies for your practice facilitators?

Below are some perspectives from Cheryl Aspy, Ph.D., University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center:

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

What are the core competencies needed by practice facilitators?

Cheryl Aspy: Practice facilitators (we call them PEAs – Practice Enhancement Assistants) need several competencies before they are placed in one of our primary care practices. Some of these competencies are required as a part of our hiring process and others we can help individuals acquire. In the first category, we include sufficient medical vocabulary and experience in a health care setting so that they can be helpful rather than impeding the work of the clinic when they first begin working there. Understanding how a primary care practice works is critical and all of our PEAs spend time observing another PEA before they work independently. Interpersonal skills are high on our list as well as sufficient computer skills to collect and manage data as well as produce reports. We look for these skills in those we hire. Other competencies are related to processes we use to help practices change and include such things as rapid cycle quality improvement (QI) techniques, chart auditing, facilitating a meeting, practice redesign, and specific knowledge related to a QI project. More detail can be obtained at:

<http://www.innovations.ahrq.gov/content.aspx?id=1768>

How do you select your educational approach and training strategies for your practice facilitators?

Cheryl Aspy: We have identified core skills that are essential for our practice facilitators and have developed a training curriculum that we use. This curriculum identifies knowledge, skills and approaches that are essential to working with primary care practices. Each new PEA spends time in individual instruction with the training manual as the key content, which is followed by observing a

more experienced PEA working in a practice setting. When new projects are initiated, we determine the new knowledge and skills required and develop specific training interventions to match the curriculum. Most training includes visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (hands-on application) processes. From time to time, our practice facilitators will identify specific skills they would like to acquire. Training for these skills is developed and then implemented as time allows.

Questions of the Week

- What is the staffing model used by your practice facilitation program?
- Why did you choose this model over others, and what are the pros and cons?

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

Upcoming Event

Practice Facilitation Webinar- Part II

Wednesday, April 11th, 12:30-2:00 EDT **Save the Date and Register Below!**

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:

<https://mathematicampr.webex.com/mathematicampr/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=664008699>

Resources

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

We've posted information about upcoming learning opportunities, slides and audio from the first Practice Facilitation Webinar (held on February 2, 2012), and previous editions of the PCPF eNewsletter. Let us know what you think at PracticeFacilitation@mathematica-mpr.com.

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