

Clinical Effectiveness: Leadership in Comparative Effectiveness and Translational Research.

The 15th Annual HMO Research Network Conference, April 26-29, 2009, Danville, Pennsylvania

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The Health Maintenance Organization Research Network (HMORN), a consortium of 16 health care delivery systems with integrated research divisions, held its annual meeting in Danville, Pennsylvania in April of 2009 and was attended by more than 260 researchers and operational leaders from HMORN organizations, pharmaceutical companies, the National Cancer Institute, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. The 2009 meeting was held from April 26th to April 29th at the Henry Hood Center for Health Research, and was hosted by Geisinger Health System. The conference theme was “Clinical Effectiveness: Leadership in Comparative Effectiveness and Translational Research.” This article provides some background on the network, its research activities, and the annual conference. This issue of *Clinical Medicine & Research* also includes selected scientific abstracts presented at the meeting.

Keywords: Comparative effectiveness; Integrated delivery systems; Managed care

From time to time, *Clinical Medicine & Research* expands its coverage to report on meetings of interest to its readership that span the nexus of research and practice. The Annual Meeting of the Health Maintenance Organization Research Network (HMORN) is one such meeting, and beginning last year, *Clinical Medicine & Research* has reported on selected proceedings from that gathering.

The network was formed in 1994 with its goal being to transform health care practice through population-based research to improve the health and health care of broad populations. The HMORN includes 16 research centers based in health care delivery systems with defined health plan populations, electronic medical record systems, and longitudinal data archives. Network research centers and their various collaborative partners conduct health services, epidemiologic, clinical, behavioral, and other types of health research that are based in community care settings and can be translated into effective clinical practice. The HMORN has been meeting annually since 1995; its conferences provide an opportunity for collaboration, information sharing, and exploration of new research areas.

The theme for the 2009 conference, “Clinical Effectiveness: Leadership in Comparative Effectiveness and Translational Research”, presented a timely topic that recognized the shifting landscape of health care research funding. Comparative effectiveness research is highly relevant to HMORN, as it represents an important area of current research and a unique strength of the network. The meeting was held from Sunday, April 26 through Wednesday, April 29, 2009 at the Henry Hood Center for Health Research, Danville, Pennsylvania and was hosted by Geisinger Health System. HMORN member attendees included clinician and other health researchers, as well as operational leaders of clinics and health plans. Formal funding support for the conference was received from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), as well as from Geisinger Clinic.

Expert panels provided engaging discussion of: (1) federal funding and industry views on comparative effectiveness research, (2) AHRQ’s role in comparative effectiveness research, and (3) system level health care innovation and research. Dr. Gail Wilensky, economist and senior fellow at

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Project Hope, served as a keynote speaker for the plenary session titled ‘Comparative Effectiveness Research: Federal Funding and Industry Views.’ Scott Smith of AHRQ served as a keynote speaker for the plenary session titled “Comparative Effectiveness in Practice and AHRQ’s Role in Comparative Effectiveness Research.”

The agenda also included 2 scientific poster sessions, the annual state of the Network address, and 20 concurrent sessions with oral abstract presentations across a wide range of important topics (comparative effectiveness, behavioral health, pharmaco-epidemiology, regulatory/compliance, genetic epidemiology, diabetes, informatics, health economics, cancer, new issues in human subjects research, lean management practice for research administration, and cardiovascular disease), and a session for junior investigators showcasing their work. More than 140 scientific presentations were featured in oral or poster format.

Importantly, there were also more than 25 ancillary sessions on the formal agenda, most of which reflected new or developing partnerships focused on critical topics such as the Cardiovascular Research Network, child health, the Cancer Research Network, mental health, diabetes, Centers for Education and Research on Therapeutics/Developing Evidence to Inform Decisions about Effectiveness (CERT/DEcIDE), obesity, pharmacovigilance, virtual data warehouse, and informatics. Sessions were also held on research support or development topics including increasing participation in cancer clinical trials, designing translational studies in genetic epidemiology, virtual data warehouse training, information on the peer review process at the National Institutes of Health, and a discussion of health literacy and cancer prevention.

The 16th Annual HMO Research Network Conference will be held March 21-24, 2010 in Austin, Texas. The topic of the conference will be “Emerging Frontiers in Healthcare Research and Delivery.” The conference hosts will be Scott & White Healthcare and Scott & White Health Plan.

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