

# Practice-Based Research: An exciting possibility for rural residency programs

*Rural Training Track Collaborative Annual Meeting  
April 16-17, 2020*

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# Objectives

## *Objective 1:*

- Describe practice-based research and practice-based research networks (PBRNs).

## *Objective 2:*

- Describe types of research opportunities available through the AAFP National Research Network.

## *Objective 3:*

- Identify one way that rural practices and residencies can benefit from participating in practice-based research.

# Overview

- Introduction to practice-based research and PBRNs
- Examples of practice-based research projects
- PBRNs and rural practice and residency
- Addressing barriers and identifying facilitators for rural residency participation in PBRNs
- The future: Get involved in practice-based research

# What is practice-based research?

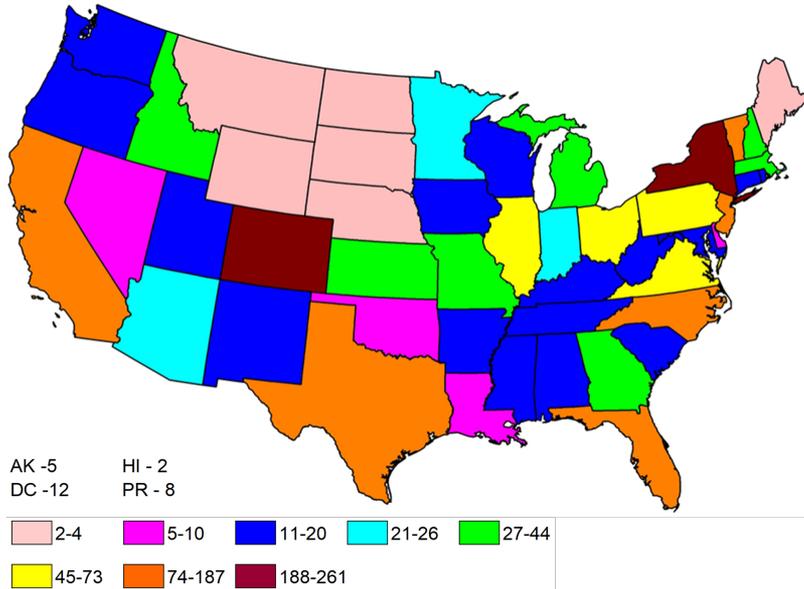
- Practice based research is research carried out in the real-world settings of clinical practices
  - Residencies can take part in practice-based research, too!
- Researchers and clinicians partner to design and implement research projects relevant to clinical practice
- Patients and other stakeholders are increasingly being included in practice-based research as part of the research team

*Practice-based research provides participating practices and programs the opportunity to engage in innovative and important projects that find real-world solutions for challenges faced by primary care clinicians.*

# Practice-based Research Networks: PBRNs

- The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality defines PBRNs as a group of ambulatory practices devoted principally to the primary care of patients, and affiliated in their mission to investigate questions related to community-based practice and to improve the quality of primary care.
- PBRNs have been described as the “laboratories of primary care research” and are an important driver for advancing clinical research into clinical practice in community settings  
(Lindbloom, et al. *Medical Care*, 2004)

# The AAFP National Research Network: Members



- The AAFP NRN is the largest practice-based research network in the country
  - Over 2,330 primary care physician and clinician members
  - 850 practices
- Our membership is representative of primary care across the US

## Rural Focus:

*We recognize the importance of rural representation in research. Some of our longest-running and most active members practice in rural communities. However, we are working to expand representation of rural practices and increasingly include residencies in practice-based research.*

# The AAFP National Research Network: Team

## AAFP NRN Staff:

- Clinicians
  - *MDs, DOs, PhDs*
- PhD researchers
  - *Health services, social/behavioral scientists, informatics, statistics*
- Project teams
  - *Project managers, research assistants, data analysts, statisticians*

**PLUS:** An expansive network of experienced Family Medicine research colleagues outside of AAFP

# Types of Projects We Do

## Information Gathering

- Surveys
- Retrospective studies
- Point of care data collection
- Expert input on materials
- Interviews and focus groups

## Implementation Effectiveness Studies

- Implementation research
- Pragmatic randomized trials: patient level or cluster randomized
- Comparative effectiveness research
- Research on patient engagement/participatory methods

## Product Development and Evaluation

- Development of resources and tools
- Evaluation of processes, resources, tools
- Provider education tools and resources
- Evaluation of educational activities

# PBRNs and rural practice and residency

- Gaps are created and inequities can be widened when rural practices, residencies, and their patients are not represented in research data
- PBRNs can provide an existing framework and structure for rural practices to contribute to research and even elevate their own observation-driven innovative research questions
- Participation in PBRN research can provide rural clinicians a way to elevate their voices and those of the members of the communities they serve

# PBRNs and rural practice and residency

- Rural practices and residencies are underrepresented in PBRNs
- The map below depicts the headquarters (not member practices) for 77 registered PBRNs from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- While the AAFP NRN and many other PBRNs have member practices across all 50 states, many PBRN members are located in urban and suburban areas, with lower representation in rural areas



# Addressing barriers and identifying facilitators for rural residency participation in PBRNs\*

Factor	Barrier	Facilitator
Time	Everyone is busy Research can be a diversion	PBRNs with fully developed protocols can facilitate implementation of the study and engagement of residents/faculty in a program
Resources	Limited funding for incentives, supplies, etc.	PBRNs may be able to collaborate on grant proposals or bring opportunities to participate in funded projects with funding for research expenses
Expertise	No faculty with time to mentor residents or each other	PBRNs may provide opportunities for residents and faculty to collaborate with experienced researchers for scholarly activity
Topics	Residents/faculty may not be interested in opportunity presented by PBRN	Residents/faculty may be able to inspire the PBRN to undertake a project that emerged from their program

\*This table contains examples and would have been populated during the breakout. If you'd like to share your thoughts on barriers and facilitators with me, please do.

The future:  
Get involved in practice-based research!

# Research Opportunities for Rural Clinicians

## **PBRN opportunities for clinicians in rural practices:**

- Respond to a survey
- Serve on a study advisory board
- Contribute to a project to review or develop content as a subject matter expert
- Engage as an individual clinician in a study
- Engage your patients in a study
- Engage your practice and patients in a study
- Contribute as a study team member to development of grant proposals, development of research projects, analysis, and dissemination of practice-based research findings

*All while connecting with new colleagues, sharing your knowledge and experience, learning from others, and ensuring a rural lens is brought to the team.*

# Research Opportunities for Rural Residencies

## **PBRN opportunities for residents in rural programs:**

- Many of the opportunities on the previous slide may be open to residents
- Engaging in practice-based research as an individual or as a program can be a way to address resident scholarly activity requirements and faculty academic objectives
- Practice-based research can lend itself well to opportunities to engage cohorts of residents and faculty in short term projects or in various phases of longer term projects

*All while helping new physicians establish a network, create ties to their community, connect with new colleagues, share their knowledge and experience, learn from others, and ensure a rural lens is brought to the team.*

# Conclusions

- Practice-based research drives research derived innovations into community practices
- Rural practices and residencies can ensure those innovations are fully informed including consideration of the needs of rural practices and communities
- PBRNs can provide rural clinicians and trainees with the opportunity to participate in research, building their capacity to continue to initiate and contribute to future research
- Engagement of rural practices and residencies in PBRNs allows for enrichment of the clinicians and the data resulting from the research they perform

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*Enroll in the NRN at our website:*

[www.aafp.org/nrn](http://www.aafp.org/nrn)

Find your nearest local or regional PBRN:

<https://pbrn.ahrq.gov/pbrn-registry#>



# Individual Mentored Research Opportunity

Have a clinically inspired research question and no way to answer it?

Learn more about the AAFP Foundation and AAFP NRN's collaboration on their Scientific Signature Program: *Family Medicine Discovers* Rapid Cycle Scientific Discovery and Innovation (RapSDI) Program

New application cycle will begin in summer 2020. Visit:

<https://www.aafpfoundation.org/foundation/our-work/grants-awards/all/rapsdi1.html>

[https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/nrn/nrn/studies/all/family\\_medicine\\_discovers.html](https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/nrn/nrn/studies/all/family_medicine_discovers.html)