Executive Summary
Evaluating Quality Improvement Training Programs

Public health and health care workers have many opportunities to acquire training in quality improvement (QI). However, there is limited evidence about whether and how these training programs increase the ability of these individuals to successfully engage in work to improve health and health care. Information about the impact of such programs on organizational culture and patient outcomes is also scarce. This information gap may lead to under-investment in effective QI training opportunities and over-investment in training that is not effective.

The goal of Evaluating Quality Improvement Training Programs was to learn what works in QI training programs so that more organizations adopt best practices and more health providers acquire training in quality improvement.

Read the full report.

THE PROJECTS

Five projects received three-year grants, beginning in January 2009, ranging from about $300,000 to $400,000:

- Academy for Educational Development (AED) and FHI 360,¹ Washington:
  Evaluation of Training/Capacity Building Conducted by the National Quality Center

¹ FHI 360 was created in 2011 by teams of experts from Family Health International and the Academy for Educational Development (AED). It worked with AED on this project, with AED receiving the first grant and FHI 360 receiving the second grant. FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. Its staff includes experts in health, education, nutrition, environment, economic development, civil society, gender equality, youth, research, and technology.
• Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati: "To Achieve the Best: Evaluating Quality Improvement Training as a Means to an End"

• Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health, Atlanta: "Evaluation of a Two-Pronged Training Program to Build Capacity for Quality"

• RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif.: "RAND Evaluation of the Perfecting Patient Care University"

• University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, N.C.: "Evaluating the Effectiveness of NACCHO Quality Improvement Training Initiatives"

Key Themes from the Findings

The five projects evaluated different QI training programs using a variety of evaluation methods. Themes that emerged from the findings include:

• Curricula and program factors such as modality (in-person session, online tutorial, etc.) and dosage (single session, multi-session, multi-part, etc.) directly shape learning from training programs.

• Equally important are opportunities to apply new skills and organizational factors that affect adoption of the learning from training.

• Staff engagement with quality improvement is influenced by having an organizational culture oriented to quality improvement, leadership support, and clear sponsorship of quality improvement projects.

• Evaluator experiences underscore the importance of mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) approaches to understanding the impact of training and issues related to the sustainability of that impact.

On February 12, 2013, RWJF launched a new website envisioned as a repository for quality improvement work. The site offers the growing community of researchers, evaluators, and other health care professionals in the field a place to access resources and to connect with colleagues.

Program Management

National Program Office: Managed internally at RWJF
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2 The website, The Science of Continuous Quality Improvement, is available online.