

The PDPQ Educators Network: A Remote-Based Model for Enhancing New Physician Involvement in Patient Safety and Quality Improvement

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Introduction

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) oversees approximately 12,700 postgraduate training programs for over 150,000 US physicians. Formative assessments of the clinical learning environments of these programs noted they vary in their approach to addressing quality improvement and patient safety (QIPS) and the degree to which they engage residents and fellows in these areas.¹

Recognizing gaps in faculty capacity and support, in 2018, the ACGME joined with the Organization of Program Director Associations (OPDA) and Project ECHO® of the University of New Mexico Health Sciences to develop a national learning network of postgraduate medical educators seeking to optimize educational programming in QIPS utilizing a model that would minimize financial burden while promoting sustainability and spread.²

Methods

From 2018-2020, a core team of individuals from the three partnering organizations designed and pilot tested an initiative called the Program Directors’ Patient Safety and Quality (PDPQ) Educators Network. Seven program director organizations applied to the initial call for participation. Of these, three specialties (emergency medicine, internal medicine, neurosurgery) were selected for the initial pilot, collectively recruiting a total of 13 teams of educators. The network has two components:

- 1) A structured 6-month series of weekly video conference sessions to introduce concepts key to improving education in quality and safety in the areas of: a) stakeholder engagement, b) longitudinal learning, c) faculty support, and d) learner assessment and program evaluation.
- 2) A separate series of regular sessions supported by the relevant specialty association or society to maintain the community of participants who complete the first component, providing opportunity to problem solve on an ongoing basis.

Results

During the initial pilot, nearly all participants were retained from start to finish. Since then, interest in PDPQ continues to grow. Since 2020, eight specialties have been added, including: family medicine, ob/gyn, psychiatry, pediatrics, urology, physical medicine and rehabilitation, pathology, and anesthesiology—with over 100 residency programs now participating in the initiative. Participants note the network not only fosters learning—it also provides a form of respite and a chance to connect with and derive support from colleagues.

Conclusion

The pilot test of the PDPQ Educators Network successfully demonstrated an approach to building a peer-based network utilizing the ECHO model that combines distance learning with a means for building and sustaining community that is effective and minimizes financial burden. While this initiative focuses on support for educators of postgraduate medical education, it provides a model that could be replicated across professions, across the spectrum of educational training, and across various topics within QIPS.

References

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