

Federal Interagency Workgroup on Improving Diagnostic Safety and Quality in Healthcare

July 2020 Meeting Summary

Workgroup Goal: Established by [Senate Report 115-150](#). The Senate Committee on Appropriations requested that AHRQ “convene a cross agency working group that will propose a strategy to enhance scientific research to improve diagnosis in healthcare, as outlined in the 2015 NASEM report.” (NASEM stands for “National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.”)

Workgroup Summary: The latest Workgroup meeting occurred virtually on July 23, 2020, and was attended by representatives from the following agencies:

AHRQ	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CMS	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration
IHS	Indian Health Service
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
NIH/NLM	National Institutes of Health/National Library of Medicine
NIH/NIBIB	National Institutes of Health/ Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering
NIH/CC	National Institutes of Health/Clinical Center
NIH/NCI	National Institutes of Health/National Cancer Institute
ONC	Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
OASH	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health
SAMSHA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
VA	Veterans Affairs

The aims of the meeting were to: (1) provide agency updates related to diagnostic improvement research as well as COVID-19 response efforts and impacts; and (2) discuss priorities for future meetings.



Updates addressed during the meeting include the following:

Agency	Update
AHRQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posted an issue brief titled State of the Science for Operational Measurement and Diagnostic Quality and Safety on the AHRQ website. • Awarded a grant under the Special Emphasis Notice: Health Services Research Priorities for Improving Diagnostic Safety and Quality: Towards a National Diagnostics Excellence Dashboard - Partnering with Stakeholders to Construct Evidence Based Operational Measures of Diagnostic Related Harms. • PSNet: Published a primer on 7/22/20 called COVID-19 and Dx Error.
CDC/Healthcare Quality Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Diagnostic Assays and Guidance – A summary of CDC guidance in this area is available. COVID-19 diagnostics are used, in addition to clinical management, for case identification and infection control (contact tracing, containment, and public health measures). This pandemic is demonstrating the important role of laboratory diagnostics in public health decision making, which can overlap with patient safety.
HRSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Repercussions Effort: The Integrated Health Systems Analytics Enterprise effort is a look at resilience and evolving collaboration between healthcare, public health systems, and other systems. It involves an ongoing network of subject matter experts around different use case scenarios that are being launched. This effort will focus on the second and third order ramifications of COVID-19 (i.e., colorectal cancer screening, mammography, primary care, and dental care). It has a safety component, and this workgroup could make contributions as subject matter experts participating in the dialog going forward.
NIH/Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trans-NIH RADx Initiative. The diagnostic technology part is called RADx Tech. The initiative has been going on for a few months with a very strong response, and the hope is that there will be some results or impact made in the fall. • RADx-UP (underrepresented population). Focus is to try to engage the underrepresented population and vulnerable populations.
NIH/NCI/HSIRB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded R01 grant to the University of Washington: Using Technology To Optimize Collaborative Care Management of Depression in Urban and Rural Cancer Centers (1R01CA244171-01A1). • Released a Notice of Special Interest regarding availability of urgent competitive revision and administrative supplements on COVID-19 (NOT-CA-20-042).

Agency	Update
VA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Hub and Resources: VA health services research COVID hub contains publications, resources, and grants recently awarded. • Recently Published Diagnostic Safety Relevant Papers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reducing the Risk of Diagnostic Error in the COVID-19 Era. Taxonomy of diagnostic errors that could occur in the COVID-19 era, including false negatives and other emerging issues (e.g., telemedicine, patients fearful of seeking care). ○ COVID-19 and the Need for a National Health Information Technology Infrastructure. Discusses development of real-time national health information infrastructure related to COVID-19 information infrastructure. ○ COVID-19 safety issues. Discusses how initial but temporary progress during the first few months of the pandemic can help solve long-term and intractable safety issues, including those related to culture (transparency, collaboration), workforce safety, and health information technology (IT). ○ Paper on anxiety diagnosis and mislabeling relevant to mental health diagnostic priorities. ○ Assessment of HIT-related outpatient diagnostic delays in Veterans Health Administration. Data and assessment from aggregated root cause analysis of diagnostic delays related to health IT in VHA published in JAMA Open. Relevant to improving electronic health record (EHR) interoperability, to include non-VA EHRs and commercial health systems and to inform future research regarding informatics and safety.

The group reviewed responses from a prior IAWG member survey and discussed priorities for future meetings. The discussion included the benefit of engagement with experts in the fields of human factors, social science, and informatics, as well as funders, specialty societies, and operational/frontline stakeholders. The group also discussed different methods and strategies to identify research priorities and topics that would benefit from collaboration.

Next Steps: The next IAWG meeting is currently scheduled for November 6, 2020.