

AHRQ's Primary Care Practice Facilitation Forum

New & Noteworthy

PCMH Resource Center

The primary care medical home, also referred to as the patient centered medical home (PCMH), advanced primary care, and the healthcare home, is a promising model for transforming the organization and delivery of primary care.

We provide implementers, decision makers, and researchers with access to evidence-based resources about the medical home and its potential to transform primary care and improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of U.S. health care.

Please visit us at pcmh.ahrq.gov.

This electronic newsletter continues our efforts toward building a learning network for individuals with an interest in practice facilitation. We will use this listserv to share questions and answers submitted by learning forum members, as well as resources, research articles, and events of interest to the community.

Key Concepts in Practice Facilitation – Previewing New Modules

Helping Practices Optimize Electronic Health Records (EHRs) for Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Transformation and Quality Improvement

Practices can optimize their EHR to support key PCMH functions, including quality improvement (QI). As a practice facilitator, you may be called on to help practices evaluate and optimize their EHR and other related information technology (IT). This work includes assessing a practice's current use of their EHR, creating an action plan for enhancing EHR use, helping practices improve EHR-related workflows, and improving the quality, efficiency, and usefulness of a practice's reporting.

As a practice facilitator, deciding how much hands-on support to provide to a practice with its EHR and reporting systems can be difficult. Typically, the goal is to build internal capacity in the practices so they can continuously improve and operate according to the principles of the PCMH. One way practice facilitators can help with this is to help create a time and space for practices to gain comfort with their EHR system, reflect on how they are interacting with and using it, and then plan how they can optimize its use to support better care, better patient experience, and better staff experience.

The new module will include sample resources to support practice facilitators in this work. For example, there are sample templates for use when planning EHR evaluations, and helping practice members identify how they can use their EHR to support the principles of the PCMH. The module also includes sample workflow maps for assessing processes involving EHRs and suggestions on how to use these to support work process redesign efforts. Finally, the module analyzes reports typically generated by EHRs and provides a sample inventory form, enabling practice facilitators to take stock of available reports and how they can be used to support care improvement.

For more information on effectively utilizing EHRs, look for our new module in our upcoming, expanded version of *The Practice Facilitation Handbook: Training Modules for New Facilitators and Their Trainers*. This module was also the focus of our October webinar, which you can still listen to through this link: [Use of Health IT](#). This includes full access to all the resources available during the live event.

Additionally, if you would like to listen to any of our other PF webinars in the series, regarding the [PF Case Studies](#), [Supporting Patient Safety](#), [Patient Engagement](#), or [Introducing the PF Curriculum](#), respectively, please click the appropriate link and register for the event you wish to listen to. If you have already registered for these events, simply sign in. This will bring you to all of the resources available during the live event, including audio and a slide deck.

Related Resource

New White Papers! *New Resources for Quality Improvement in Primary Care*

The Agency for Health Research and Quality (AHRQ) has released two new white papers on quality improvement (QI) in primary care practices. Revitalizing primary care in the United States is critically

important to achieving high quality, accessible, and efficient health care for all Americans, and engaging in QI is critical to achieving that goal.

The first paper, [Engaging Primary Care Practices in Quality Improvement: Strategies for Practice Facilitators](#), is geared to practice facilitators and the organizations that deploy them, and describes how facilitators can engage primary care practices as they begin and sustain QI work. It distills wisdom and best practices from experts who have honed their approaches through working on QI and practice redesign initiatives with more than 6,000 practices in 44 States. The white paper, [associated brief](#), and related resources, including a related tip sheet for primary care practices, are available online from AHRQ's [PCMH Resource Center](#) at pcmh.ahrq.gov

The second paper, [Using Health Information Technology to Support Quality Improvement in Primary Care](#), describes how practices can use health information technology (health IT) to support ongoing QI and is written for primary care practices, practice facilitators and the organizations that deploy them, IT developers and standards certifiers, and decisionmakers. It shares lessons learned from discussions with experts in fields such as health IT, clinical practice, primary care transformation, and human factors engineering, as well as with representatives of three primary care organizations that have made exemplary use of health IT for QI. This white paper, [associated brief](#), and additional information for primary care practices can also be accessed online at the [PCMH Resource Center](#) at pcmh.ahrq.gov.

Both papers and accompanying briefs were developed with researchers at Mathematica Policy Research under a contract with AHRQ.

Upcoming Event

Harnessing the Power of Your EHR for Quality Improvement: Successful Strategies from Primary Care Colleagues

Register Now! Thursday, April 30 from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. ET

This webinar is designed for primary care practices interested in improving care delivery and those who support them in making changes. Health IT can be an important and effective tool for primary care practices to use in their ongoing quality improvement (QI) efforts. However, significant barriers have limited the use of health IT to support QI. Despite these barriers, exemplary primary care practices and organizations have found ways to effectively use health IT to support QI efforts. These practices can offer lessons to support and increase the use of health IT to improve the quality of health care delivery and patient and population health outcomes.

The session draws on findings of a recently-published [AHRQ white paper](#) (noted above) and will focus on how three exemplary primary care organizations are working towards maximizing the functionality of EHRs and other forms of health IT to use these tools efficiently and effectively for QI.

Panelists represent a small independent primary care practice; a large academic primary care practice; and a health information network that supports primary care practices, particularly federally qualified health centers and other safety net clinics:

- Gregory Reicks, D.O., FAAFP, President, Foresight Family Physicians, Chief Medical Officer, Mesa Co. IPA, Chairman, Quality Health Network
- Richelle Koopman, M.D., M.S., Associate Professor, Curtis W. and Ann H. Long Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of Missouri
- Tim Hogan, R.R.T., Ph.D., Coordinator of Quality Assessment and Improvement, Curtis W. and Ann H. Long Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of Missouri
- Scott Fields, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, OCHIN (Oregon Community Health Information Network)

This webinar is free and open to the public. To register, please click [here](#).

Upcoming Event

Care Management: Key Elements and Implications for Medical Practice, Health Policy and Health Services Research

Register Now! Wednesday, April 15 from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. ET

AHRQ and the University of Utah are hosting a webinar to discuss a white paper highlighting care management and the findings of various AHRQ-funded studies. Moderated by Janice Genevro and Michael Harrison of AHRQ, speakers include:

- Ed Wagner, MD, MPH, Group Health Research Institute Senior Investigator and Director (Emeritus), MacColl Center
- Timothy W. Farrell, MD, AGSF, University of Utah
- Andrada Tomoaia-Cotisel, MPH, MHA, PhD (Cand), University of Utah
- Debra Scammon, PhD, University of Utah
- Julie Day, MD, University of Utah
- Michael Magill, MD, University of Utah

There is no cost to participate and pre-registration is not required. To attend the webinar, either join the meeting by [WebEx](#) (Password: Ahrq123), or join by phone by calling the toll-free number, 1-877-668-4490 (US/Canada), and entering the access code: 715 471 447.

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