



PATIENT-CENTERED OUTCOMES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

PCORI Advisory Panel on Improving Healthcare Systems Meeting Summary

February 2014

Overview

On January 13, 2014, PCORI convened its Advisory Panel on Improving Healthcare Systems (IHS) to discuss the program's current research portfolio, seek input on its strategic direction, consider the role of the panel, and lay the foundation for future topic prioritization.

The Advisory Panel on Improving Healthcare Systems is made up of 21 representatives of patients, caregivers, patient advocates, clinicians, researchers, health systems, purchasers, payers, industry, and policy makers. The panel was joined by PCORI staff and leadership. The meeting was open to the public via teleconference, and slides and meeting materials were posted to the website in advance of the sessions.

The panel expressed a desire to become more involved in IHS program initiatives and funding decisions. It discussed PCORI's progress on topics prioritized last April and discussed communication between staff and panelist.

The panel formed two subcommittees to consider how PCORI can fund research on insurance features and to advise IHS on its strategic framework. The group also refined the list of topics to be prioritized at its next meeting.

Related Information

- [About This Advisory Panel](#)
- [Meeting Details and Materials](#)

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

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Introduction

Dr. Chad Boulton, PCORI consultant and former IHS program Director, introduced incoming IHS Program Director, Dr. Steve Clauser, who joins the team from the National Institutes of Health National Cancer Institute. The Advisory Panel Co-Chairs, Dr. Trent Haywood and Dr. Doris Lotz, indicated that although much progress has been made, there is still significant opportunity for the advisory panel to help strengthen its relationship with the IHS team and to influence the PCORI IHS portfolio.

IHS Senior Program Officer Dr. Lynn Disney described the IHS strategic framework, which identifies three key drivers of health system change: innovative use of technology, personnel, and incentives. Disney then described how the [41 research contracts](#)¹ funded in the IHS portfolio align with each of the drivers.

Portfolio and Research Direction

Some panel members suggested additional drivers of health-system change, including leadership and innovation. Panelists also voiced a desire to become more informed regarding the studies in the IHS portfolio. Furthermore, panelists recommended greater diversity, beyond academic institutions, in the types of organizations selected for funding.

PCORI staff agreed to communicate IHS program activities on a more regular basis and will distribute the analysis of portfolio characteristics well in advance of the next meeting. The staff invited interested panelists to form a subcommittee to work with them to further develop the strategic framework.

Overview of Progress on Prioritized Topics and Discussion

Patient-Empowering Care Management

Panelist Joan Leon described the [Patient-Empowering Care Management \(PECM\) workgroup](#),² in which she had participated. Leon voiced concern that the workgroup discussion had not come to any conclusions, and she noted the gap between the perspectives of the practitioners and patient representatives.

IHS Program Associate Alex Hartzman reported that the IHS program is currently working with the J.A. Hartford Foundation to develop a new model of empowering care management. He suggested that a PCORI funding announcement related to this topic will likely not be released until fiscal year 2015. Drs. Anne Sales and Annie Lewis O'Connor suggested further literature reviews of the women's empowerment movement in the area of domestic violence as well as medical shared decision making. Sales criticized the IHS program approach as continuing the "top down" approach to empowerment by

¹ Available at pfaawards.pcori.org/?StateAbrev=&ResearchPriorityArea=Improving+Healthcare+Systems&FundingAnnouncement=&BriefPublicDescriptionAbstract=&Go

² Available at pcori.org/events/patient-empowering-care-management-for-people-with-ongoing-complex-healthcare-needs/?type=past

clinicians and researchers. Other panel members indicated they would like to help PCORI staff develop topic briefs on this and other prioritized topics in the future and would like the opportunity to join workgroups remotely. Furthermore, some panelists suggested that PCORI avoid “another model.”

Transitional Care

IHS Program Associate Lauren Holuj noted that the upcoming release of a [targeted funding announcement](#)³ on the effectiveness of transitional care is the first a result of the Advisory Panel’s prioritization. Panelists expressed concern that the announcement was soliciting only a single study, which may limit applicants to the “usual suspects” and reduce opportunity for innovation for alternative researchers. Panelists also posed questions related to populations of interest (including children), which outcomes would be measured, and the merit review process.

Perinatal Care Management

Next, Holuj presented an overview of the work under way to develop an initiative on Perinatal Care Management. She reminded panelists that an expert [multi-perspective workgroup](#)⁴ took place in October 2013, which was co-sponsored by PCORI’s Addressing Disparities program (whose [advisory panel](#)⁵ also prioritized the topic). The two teams continue to collaborate and are currently working toward a potential partnership with the National Institutes for Child and Human Development.

Panelists raised questions about the outcomes of interest and the population to be studied. Some panelists called for studies aimed at specific subpopulations, while others suggested a broader approach. Some panelists were particularly concerned about over-medicalization (for example, high C-section rates) and its associated costs. Panelist Leah Binder emphasized the importance of targeting all women and newborns rather than focusing on specific at-risk populations.

Integration of Mental Health and Primary Care

Hartzman reviewed the [Integration of Mental Health and Primary Care Workgroup](#),⁶ held in December 2013. Advisory panelist Jake Galdo, who participated in this workgroup, further described the workgroup focus on primary care versus community mental health settings.

Panel members supported the direction and approach of this initiative and recommended looking to the Veterans Health Administration for possible partnerships. Boulton suggested that Funding Announcements for PCORI’s Pragmatic Clinical Studies and Large Simple Trials to Evaluate Patient-Centered Outcomes would likely be the mechanism for funding research on this topic.

Insurance Features

Although the IHS program had not yet begun formal work on this topic, panelists expressed interest in maintaining it as a priority and discussed possible strategies for moving it forward. Suggestions included comparisons of benefit designs and features, incentive systems, and patient education tools. PCORI’s legislative mandate prohibiting cost-effectiveness analysis was discussed as a complicating factor. Several panelists volunteered to form a subcommittee on this topic.

³ Available at pcori.org/funding-opportunities/funding-announcements/the-effectiveness-of-transitional-care/

⁴ Available at pcori.org/events/workgroup-perinatal-care-management-and-outcomes/?type=past

⁵ Available at pcori.org/get-involved/advisory-panels/advisory-panel-on-addressing-disparities/

⁶ Available at pcori.org/events/integration-of-mental-health-care-and-primary-care/?type=past

Review Potential Topics for Prioritization in April 2014

The group reviewed a [list of 18 research topics](#)⁷ previously selected for prioritization during its next meeting. After a lengthy discussion, panelists made suggestions for narrowing the list. The IHS team agreed to commission topic briefs for 10 topics.

Next Steps

- The Advisory Panel on Improving Healthcare Systems will assist staff in refining the IHS strategic vision.
- Panel members will form two subcommittees to consider how PCORI can fund research on insurance features and to advise on the IHS strategic framework.
- The panel will next convene in May 2014.

⁷ Available at pcori.org/assets/2014/01/PCORI-Advisory-Panel-IHS-Potential-Topics-for-Prioritization-012114.pdf