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Organizations of Interest to Health Actuaries: AcademyHealth

“Moving Evidence Into Action”

By Rebecca Owen

AcademyHealth is the preeminent consolidator of health services research in the United States. Their site is a rich repository of discussion, forums and techniques addressing all aspects of health service. AcademyHealth brings together researchers, practitioners, policymakers and, yes, actuaries to address the emerging needs of health systems, mostly American, but also international systems and concerns.

The organization focuses on evidence-based work and devotes considerable resources to the dissemination of evidence-based policy, programs and methods for research. The organization is nonpartisan, but an advocacy arm promotes health services research as a scientific discipline and monitors activity in both the public and private sectors that relate to the conduct of health services research.

Organizational resources on evidence encompass methods on delivering better care through access, improved quality and enhanced organization among the components of the health systems. An example of information in this topic are links to articles on increasing hospice care in various populations.

There is an evidence subject area on building healthy communities, including issues like equity and both public and population health. Staff highlight research that endeavors to identify factors that improve the health of communities.

Evidence also includes tools, analytic methods, data sharing and sources for accessing health data, validating and using the data appropriately. An example of this is an article on improving risk prediction using machine learning algorithms.

The final component of the evidence foci compiled by AcademyHealth is the engrossing topic of paying for care. The site compiles information and research on costs of care, efficiency and insurance/payer topics including Medicare and Medicaid.

The organization is hosting five big events in the next year:

- **Annual Health Policy Orientation Meeting.** A seminar on all aspects of health policy
- **Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation in Health.** On bridging the gap between evidence, practice and policy
- **National Health Policy Conference.** Brings together all aspects of the health delivery system to have an evidence-based discussion on the entire policy agenda
- **Health Datapalooza.** Assembles all things data driven in the health sphere
- **Annual Research Meeting.** Convenes researchers from all aspects of health services research; see Margie Rosenberg’s article in this issue.

As a resource for finding what has been studied or published outside of the actuarial profession, as well as finding opportunities to participate in research going forward, AcademyHealth is a great first option. They have created frameworks led by staff to work teach, learn and advance areas of interest that further health services research and system improvement.

Table 1 shows a list of the programs led by their staff.



Table 1
AcademyHealth Programs

Advancing Research to Reduce Low-Value Care	National Change Leadership Programs
Adverse Childhood Experience	Payment Reform for Population Health
Center for Diversity, Inclusion and Minority Engagement in HSR	PCOR Analysis, Synthesis and Reporting
Community Health Peer Learning Program	Public Health Systems Research
Consumer Patient Researcher Roundtable	Registry of Patient Registries
EDM Forum	Research Insights
Engaging Businesses for Health	Special Topic Research Programs
Global Programs and Initiatives	State Health Policy and Technical Assistance
Health Care Financing and Organization	Translation and Dissemination Institute
Managing and Learning from Payment and Delivery System Reform	

Many of the resources are available without membership; however, membership does give access to more content as well as offer opportunities to work on collaborative efforts.

Subscribing to their newsletters will provide you with such engaging reads as the enlightening “Patient Characteristics of Opioid-Related Inpatient Stays and Emergency Department Visits Nationally and by State, 2014,” from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, but also access to a number of publications from journals that are not always on the radar

of the actuarial community. Their website is <http://www.academyhealth.org/>. You can follow them on Facebook and Twitter (@academyhealth). ■



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