Implementing Health Assessments in Primary Care: A How-to Guide

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BIGHORN PBRN

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Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Sponsored by the AHRQ PBRN Resource Center
January 15, 2014
• Instructions for Question Submission
  ► Kristin Mikolowsky, MSc, Project Manager, PBRN Resource Center

• Welcome and Introductions
  ► Kristin Mikolowsky, MSc, Project Manager, PBRN Resource Center

• Presentation and Question & Answer Sessions
  ► Douglas Fernald, MA and Richard Ricciardi, PhD
  ► Q&A Moderator: Richard Ricciardi, PhD

• Instructions for Obtaining CME Credits

Note: After today’s webinar, a copy of the slides will be e-mailed to all webinar registrants.
Implementing Health Assessments in Primary Care: A How-to Guide
Richard Ricciardi, PhD, NP
AHRQ - Center for Primary Care, Prevention and Clinical Partnerships
The Team

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AHRQ’s New Mission

To produce evidence to make health care safer, higher quality, more accessible, equitable, and affordable, and to work with HHS and other partners to make sure that the evidence is understood and used.
AHRQ’s Four Priorities

• Improve health care quality by accelerating implementation of Patient Centered Outcomes Research
• Make health care safer
• Increase accessibility by evaluating Affordable Care Act coverage expansions
• Improve health care affordability, efficiency, and cost transparency
• I have no financial relationships to disclose.

• I will not discuss off label use and/or investigational use of medications in my presentation.
“Relationship first; then health assessment.”

- High Plains Research Network Community Advisory Council Member
Objectives

• Describe the background on health assessments for primary care
• Describe practice observations about effective implementation of health assessments
• Describe essential patient priorities for health assessments
• Review the How-to Guide and the key decision points for adoption and implementation
Health Assessment Background
15. How have things been going for you during the past four weeks?
   - Very well; could hardly be better.
   - Pretty well.
   - Good and bad parts about equal.
   - Pretty bad.
   - Very bad; could hardly be worse.

16. Are you having difficulties driving your car?
   - Yes, often.
   - Sometimes.
   - No.
   - Not applicable, I do not use a car.

17. Do you always fasten your seat belt when you are in a car?
   - Yes, usually.
   - Yes, sometimes.
   - No.

18. How often during the past four weeks have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Falling or dizzy when standing up.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trouble eating well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teeth or denture problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problems using the telephone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tiredness or fatigue.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. During the past four weeks, how many drinks of wine, beer, or other alcoholic beverages did you have?
   - 10 or more drinks per week.
   - 6-9 drinks per week.
   - 2-5 drinks per week.
   - One drink or less per week.
   - No alcohol at all.

23. Do you exercise for about 20 minutes three or more days a week?
   - Yes, most of the time.
   - Yes, some of the time.
   - No, I usually do not exercise this much.

24. Have you been given any information to help you with the following:
   - Hazards in your house that might hurt you?
     - Yes.  No.
   - Keeping track of your medications?
     - Yes.  No.

25. How often do you have trouble taking medicines the way you have been told to take them?
   - I do not have to take medicine.
   - I always take them as prescribed.
   - Sometimes I take them as prescribed.
   - I seldom take them as prescribed.

26. How confident are you that you can control and manage most of your health problems?
   - Very confident.
   - Somewhat confident.
   - Not very confident.
   - I do not have any health problems.
What are Health Assessments?

- A health assessment is a set of questions, answered by patients, that asks about personal behaviors, risks, life-changing events, health goals and priorities, and overall health.

CaReNet Patient Advisory Council 2012
What are Health Assessments?

- Health assessments are a process to collect information from patients to engage them in an informed conversation about their own health—leading to better health choices, better care, and improved health behaviors in the long term.

- Health assessments systematically collect and use health-related patient information to identify and support beneficial health behaviors to improve health.

- More than simple screening or health histories, they are an opportunity to learn from patients about their health concerns and priorities.

- There is no single health assessment; there are many.
Background on Health Assessments

Why Routine Health Assessments for Primary Care?

• Improve care and improve patients’ overall health and well being

• Enables practices to systematically collect high priority information from patients to improve patient care

• Allows providers to hear what patient’s priorities are, and helps to refine options for care plans and/or next steps

• Activates and informs patients about their own health with professional guidance

• Takes advantage of incentives provided by insurers or accrediting agencies
Incentives

• Medicare Annual Wellness Visit

• Meaningful use, PCMH recognition, health system profit sharing incentives

• Address clinical priority or questions about patients

• Better conversations with your patients
Background on Health Assessments

Barriers

• Lack of time
• Lack of resources for appropriate follow up with patients
• Lack of knowledge/training
• Insufficient financial incentives
“Don’t be afraid of the information you are going to start seeing [from health assessments]. You will have better insight and probably learn more about your patients, thus building a far better relationship with your patient than you may have thought possible.”

- Practice manager, urban private practice, Colorado
How to Submit a Question

• At any time during the presentation, type your question into the “Questions” section of your GoToWebinar control panel.
• Select “Send” to submit your question to the moderator.
• Questions will be read aloud by the moderator.
Lessons from the field
Background on our work

Goals of the AHRQ contract

• Identify best practices for implementing health assessments in primary care settings

• Develop a how-to guide

• Field test and revise the how-to guide based on feedback

• Make the how-to guide available to primary care clinicians, clinical teams and other stakeholders
What Did We Learn from Practices?

- Implementing a new health assessment is best done as a team effort involving everyone in the practice.
- Any new health assessment should align with practice priorities for patient care.
- Health assessments are tools to create a dialogue and inform the conversation between a patient and his or her provider.
- Patients need more information from providers and practices about what health assessments are, how the information is reviewed, and how providers and practices use the information.
What Else Did We Learn from Practices?

- Practices would like assistance with:
  - Finding assessment questions suitable for primary care settings
  - Talking with patients about their “annual exam” and the Annual Wellness Visit
  - Integrating health assessments with information systems (i.e., EHRs)
  - Prioritizing care options with patient health goals and concerns
Results

What Did We Learn from Patients and Community Members?

• “Relationship first, then assessment.”
  
  • Health assessments work best in the context of an established relationship with their providers

• Patients expect some acknowledgment that health assessment questions have been reviewed and the responses considered

• Health assessments should inform the conversation with their provider

• Patients want to be asked about their own health priorities as part of their health assessments
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Assembling a How-To Guide
About the Guide

How was the Guide Created?

• In-practice observation and evaluation of how health assessments were successfully implemented in primary care practices

• Field-test of the how-to guide in real-world primary care practices

• In-depth interviews with primary care providers and staff about their challenges in routinely assessing patient’s health

• Review of the literature and expert panel guidance

• Patient and community advisory council input

• Critical review of the How-to Guide’s content and recommendations
About the Guide

Who is the *How-to Guide* for and Why?

- Primary care practices that want to obtain better information from patients
- Providers and staff who want to improve the conversation with their patients
- Designed for clinician leaders, managerial leaders, and quality improvement organizations that work with primary care practices
- Optimized for a practice team including both providers and staff—especially QI teams or improvement/change teams
- Designed to help activate and empower patients to improve their health behaviors and their health
About the Guide

What is in the Guide?

• Step-by-step guidance to successfully prepare, select, implement, evaluate, and maintain any new health assessments

• Practical lessons from others who have implemented health assessments successfully

• Tools to help prepare and involve providers and staff

• Checklists to guide selection and implementation of health assessments

• Health assessment questions suitable for primary care settings

• Links to additional resources
Utilizing the Guide

The Guide Is Organized into 6 Implementation Decision Points

Section 1. How Ready Is Your Practice to Implement a New Health Assessment?

How do you know if your practice is ready to start work on implementing a health assessment? Answer the questions below to help identify areas where more preparation is needed.

Table 1: A Checklist to Evaluate Your Practice Readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions for Your Practice or Team</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Where to Find Help in This Guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do most clinicians and staff in your practice agree that implementing a health assessment is an important issue?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Section 1 (this section): benefits of implementing health assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your practice prepared to commit resources to the process of implementing a new health assessment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Section 2: health assessment selection and resource considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your practice have an idea of where the health assessment will fit into your practice’s current workflow?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Section 3: workflow integration strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your practice have a plan for how the data from the health assessment will be used once it is collected?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Section 4: approaches to using information with your patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will your practice organize its resources (internal and external) to provide care based on the results of the health assessment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Section 4: approaches to using information with your patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has your practice thought about ways to engage your patients in the health assessment process (review of results, prioritization, action plan, etc.)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Section 5: strategies for engaging patients with health assessment information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has your practice considered how it will sustain and improve the health assessment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Section 6: tips for sustaining health assessments</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If you found yourself marking “No” more often than “Yes”, you may need to address these barriers before moving forward on a full health assessment implementation. If
Utilizing the Guide

Implementation Steps:

1. Assess Practice Readiness

2. Choose a Health Assessment
   • Planning tools to review practice priorities for selecting a health assessment

3. Integrate Health Assessments into Practice Workflow:
   • Guides and checklists for getting the whole practice involved, resources for office flow planning, and planning for EHR integration
Implementation Steps Continued:

4. Use the Information Effectively
   • Guidance for using health assessment information with individuals and for populations of patients

5. Involve Patients
   • Read about patient expectations and strategies to discuss care options and patient preferences

6. Sustain Health Assessments
   • Find resources for coding and billing for health assessments, guidance to assess the value of implementing them, and a checklist to review how the assessment is working in your practice
How Ready Is Your Practice to Implement a New Health Assessment?

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Choosing an assessment

How Does Your Practice Choose an Assessment?

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is your practice ready?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you choose an assessment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you integrate assessments into practice flow?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you use the information you collect?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you involve patients?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you sustain health assessments?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Choosing an assessment

1. Which patient group is most important to your practice to begin assessing more routinely now?

- Adults
- Seniors
- Adolescents
- Children
- Other: _____________________________________________

Table 2: Health Assessments Related to Incentive and Quality Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensive Health Assessment Items</th>
<th>CMS Medicare Annual Wellness Visit</th>
<th>CMS Meaningful Use - Stage 1</th>
<th>NCQA HEDIS Measures 2012</th>
<th>NCQA PCMH</th>
<th>PQRS Measures 2011</th>
<th>The Joint Commission Core Measure Sets</th>
<th>USPSTF “A” or “B” Grade Recs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Use</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (2012)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Risk</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (2012)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Activity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. PCMH: Requirement 2C Comprehensive Health Assessment includes “Behaviors affecting health”
2. Includes assessment and follow-up action (e.g., referral, counseling, other intervention)
3. Medicare patients only
How Do You Work Health Assessments into Your Office Workflow?
Integration into Workflow

Is your whole staff involved in the implementation?

Implementing a new health assessment—like many practice improvement efforts—works best as a team effort. Clinicians, staff, and managers must all be involved in the final decisions about how an assessment will be implemented. To achieve this, engage staff and clarify roles and responsibilities. Here are some practical questions to consider:

- Which patients (or groups of patients) should receive the health assessment?
- Who will make sure the patients get the health assessment? How (checklists; EHR reminders)?
- How often do patients complete the health assessment (e.g., at all well care or preventive visits; annually for patients with chronic conditions)?
- Where will the data go (into your EHR; into a database; into a paper chart)?
- Who on your team will primarily review the information with the patient? When?
- How will your practice arrange patient follow up?
Using the Information

How Do You Use the Health Assessment Information you Collect?

Is your practice ready? | How do you choose an assessment? | How do you integrate assessments into practice flow? | How do you use the information you collect? | How do you involve patients? | How do you sustain health assessments?
---|---|---|---|---|---
1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6

Section 4. How Do You Use the Health Assessment Information You Collect?
Did you tell your patients that you reviewed their health assessment?

An important first step is to tell patients you have reviewed the information. Regardless of how you choose to handle the information collected during health assessment, acknowledge to patients that you have reviewed the data you collected. Patients often wonder, “Why am I filling this out if the clinician isn’t going to look at it?” Let them know you really do look at it. The acknowledgement can be brief: “Thank you, Ms. Jones, for filling out this questionnaire. It looks like you’re having some minor symptoms of depression or stress, which we can talk about.” Or, use the opportunity to deliver a focused reminder or praise about how a specific behavior affects a health concern of the patient. “It looks like you’re doing a good job limiting your fatty foods and snacks. That can help keep your cholesterol at a healthy level. Keep it up.”
How Do You Activate and Engage Patients in Using Their Health Assessment Information?

Section 5. How Do You Activate and Engage Patients in Using Their Health Assessment Information?
What do you need to tell patients about health assessments?

Patients need to hear from their clinicians that taking the time to complete the health assessment accurately is important and that health assessments will help you to work as a team to improve their health. Consider creating a script for staff and clinicians to use when talking about health assessments so they deliver a consistent, reinforcing message.

- Reassure patients that the information provided is confidential.
- Explain why the information is needed.
- Discuss the benefits of completing the assessment.

Ask patients about their experience completing the health assessment.

As part of your assessment of quality of care, consider asking for patient feedback on the health assessment process. Establishing a more formal approach to patient feedback using focus groups or a patient advisory group can provide a richer understanding of patient views. Using a brief patient feedback form (sample in Appendix 11) can provide you with a quick evaluation of what patients think of the health assessment questions and process. You may learn that completing a health assessment helps to raise awareness in your patients about important health issues. As one clinician learned from an older patient after completing a comprehensive health assessment:

“It helps me remember to take care of myself. Maybe you could suggest some activities that are age-appropriate.”
How Does Your Practice Sustain Health Assessments?
Table 3: A Checklist for Reviewing Your Implementation Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions for your practice or team</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>If, “No,” how can you improve this part of the assessment process?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In general, are patients completing the health assessments as expected?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In general, are patients responding positively to the assessment?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you reaching all or most of the patients you wanted to with the assessment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can most patients complete the assessment in a timely manner?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do patients routinely complete all the questions on the assessment?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are staff members able to review the completed assessments as expected?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are clinicians able to review the completed assessments as expected?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the clinicians in the practice providing acknowledgment and feedback to patients as expected?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are assessments being entered into patient charts correctly?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you able to respond to “positives” as expected?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have data to show how the practice has improved screening/assessment rates?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Appendices

Appendix 7 (p. 44): Sample script explaining the Annual Wellness Visit

GENERAL HEALTH

- AHRQ’s HIT web site provides extensive guidance on workflow assessments for implementing information technology. Many of the online tools and guidance are perfectly applicable to thinking through workflows and mapping office processes. Look for the “workflow tools” link.

Link: http://healthit.ahrq.gov/health-it-tools-and-resources/workflow-assessment-health-it-toolkit
A few take aways

• Patients want what you want: to have an informed conversation
• Talk with your patients about health assessments: they expect it
• Team work, in small steps
• Organize around a practice priority
How to Submit a Question

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About the Guide

Where to Get the Guide:

You can find “Health Assessments in Primary Care: A How-to-Guide for clinicians and Staff” at


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