

USPSTF EPC Key Informant and Technical Expert Agreement

The primary role of the Key Informant is to provide input on proposed review questions to help the EPC ensure that a resulting evidence review will be useful for people making real-world decisions.

The primary role of the Technical Expert is to provide clinical or methodological input to the EPCs to ensure a scientifically rigorous and relevant protocol for the evidence review.

EPCs generally gather Key Informant and Technical Expert input through group calls of 5-9 individuals. Although the EPC will consider all input, the purpose of the calls is not to achieve group consensus. The final EPC product is not intended to represent all the opinions of all Key Informants or Technical Experts; this may be because of differing opinions or because of other considerations such as time or resource limitations.

Consistent with the IOM recommendations on Standards for Systematic Reviews (1) to protect the independence of authors, Key Informants and Technical Experts do not provide analysis or contribute to the writing of the report. All communications between the EPC and Key Informants or Technical Experts should include the AHRQ representative. Once finalized, the evidence review will acknowledge by name the input and contributions of Key Informants and Technical Experts.

Key Informants and Technical Experts may be invited to review the draft evidence review. If they agree to provide comments, comments will be de-identified such that there will be no indication of which comments were made by specific reviewers. Disposition of peer and public review comments by the authors will be posted on the Effective Health Care Web site 3 months following online publication of the final report.

Key Informants and Technical Experts agree to maintain confidentiality with respect to nonpublic interim documents, or any draft (nonpublic) EPC report versions ("Confidential Information"). The Key Informant or Technical Expert shall not, without prior written approval of AHRQ, use for their own benefit, publish, copy, or otherwise disclose to others, or permit the use by others of, any Confidential Information.

The Key Informant or Technical Expert shall maintain the confidentiality of Confidential Information until: the EPC report is finalized and published on the AHRQ site and no longer qualifies as Confidential; five years elapses from the date of this Agreement; or until AHRQ sends the Key Informant or Technical Expert written notice releasing them from this Agreement, whichever occurs first.

The obligations of the Key Informant or Technical Expert under this Agreement do not extend to information that is (a) publicly known at the time of participation in the EPC project or subsequently becomes publicly known through no fault of the Key Informant or Technical Expert; (b) discovered or created by the Key Informant or Technical Expert before participation in the EPC project; (c) learned by the Key Informant or Technical Expert through legitimate means other than from the EPC project; or (d) is disclosed in the EPC project with AHRQ's written approval.

My signature indicates that I understand and agree to comply with the terms of this Agreement.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

EPC Project Title: _____

Role: Key Informant Technical Expert

Reference:

1. Institute of Medicine. (2011). Finding What Works in Health Care: Standards for Systematic Reviews. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. Available at: Institute of Medicine. <http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2011/Finding-What-Works-in-Health-Care-Standards-for-Systematic-Reviews/Standards%20for%20Systematic%20Review%202010%20Insert.pdf>. Accessed July 2012.

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