

QUERI Partnered Evaluation Initiative

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Action-Oriented Evaluation of Interprofessional Learning Efforts in the CoEPCE and IA-PACT Environments

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Overview

As team-based care becomes a cornerstone of primary care delivery, healthcare professionals from diverse fields need clinical training that prepares them to work in collaborative, interdisciplinary teams. Since 2010, VA has supported the development of innovative tools for workplace-based learning in Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice (ICECP) through seven Centers of Excellence in Primary Care Education (CoEPCE) around the country. These Centers train new professionals from nursing, medicine, pharmacy, mental health and social work, while developing and disseminating tools to encourage the broader implementation of IPECP in Inter-Professional Academic Patient Aligned Care Team (IA-PACT) settings throughout the VA healthcare system.

This evaluation provides its operations partner—VA's Office of Academic Affiliations—and the CoEPCEs with ongoing insights into the clinic dynamics and contextual factors that best promote sustained and widespread use of effective learning techniques. Evaluation investigators also generate new evidence on the impact of ICECP on patient outcomes, learner and employee experience, and costs.

Methodology

The evaluation is guided by an action-oriented, realist approach that:

- Uses mixed methods, including:
 - qualitative interviews with PACT team members, patients, and learners;
 - employee and learner surveys;
 - budget impact analysis of specific innovations; and
 - Differences-in-Differences analyses of administrative data on patient health outcomes and process measures.
- Involves Center faculty in the process of analysis and dissemination of results.
- Provides quarterly report findings back to partners in order to maximize the impact of findings on ongoing implementation efforts.

Findings and Anticipated Impacts

- The CoEPCE initiative is associated with fewer patients with poor HbA1c control, more timely mental health visits, and more all-cause hospitalizations, with no change to emergency department visits, hospitalizations for ambulatory care sensitive conditions, or numerous common quality-of-care measures.
- Employee surveys suggest that CoEPCE clinics are more conducive to participatory decision-making, with more participatory decision-making associated with less burnout and greater job satisfaction.

Understanding what supports successful sharing and sustainment of innovations across and beyond the Centers will be a goal of the final phase of the evaluation.

Operations Partner(s)

VA's Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) fulfills one of the four statutory missions of the VA: "to educate for VA and for the Nation." The OAA has assisted in the education of hundreds of thousands of clinicians and strives to collaborate with academic institutions to create environments that enhance the health and care of Veterans.



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