

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.

April 20, 2012

Perspectives from the Field

How does a facilitation program reach out to practices?

Below are some perspectives from two PF experts:

- *Brenda Fraser, M.Sc, Cancer Care Ontario*
- *Mary Ruhe, R.N., M.P.H., Case Western Reserve University*

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

Brenda Fraser: The way in which a facilitation program engages primary care practices will depend to some degree on the structure of the program. For example, when recruiting practices to participate in an organized QI initiative such as a Learning Collaborative that is targeted to a particular clinical improvement aim (i.e., access or diabetes care), facilitation would be a core part of the support provided to practices during their active engagement and learning over a defined time period from the enrollment and readiness assessment phase through to planning for sustainability and spread.

As part of the implementation plan, recruitment materials need to be developed that are designed to market the value of the initiative including the benefits to physicians, their patients and their practice teams. These materials can include an invitation letter, FAQs, and links to articles demonstrating the case for improvement. It is also helpful to partner with physician organizations that can distribute information through their bulletins or communication channels to increase reach and lend credibility to the importance of the initiative. Invitation letters, testimonials or short "success stories" from recognized leaders or peers within the local physician community also create a more tangible connection to the recruitment effort. These initial materials can be enhanced by offering a series of "open-calls" or "webinars" that provide opportunities for interested practices to participate in an information session to learn more and pose questions. These calls are effective tools to help gauge practice interest but also to identify some of the needs and issues that exist.

Mary Ruhe: There are many ways to reach out to practices to offer facilitation for improvement or change initiatives. Most of my experience has been through the combination of practice-based research

and facilitation services. This can be a win-win arrangement; however, other options can work equally well. Facilitation programs I have worked with have team members with existing relationships among local health care providers and leverage those personal relationships to make connections with practices. This approach leads to a snowball effect and word-of-mouth program promotion. One facilitation service reaches out by offering free educational events, a speaker series, open grand rounds, keynote addresses at local public events, and webinars in tandem with fee-based services.

What do you think?

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.

Question of the Week

- **How does a facilitation program determine a practice's readiness for a facilitation intervention?**

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

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

Resources

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. The PCMH Resource Center at www.pcmh.ahrq.gov also offers 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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