

## Attachment B

# AHRQ Health Care Innovations Exchange Innovator Email Submission Guidelines

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality wants to hear about your innovative efforts to improve the delivery of health care services and invites you to participate in the AHRQ Health Care Innovations Exchange.

## How an Innovation is Defined

The Innovations Exchange defines innovation as the implementation of new or altered products, services, processes, systems, organizational structures, or business models as a means of improving one or more domains of health care quality. However, AHRQ does not want to put too tight a frame around this term based on our review of the innovation literature and expert consultations. Innovation can mean different things to different people, depending on sector as well as organizational factors. An activity that is standard practice in one health care system may be cutting-edge for another. While we will apply certain criteria to determine what belongs in the Innovations Exchange, our goal is to cast a wide net that allows for differences across the health care industry.

Our Editorial Team will work with you to produce an accurate description of your initiative<sup>1</sup>. This page explains what we look for and how to submit an innovation for consideration.

If you have questions or think you have an innovation to submit, please e-mail us at: [info@innovations.ahrq.gov](mailto:info@innovations.ahrq.gov).

## Why Participate in the Health Care Innovations Exchange?

- **Contribute to the Greater Good** – You will help advance positive changes in patient care beyond the walls of your own institution. By submitting your innovation, you will help build a rich resource that complements and enhances the usefulness of the traditional professional literature on health care services.

- **Become a Community Leader** – You will join a nationwide community of health care innovators, who can both learn from you and support your efforts to design and implement innovations in your organization. The Innovations Exchange will invite select innovators to serve as faculty for educational events.

## The Agency's Priorities

The Editorial Team aims for breadth in the settings, populations, and services covered by the Innovations Exchange. If we receive a large number of submissions, we will evaluate how well the innovation expands the current collection of innovations on these dimensions, as well as priorities AHRQ has established. These priorities include the following:

- **Vulnerable populations.** AHRQ is interested in identifying innovations to help reduce disparities in health care and health status. Populations of interest to AHRQ are low-income groups, minority groups, women, children, the elderly, and individuals with special health care needs.
- **Potential for high impact.** The Innovations Exchange gives preference to innovations that significantly affect the overall value of health care. For example, the innovation may affect a broad population, address a critical health issue, or demonstrate large cost savings.
- **Innovator interest in participating.** AHRQ gives priority to innovators interested in becoming involved in other activities of the Innovations Exchange, such as participating in learning networks and writing commentaries.
- **AHRQ-funded innovations.** The Innovations Exchange gives priority to innovations funded by AHRQ, but does not exclude innovations funded by other sources.

## What We Look For

### Inclusion Criteria

To be considered an **Innovation Profile**, a health care innovation must meet six criteria. To be considered an **Innovation Attempt**, a health care innovation must meet the same criteria as an Innovation Profile except for effectiveness. The criteria, explained in detail below, are minimum eligibility requirements. The decision to publish a description of your innovation ultimately depends on several factors including an evaluation by the Editorial Team, AHRQ's priorities (see above), and the number of similar innovations currently in the Innovations Exchange collection.

If you think your innovation meets most or all of the minimum requirements and you want to submit it for our consideration, go to [How To Submit An Innovation](#). If you have any questions about these criteria, contact us at [info@innovations.ahrq.gov](mailto:info@innovations.ahrq.gov).

- **The innovation relates to patient care delivery processes.**  
Your innovation changes usual patient care processes and/or associated health services delivery. It does not have to involve direct patient care or direct contact with health care consumers. However, it must have important implications for the delivery of patient care—whether preventive, emergent, chronic, acute, rehabilitative, long-term, or end-of-life. Innovations that involve devices, tools, technology, software, curricula, policies, procedures, and changes to the physical environment qualify only if these items are used in innovative ways for the delivery of health care services to patients.
- **The innovation aims to improve one or more domains of health care quality.**  
Your innovation addresses one or more specific measurable indicators of quality in one or more of the domains defined by the Institute of Medicine: effectiveness, efficiency, equity, patient-centeredness, safety, and timeliness. The indicators you use do not have to come from an established measure set, but they must be clearly defined and relevant to the quality issue your innovation addresses. Also, your innovation must not contradict established standards of evidence-based care.
- **The activity is truly innovative in the context of its setting or target population.**  
For the purposes of the Innovations Exchange, innovation refers to the creative implementation of new or altered products, services, processes, systems, organizational structures, or business models to improve one or more domains of health care quality. In this context, innovations are activities that are generally perceived as new in a particular setting or for a particular population relative to the usual care processes. The Editorial Team will assess the novelty of quality improvement initiatives/efforts including the context and conditions of the novel

approach against usual care delivery or care processes. In addition to brand new ideas, we welcome activities adapted from other industries to health care, transferred from one health care setting or market segment to another, drawn from settings in other countries, or applied to a new or different patient population. You must be able to communicate how your innovation differs from what is regarded as standard practice in your organization and among similar organizations. The Editorial Team will combine their working knowledge of the industry and knowledge by experts with your perspective to make a final decision about novelty.

- **Information about the innovation is publicly available.**

Enough information must be freely available so that a user of the Innovations Exchange can understand the elements of the innovation and make a decision about adopting it. This requirement does not exclude innovations that incorporate commercial products or other materials for which there may be a fee or licensing requirements. All information about the innovation doesn't have to be publicly available, but the Editorial Team will need access to information with sufficient detail to produce a comprehensive description.

- **The innovator (or a representative) will contribute information to the Innovations Exchange.**

A person knowledgeable about the innovation must participate in interviews with the Editorial Team and share available written information about the innovation. This person must also confirm that he or she can speak on behalf of any collaborating organizations and provide the name of a contact person who will be listed in the innovation description.

- **There is reason to believe that the innovation will be effective.**

You must be able to provide some evidence that the innovation is likely to achieve its goals. Ideally, this would include some quantitative or qualitative support for a link between the activity and improved performance on the defined quality indicator. However, if data are unavailable, limited, or lacking in methodological rigor, anecdotal reports of the impact of the innovation may suffice. Otherwise, it may be considered as an Innovation Attempt.

## **Exclusion Criteria**

Innovations that fall into any one of these categories will be excluded from the Innovations Exchange.

- **Product or Technical Innovations.** These innovations include new drugs or devices, software design and development, or durable medical equipment or supplies. Although advances in these areas may be innovative, to be eligible for inclusion in the Innovations Exchange, you need to demonstrate a connection to an innovative service delivery change.
- **Policy innovations.** Policy innovations such as legal or public policy changes, credentialing policy, or reimbursement policy are outside the scope of the Innovations Exchange. For example, a purchaser-sponsored pay-for-performance initiative is outside the scope. However, innovative service delivery changes in response to policy changes may be eligible. For example, an innovative chronic disease management approach at a medical group that was motivated by an external pay-for-performance program is within the scope of the Innovations Exchange.
- **Educational Innovations.** Innovations such as curriculum redesigns, continuing education certification, or the use of simulators or other technologies for training are outside the scope of the Innovations Exchange.
- **Clinical Innovations.** Pure clinical innovations such as new surgical, medical, or dental therapies or professional techniques are outside the scope of the Innovations Exchange.
- **Health service delivery innovations without any evidence of effect.** An innovation without quantitative or qualitative support between the innovation and targeted health care outcomes or processes is outside the scope of the Innovations Exchange.

## How Innovation Profiles Are Developed

Our development process has several steps:

- **Identification:** The Editorial Team searches the published and gray literature, as well as the Internet, to identify activities that could be eligible for the Innovations Exchange. Innovations are also submitted by developers and researchers at various kinds of health care organizations.
- **Assessment:** The Editorial Team assesses each innovation against the inclusion criteria. Once an innovation is submitted, the Team typically responds with the results of this assessment within 1 month.
- **Approval to proceed:** If an innovation meets the inclusion criteria, the innovator is contacted. If willing to participate, the innovator is asked to confirm that he or she can speak on behalf of any collaborating organizations, and that the Innovations Exchange can link to any pertinent Web sites. The Editorial Team does not proceed with the development of a description of the innovation until that confirmation is received.
- **Development of Profile/Attempt:** The Editorial Team drafts a profile of the innovation based on available written information and input from the innovator.
- **Innovator review:** The Editorial Team sends a final draft to the innovator to review. Any comments received from the innovator are incorporated as appropriate.
- **Review:** Published innovations are reviewed annually to ensure that the descriptions, including any Web links, remain current.

## How to Submit an Innovation<sup>1</sup>

To submit a candidate innovation for our consideration, contact the Innovations Exchange at [info@innovations.ahrq.gov](mailto:info@innovations.ahrq.gov). Please provide the following information in the e-mail:

- Name of the main organization, along with any other organizations that are participating in the innovation.
- Name and title of the submitter.
- Contact information for the submitter (e-mail address and phone number).
- Brief description of the innovation.
- Brief description of results, including any impact on the delivery of patient care.

- Description of the health care setting (e.g., hospital, community clinic, nursing home).
- Description of the population on which the innovation is focused, if any (e.g., the elderly, children, racial or ethnic group).
- Any funding sources for the innovation.

## Elements of an Innovation Profile

Element:	Description:
<b>Name of Innovation</b>	A title that describes the innovative activity and highlights its impact and what makes it innovative (e.g., the idea itself, the population served, the setting).
<b>Setting</b>	The type of organization where the innovation was implemented (e.g., hospital, health plan, community, nursing home).
<b>Summary</b>	A brief description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the key elements of the innovation,</li> <li>• what makes it innovative (if that is not clear), and</li> <li>• the impact or results achieved.</li> </ul>
<b>Developing Organizations</b>	A list of all organizations involved in developing the innovation. If appropriate, both primary and secondary developers are listed.
<b>Date First Implemented</b>	The date when the organization first implemented the innovative activity. If the innovation was initially implemented as a pilot, the date could be when the pilot began.

### What They Did

<b>Problem Addressed</b>	A brief description of the key problem(s) that the innovation addresses, plus details that support this statement, such as data on the magnitude and impact of the problem. Citations are provided to support any data.
<b>Pertinent Quality Measures</b>	A list of any standardized quality measures that are relevant to the innovation (as evidence of the problem or as measures of performance).
<b>Patient Population</b>	A description of the population affected by the innovation. Variables include gender, age, race/ethnicity, geographic location, disease/condition, and other pertinent characteristics.
<b>Description of the Innovative Activity</b>	A description of the components of the innovation, including the ongoing, day-to-day operations.

<b>References/Related Articles</b>	Complete citations for any related articles and full Web site addresses for links to any other related information.
<b>Contact the Innovator</b>	Name, title, organization, and telephone number and/or e-mail address for someone willing to serve as an ongoing contact for the innovation.
<b>Did It Work?</b>	
<b>Results</b>	A description of the overall results of the innovation (specifically, the extent to which the innovation succeeded in addressing the problem outlined earlier), plus a summary of specific key results with supporting data.
<b>Evidence Rating</b>	A rating of the strength of the evidence based on the nature of the study design, and a summary of the nature of the evidence (e.g., a before-and-after comparison). Possible ratings are strong, moderate, suggestive, and unproven. Ratings are given by the Editors.

### How They Did It

<b>Context of the Innovation</b>	<p>A brief description of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organization(s) implementing the innovation, including the type of organization, basic facilities and/or services offered, where it is located, etc.</li> <li>• Any unique macro-environmental factors (e.g., regulations, statewide initiatives, national initiatives or programs) that served as motivators and/or had an impact on the innovation's success or implementation.</li> <li>• Any larger initiatives that the innovation may be part of.</li> <li>• Any specifics about the local impetus for the innovation.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning and Development Process</b>	The key steps involved in the planning and development of the innovation, including upfront planning meetings, use of task forces, training, efforts to gain buy-in from key constituencies, etc.
<b>Resources Used and Skills Needed</b>	<p>Information on the staffing and financial costs of the innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Staffing:</b> Where available, includes the number and type of individuals involved in the innovation, emphasizing</li> </ul>



	<p>the amount of incremental staff needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Costs:</b> Where available, summarizes the overall costs of implementing and sustaining the innovation, and provides a cost breakdown.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Sources</b>	A brief description of where the money came from to fund the innovation, such as an AHRQ grant or contract, a foundation grant, or internal sources. When available, grant/contract/project numbers are also provided to identify specific funding sources.
<b>Tools and Other Resources</b>	Full article citations and Web site links to any publicly available worksheets or other tools related to the innovation.

### Adoption Considerations

<b>Getting Started With This Innovation</b>	Advice from the innovator regarding important/essential prerequisites to a successful launch, such as grant funding, staff expertise, the ability to pilot test, and the ability to get the "buy-in" and support of key constituencies.
<b>Sustaining This Innovation</b>	Advice from the innovator regarding what is needed to sustain the innovation over time and maintain momentum, such as ongoing funding, regular monitoring/feedback to foster improvement, staff time, and other necessary resources.
<b>Other Considerations and Lessons</b>	Additional tips, considerations, overall lessons, or otherwise useful information from the innovator that do not fit into the above categories.
<b>Use by Other Organizations</b>	Where available, information on the use of this innovation beyond the organization(s) discussed in this profile.

### Elements of an Innovation Attempt

<b>Name of Innovation</b>	A title that describes the innovative activity and highlights its results and what makes it innovative (e.g., the idea itself, the population served, the setting).
<b>Setting</b>	The type of organization where the innovation was implemented (e.g., hospital, health plan, community, nursing home).
<b>Summary</b>	<p>A brief description of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the key elements of the innovation,</li> <li>• what makes it innovative (if that is not clear), and</li> <li>• the impact or results achieved (or not achieved).</li> </ul>
<b>Developing Organizations</b>	A list of all organizations involved in developing the innovation. If appropriate, both primary and secondary developers are listed.

<b>Date First Implemented</b>	The date when the organization first implemented the innovative activity. If the innovation was initially implemented as a pilot, the date could be when the pilot began.
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### What They Did

<b>Problem Addressed</b>	A brief description of the key problem(s) that the innovation addresses, plus details that support this statement, such as data on the magnitude and impact of the problem. Citations are provided to support any data.
<b>Pertinent Quality Measures</b>	A list of any standardized quality measures that are relevant to the innovation (as evidence of the problem or as measures of performance).
<b>Patient Population</b>	A description of the population affected by the innovation. Variables include gender, age, race/ethnicity, geographic location, disease/condition, and other pertinent characteristics.
<b>Description of the Innovative Activity</b>	A description of the components of the innovation, including the ongoing, day-to-day operations.
<b>References/Related Articles</b>	Complete citations for any related articles and full Web site addresses for links to any other related information.
<b>Contact the Innovator</b>	Name, title, organization, and telephone number and/or e-mail address for someone willing to serve as an ongoing contact for the innovation.

### Did It Work?

<b>Results</b>	A description of the overall results of the innovation (specifically, an explanation of the ways in which the innovation failed to address the problem outlined earlier), plus a summary of specific key results with supporting data.
<b>Evidence Rating</b>	A rating of the strength of the evidence based on the nature of the study design, and a summary of the nature of the evidence (e.g., a before-and-after comparison). Possible ratings are strong, moderate, suggestive, and unproven. <a href="#">Select to learn more about the evidence rating.</a>

### What They Learned

	A summary of lessons learned by the innovator, with an emphasis on the challenges that arose and what the innovator might have done differently.
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If you have printed information about your innovation, you can fax it to us at 301-610-4950. Please address the fax to Innovations Exchange Editorial Teams, Westat, put the words "Innovation Submission" in the subject line, and include your contact information.

You may also mail information to Russ Mardon, RA-1140, Westat, 1650 Research Blvd., Rockville, MD 20850.

After reviewing and evaluating your submission against the minimum criteria, the Editorial Team will contact you for further information.

If your innovation is accepted, the Editorial Team will confirm that you can speak on behalf of your organization and collaborating organizations, and that the Innovations Exchange has permission to link to any pertinent Web sites that your organization maintains. Once we receive your confirmation, we will draft a description of your innovation and send it to you for review and comment before posting it on the site.

**Note about privacy:** If we select your submitted innovation for the Innovations Exchange, we may publish information you provide as part of the innovation description unless that information is confidential.