The National Evaluation

EvidenceNOW: Advancing Heart Health in Primary Care is an initiative of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to transform health care delivery by building a critical infrastructure to help smaller primary care practices improve the heart health of their patients by applying the latest medical research and tools. EvidenceNOW establishes seven regional cooperatives composed of public and private health partnerships that will provide a variety of quality improvement services typically not available to small primary care practices. The goal of this initiative is to ensure that primary care practices have the evidence they need to help their patients adopt the ABCS of cardiovascular disease prevention: Aspirin in high-risk individuals, Blood pressure control, Cholesterol management, and Smoking cessation. The initiative also includes an independent national evaluation designed to determine if and how quality improvement support can accelerate the dissemination and implementation of new evidence in primary care.

Specific Aims

1. Engage EvidenceNOW grantees in the overall evaluation initiative by harmonizing measures and working together to collect similar qualitative and quantitative data, identify lessons learned, and foster rapid-cycle learning.
2. Identify the practice, organization, and contextual factors associated with higher and lower levels of delivery of ABCS services at baseline among 1,750 primary care practices engaged by EvidenceNOW grantees.
3. Identify which intervention strategies are most effective in improving the delivery of ABCS services over time in relation to practice, organization, and contextual factors, and identify why some strategies are more effective.
4. Engage, rapidly disseminate, and evaluate the impact of disseminating actionable findings to key external stakeholders.

Comment from Principal Investigator

Deborah Cohen, Ph.D.

“The EvidenceNOW Cooperatives are building sustainable dissemination and implementation infrastructure in their regions. Together, we have the opportunity to learn how this infrastructure is built across the U.S., and to develop practical and effective models for large-scale dissemination and implementation of patient-centered outcomes research evidence into practice. Such models are needed, and this is especially true for small-to medium-sized independent practices that typically do not have access to quality improvement resources.

Primary care is the foundation of our health system and the key to achieving the Triple Aim. The EvidenceNOW National Evaluation is special because it will study how regions build sustainable capacity for ongoing quality improvement for primary care practices in the U.S. No one has done this before. We hope to pull together the regional lessons that emerge among the EvidenceNOW Cooperatives in a careful and rigorous way so as to share the collective story of this initiative in a way that accelerates evidence-based practice across the nation.”
Notable Project Features

Evaluation research team:
- Is multidisciplinary and geographically dispersed
- Offers a strong organizational framework to study multi-site practice change efforts for the EvidenceNOW initiative, as well as a robust understanding of primary care practice
- Brings mixed methods expertise and a collaborative approach to evaluation of the EvidenceNOW initiative

Approach and Methods

EvidenceNOW grantees all focus on the same cardiovascular disease prevention outcomes and will collect practice, context, and outcome data as part of their own evaluations. This overarching evaluation will collect and analyze quantitative data from each grantee to identify the most effective combinations of intervention strategies for various primary care practice types, contexts, and organizational characteristics. The evaluation also will collect qualitative data from grantees and selected practices to understand why and how those combinations of interventions are effective.

Strategies for Disseminating Study Findings and Lessons Learned

The National Evaluation team will engage grantees and external stakeholders to rapidly disseminate findings through a range of communications strategies, including an interactive Web site, multi-media Webinars, press releases, blogging and vlogging, and academic and professional publications and conferences.