

## Focus Group Moderator Guide: Policymakers

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**Focus Group Discussion: Public Policy decision makers use the information produced by AHRQ to expand their capability to monitor and evaluate changes in the health care system and to devise policies designed to improve its performance. These decision makers include Federal and State policymakers such as Medicare and Medicaid, as well as policy advisory groups such as the IOM, professional societies, healthcare associations, and Quality Improvement Organizations.**

***Note. We recommend considering the policy maker's focus be for Federal and State policymakers. Questions for policy advisory groups, professional societies, healthcare associations, and quality improvement organizations follow the health system decision maker's guide.***

***Note. There are two types of policymakers; those that develop and implement policy and Medicaid and Medicare that serve as purchasers/providers. This draft incorporates both applications of PCOR.***

***Note. It is likely that public policymakers will not get information from mass media.***

### Moderator's Topic Guide

#### ROAD MAP of Discussion

Introduction	5
Agency Background	5
Awareness of the Research	15
Understanding of the Research	10
Behavior Change/Use	15
Research Benefits	5
Close	5
Total	60

#### I. Introduction (5 minutes)

##### (a) Introduction

(i) Thanks for attending the teleconference/webinar.

(ii) Your participation is important.

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(iii) Describe what a focus group is – like an opinion survey, but very general, broad questions.

(b) Purpose

(i) We will be discussing you and your organization's awareness, understanding, use, and benefits of patient-center outcomes research (PCOR), how your organization and employees, members, or constituents receive and interpret materials, and how employees, members, or constituents decide to adopt new behaviors based on information they receive. We are also trying to understand how your organization learned about research that is designed to help your organization use PCOR, the best way to communicate information about PCOR within your organization, and how important you think it is for your organization to have information to make clinical comparisons.

(ii) Ground Rules (go over verbally)

1. I am interested in all your ideas, comments, and suggestions.
2. Please be in a quiet place where you will not be interrupted.
3. There is no right or wrong answers.
4. All comments, both positive and negative, are welcome.
5. Please feel free to disagree with one another. We would like to have many points of view.
6. Please turn off cell phones.
7. Please use your first name only.

(c) Procedure

(i) Explain the use of audiotape. All comments are confidential, to be used for research purposes only, as explained in the consent form you signed.

(ii) I want this to be a group discussion, so you need not wait for me to call on you. Please speak one at a time so that the recorder can pick up everything. Please state your name before you speak so I know who is talking.

(iii) We have a lot of ground to cover, so I may change the subject or move ahead. Please stop me if you want to add something.

(iv) When it comes to our health and our experiences surrounding our health, there is a lot we can discuss; however, in the interest of our discussion and so I get you out of here on time, please stay focused on the questions I will be asking.

## Attachment O Moderator Guide for Policymakers

### Warm-up

Let's do introductions. Please introduce yourself, one at a time, first name only.

- Tell us your first name and
- Your favorite vacation spot
- Please describe your role/function in the organization.

### Agency Background Information (5 minutes)

1. Please provide a brief background on your agency and the role it plays in health care delivery and legislative decision-making, particularly PCOR.
2. .
3. Please describe the part of the agency that manages the PCOR information dissemination the component that manages the PCOR policy development and/or decision making process?
4. Is anyone in your agency on any government PCOR committee? If so, which ones?

### Awareness of the Research (15 minutes)

#### *Individual Awareness*

**Patient-centered outcomes research or PCOR compares different health care interventions for common conditions by rigorously evaluating existing scientific literature and generating new findings through scientific studies of different treatment and diagnostic interventions. This information helps patients and their providers work together to make the best possible choice among treatment options.**

Let's talk about patient-centered outreach research or PCOR.

5. Are you aware of PCOR?
6. If yes, how long have you been aware of PCOR? (Probe for a year, 6-9 months, longer than a year)
7. Did you become aware of PCOR through Federal mandates or legislation? Did you become aware through the role that your agency plays in PCOR policy?
  - a. If through legislation, tell me about the process, who mandated? How is this enforced?
8. Did you become aware through your work, health care provider, family/friends, advertisement, social media, conference, membership organizations, or Web sites? (Probe for AHRQ sources such as Web site, printed materials?)
9. If you did hear about PCOR via any of the channels above, what topics were communicated as priorities for PCOR? Are there topics you think should be priorities that were not communicated?

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10. If you learned about PCOR through advertisement, social media, conference, membership organizations, or Web sites, was the concept of PCOR clear to you? What would make the message about PCOR clearer? (Probe for better visual, word choice, time of day, website).
11. Where do you find updated or on-going information about PCOR? (i.e., Web sites, your agency, TV, radio, print, advertisement, social media, conference, membership organizations, or Web sites) (Probe for AHRQ materials)
12. Have you heard about the Effective Healthcare Research Program (EHCP)?
  - a. What do you know about EHCP? Where did you learn about the program?
  - b. Are you aware that there is a website to get information on these programs? If so, have you visited it? If not, would you visit it?
  - c. Have you worked with the EHCP? What is your role? (Probe for research, topic selection and nomination, materials)

**Agency Awareness**

13. Does your agency receive information on PCOR? If so, from where? How often? (Probe: for information and types of information from AHRQ)
  - a. Do these resources provide general information or on specific conditions?
  - b. What is that topic(s)?
  - c. Which do you prefer?
  - d. How is staff within your agency made aware of PCOR?
  - e. Is staff actively searching for materials? Is your staff receiving routine updates from somewhere (i.e., Web sites, Agency, provider organizations, published PCOR materials-Probe for AHRQ)?
14. Does your agency provide PCOR training to staff? If so, to whom and by whom?
15. As part of general practice, does your agency educate beneficiaries/patients on PCOR (if organization provides care delivery-Medicaid, CHIP, Medicare)? If so, by what means and why? If not, why? Probe for lack of awareness, doesn't seem useful?
  - a. Do you think providers are aware of PCOR?
  - b. Do you think providers are receptive to learning about and using PCOR? If so, why? If not, why?
16. Does your agency help produce or create PCOR information? (Probe for research, legislative, topic selection...) Who do you work with on this process? (Probe for other agencies and organizations)

**Understanding of the Research (10 minutes)**

**Individual Understanding**

17. Have you gone to Web sites or other sources to learn more about PCOR? What are those?
18. Do you participate in PCOR training in your agency, if training is conducted?
19. Do you feel comfortable explaining PCOR to staff within your organization?

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20. What do you think is the best way or method to help consumers understand PCOR?  
(Probe for materials, Web sites, providers)
21. What do you think is the best way or method to help providers understand PCOR?
22. What do you think is the best way or method to help health care decision makers understand PCOR?
23. What do you think is the best way or method to help purchasers understand PCOR?

**Behavior Change/Use (15 minutes)**

24. Does your agency use PCOR?
  - a. If so, for how long? (Probe for year, 6-9 months, longer than a year) For which topic(s)? Which divisions/groups use it?
  - b. Is PCOR used for specific topics or general awareness?
  - c. If not, why? Do you think your agency would be receptive to PCOR policy implementation? What would influence your agency to implement or use PCOR (if Medicaid, CHIP, or Medicare provider)?
25. How does Federal policy or funding influence your agency's development or use of PCOR?
  - a. Do you think as health care reform continues and PCOR dollars are further distributed, will your agency begin or expand its PCOR focus (i.e., evaluations, consumer/provider education)?
  - b. How do you see policy mandates affecting PCOR use? Encourage use?
26. Do you think the physicians and other providers use PCOR (If Medicaid, CHIP, or Medicare representative)? If not, why?
27. Do you feel your agency is likely to continue using PCOR in the future?
  - a. Is there anything that would prohibit your agency from using PCOR?
28. What PCOR topics would be most valuable for your agency?
29. In your opinion, what would be the best way for you to receive PCOR information?  
(probe for: format, content, length)

**Research Benefits (5 minutes)**

Let's talk about some of the benefits of PCOR.

30. What do you find to be the most useful benefit(s) of PCOR?
31. Do you feel there are any disadvantages to PCOR? What are they? What would you tell a friend, if they expressed concern or hesitation with PCOR?
32. How has the use of PCOR affected your agency's policy or decision-making process?
33. What do you see as some of the biggest challenges garnering PCOR support among providers? Among consumers? Among health care decision makers? Among purchasers?
  - a. What recommendations do you have to advance PCOR use among providers?
  - b. What recommendations do you have to advance PCOR use among consumers?
  - c. What recommendations do you have to advance PCOR use among health care decision makers?
  - d. What recommendations do you have to advance PCOR use among purchasers?

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34. How has the use of PCOR impacted health care delivery (if speaking with Medicaid, CHIP, or Medicare representative)?

**Closing (5 minutes)**

If there's anything else you'd like to say about the discussion we had that has not yet been shared please let me know.

Thank you so much for your time and participation in the project. Your insights are very much appreciated and have been very helpful. Your participation incentive will be mailed to you within two weeks.