

Evidence-Based Guidelines

Evidence-Based Guidelines (EBGs) are recommendations for clinical care supported by the best available evidence in the clinical literature.

They outline best practices based on peer-reviewed scientific evidence. EBGs give credible support for handling particular situations, populations, visit types and so on in a specific way.

If your practice varies the way it provides care, EBGs can help every care team agree on and use the same standard of care. This agreement will result in more consistency in the type and quality of care provided to patients and in more efficient processes and policies within the practice.

Purpose of EBGs

- Describe appropriate care based on the best available scientific evidence and broad consensus
- Reduce cost due to variations in care
- Provide a consistent reason for referral
- Promote efficient use of resources
- Improve clinical outcomes and process measures
- Act as a focus for quality control

Use of EBGs

Using EBGs, you can standardize many tasks at your practice. This allows physicians to distribute patient care tasks among staff, embracing the team-based care concept and ensuring team members are working at the top of their licensure. For example, to support standard diabetes care, a medical assistant can determine whether a patient is overdue for an HbA1c test, foot exam or retinal exam. If so, the assistant may perform the testing for HbA1c, provide a comprehensive foot exam and set up an appointment for a retinal exam. Nurses can provide patient education, care planning and care coordination as health coaches for these same patients. In turn, physicians are able to focus on reviewing lab and test results, performing a physical exam, and discussing a course of action for ongoing care.

By reviewing current staff duties and clinic care processes, your practice can determine whose skills and time are best suited for particular tasks, leaving more time for physicians to do physician work.



Implementing EBGs

1. Identify a patient population, measure or outcome that is important to your group.
2. Clearly define metrics/goals for this population, measure or outcome.
3. Agree on the EBGs your practice will use.
4. Document the agreed-upon guidelines
5. Educate your team on the value of providing evidence-based care.
6. Ensure effective decision support at the point of care.
7. Embed the new guidelines in your practice's day-to-day operations.

Clinical Practice Guideline Resources

A variety of guidelines are available. Click on any item listed below to view the resource online.

Asthma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) ○ American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) ○ American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
Behavioral Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence ○ American Psychiatric Association <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Treating Major Depressive Disorder: A Quick Reference Guide – Treating Bipolar Disorder: A Quick Reference Guide – Treating Substance Use Disorders: A Quick Reference Guide – Practice Guidelines for the Treatment of Patients with Schizophrenia ○ American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Practice Parameter for the Assessment and Treatment of Children and Adolescents With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease ○ NHLBI
Diabetes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ American Diabetes Association ○ AAFP
Heart Health/Cholesterol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NHLBI ○ American Heart Association ○ Journal of the American College of Cardiology
HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Institutes of Health
Hypertension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NHLBI ○ AAFP
Immunizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ○ AAFP ○ Immunization Action Coalition
Kidney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Kidney Foundation
Obesity — Children, Adolescents and Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NHLBI ○ U.S. Preventive Services Task Force
Preventive Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality ○ American Academy of Pediatrics ○ U.S. Preventive Services Task Force
Prenatal and Postpartum Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Additional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AAFP ○ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality ○ American Academy of Pediatrics