



Advisory Panel on Improving Healthcare Systems

April 19-20, 2013 Meeting Summary

Overview

On April 19-20, 2013, PCORI convened the Advisory Panel on Improving Healthcare Systems in Alexandria, Virginia, for a two-day training and working session to help PCORI identify and prioritize research questions for potential funding. The panel included 21 members representing caregivers, patient-caregiver advocates, clinicians, researchers, organizational providers, and representatives from payers, industry, and purchasers.

Prior to the meeting, panelists received an orientation to PCORI's research prioritization process, describing the application of five criteria by which research topics should be assessed for their suitability and priority for PCORI funding, and research briefs describing the problem and state of current knowledge for fifteen potential research topics.

Over the course of the two-day meeting, panelists engaged in an open conversation about the merits of the research topics, sharing opinions about whether and why certain topics should be prioritized and funded by PCORI, and then ranked the topics using Expert Choice® and SurveyGizmo® software. By the end of the meeting, the panel reached consensus on the highest priority topics to submit to PCORI's Board of Governors for consideration for potential funding:

1. Models of patient empowering care management
2. Models of transitional care
3. Models of integration of mental health care and primary care
4. Models of perinatal care
5. Different features in health insurance coverage.

Related Information

- [About PCORI's Advisory Panels](#)
- [Advisory Panel on Improving Healthcare Systems](#)
- [Orientation to PCORI's Research Prioritization](#)
- [Improving Healthcare Systems Research Briefs](#)

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) is an independent organization created to help people make informed healthcare decisions.

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Background

The [Advisory Panel on Improving Healthcare Systems](#)¹ was opened by PCORI Program Director Chad Boult, with a discussion about the role of improving healthcare systems within PCORI's national research priorities. Dr. Boult noted how "healthcare system" could have different meanings for patients, providers, payers, and decision makers. Panel members then discussed [each of the 15 topics referred to the panel for prioritization](#)² (see Box 1).

Box 1: Research Prioritization Topics

Topic 1: Accountable care organizations and PCOs
Topic 2: Effects of models for chronic disease management
Topic 3: COPD management
Topic 4: Cancer management
Topic 5: Palliative care management
Topic 6: Pregnancy management
Topic 7: Care management of multiple chronic conditions
Topic 8: Medical homes
Topic 9: Non-physician medical homes
Topic 10: Mental health and primary care co-location
Topic 11: Rural trauma
Topic 12: Health IT and treatment guidelines
Topic 13: Quality improvement strategies
Topic 14: Effect of insurance features
Topic 15: Transitions in care and patient safety

Discussion

Over the course of the two-day meeting, advisory panel members discussed the research topics with respect to the PCORI topic criteria. Key discussion points included:

Cultural change within the healthcare system. Panel members emphasized the importance of studying interventions that change the culture of the healthcare system, the need for a "culture shift" and "changing the way we think." Panelists identified several characteristics of a patient-centered healthcare system, including:

- Empowering patients to make choices using transparent information
- Providing individualized care based on unique patient needs, preferences, and risks

¹ Available at pcori.org/get-involved/pcori-advisory-panels/advisory-panel-on-improving-healthcare-systems

² Available at pcori.org/assets/PCORI-Improving-Healthcare-Systems-Topic-Briefs-All-04161311.pdf

Some panel members suggested that research efforts should consider why some providers and institutions have adopted patient-centered models of care while others have not. It was also suggested that healthcare systems and hospital administrators be part of the deliberation in the future.

“Usual care” and appropriate comparators. Many of the research topics under consideration compared an intervention with “usual care.” Panelists questioned whether “usual care” should be the basis of comparison and instead proposed funding comparisons of different models of care, as “usual care” often represents the least effective practices. Other panel members suggested that because “usual care” exists in the healthcare system, it can be a useful comparator.

Defining models for comparison. Panel members raised several key issues with regard to identifying models of care to be studied, highlighting the need for commonly defined concepts and recognizing the variation within any model of care, such as care management.

Patient-Centeredness. Panel members shared important insights regarding patient empowerment and patient-centered outcomes research. Several panelists commented that the research questions seemed “provider-focused” and not “patient-centered.” Panelists questioned the assumption that care management and care coordination are patient-centered.

Action

On the first day of the meeting, panel members conducted an initial ranking exercise to prioritize the 15 research topics. Based on this preliminary ranking, the panel decided to focus its discussion on the seven highest scoring topics, removing topics 1, 11, and 13 from consideration. Through further deliberation, the panel agreed to propose a broad research topic addressing care management strategies by merging topics 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7. Panelists also agreed to reword topic 6 to focus on perinatal care rather than pregnancy alone. After reviewing the results for the seven most highly ranked research topics, the panel deliberated as to which of the research topics should be recommended to PCORI’s Board of Governors as funding priorities. The final prioritization results included:

Top two:

- **Models of patient-empowering care management:** What are the comparative effects of care management models (designed to optimize care coordination and continuity) on patient-centered outcomes (PCOs) among patients with chronic or progressive conditions, disability, cancer, or other potentially life-changing illnesses?
- **Models of transitional care:** What are the comparative effects of models of transitional care on patient safety and other PCOs?

Next three (in order of priority; * indicates topics that received an equal number of votes):

- **Different features of health insurance coverage:** What are the comparative effects of different insurance features (e.g., benefit designs, utilization management, cost sharing) on chronically ill patients' access to care, quality of care, and PCOs?
- **Models of integration of mental health care and primary care*:** Compared to primary care alone, what is the effect of primary care co-located with mental health services on mental health symptoms, medication use, and other PCOs?
- **Models of perinatal care*:** What are the comparative effects of care management (designed to optimize care coordination and continuity) on PCOs among pregnant and post-partum women?

Next Steps

The panel discussed the potential topics for future research, including research areas that should be raised during the next advisory panel meeting, such as healthcare financing, whole-system redesign efforts, alternative providers and sites for healthcare delivery, and patient-centered outcomes measure development. Panel members also shared their perspectives on the panel process and recommended modifications for future meetings. Panel members want to learn more about the proposed research topics in advance of their prioritization discussions and ranking. Some panelists suggested helping PCORI with landscape reviews of the various research topics. The five highest priority research topics will be presented to PCORI's Board of Governors. Panelists were invited to submit nominations for Advisory Panel Chair to be considered by staff and the PCORI Board of Governors.³ PCORI staff will consider holding a conference call with the panel prior to its next meeting to provide instructions for preparing for the next meeting.

—Meeting summary prepared by Chad Boult, Kara Odom Walker, and Lauren Holuj. Posted June 11, 2013 and available on [PCORI's website](#).⁴

³ On May 21, 2013, Trent Haywood, MD, JD, and Doris Lotz, MD, MPH were selected as Chair and Co-Chair of the Advisory Panel on Improving Healthcare Systems. For more information, see pcori.org/2013/eight-healthcare-community-representatives-named-chairs-co-chairs-of-pcori-advisory-panels.

⁴ Available at pcori.org/get-involved/pcori-advisory-panels/advisory-panel-on-improving-healthcare-systems/