

# CoCoNet2: Coordinated Coalition of Primary Care Research Networks

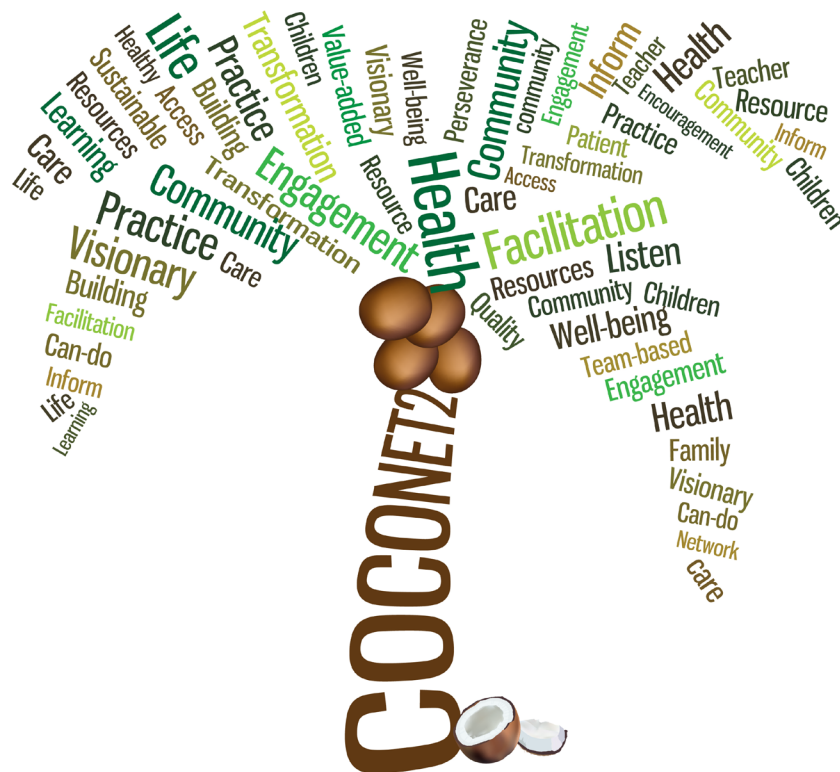
NURTURING PARTNERSHIPS IN RESEARCH,  
TRAINING, DISSEMINATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION

## [AHRQ Centers for Primary Care Practice-Based Research and Learning \(P30 Grants\)](#)

*The AHRQ Centers for Primary Care Practice-Based Research and Learning nurture partnerships, conduct research, and disseminate knowledge with the ultimate aim of improving patient care. By connecting several Practice-Based Research Networks (PBRNs) and other research partners under a single Center it is possible to engage in sophisticated projects in a collaborative environment.*

*This summary is an invitation to learn about the Center's research areas of interest, experts, and strategies for enhancing primary care. We hope the information fosters pursuits of shared interest and new quality improvement partnerships, perhaps with you.*

The [CoCoNet2](#) center comprises six PBRNs across five States. Among these PBRNs, over 400 practices serve thousands of patients from all socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups. CoCoNet2 challenges itself to be an active learning community by sharing resources and collaborating on research projects. All member PBRNs employ [practice facilitators \(PFs\)](#) and have expertise in implementation and quality improvement.



## Partnerships & Collaborations


The CoCoNet2 coalition is able to effectively manage resources, reduce administrative burden on investigators, provide continuity, and separate intervention components from data management and analysis functions due to a fruitful working relationship with a Coordinating Center led by Dr. Paula Darby Lipman and her team at [Westat](#). The Westat Coordinating Center also aids CoCoNet2 in developing and maintaining learning groups for their members.

Dr. Mold, formerly of the Oklahoma PBRN (OKPRN), and Dr. Lipman and Mr. Steve Durako of Westat co-authored an article on [Coordinating Centers and Multi-Practice-based Research Network \(PBRN\) Research](#).

## Training & Education

CoCoNet2 acts as a tree of knowledge for its members, providing a robust environment for learning by offering educational opportunities on topics such as practice facilitation, academic detailing, and multi-component quality improvement processes. As a P30, CoCoNet2 connects leaders of each member PBRN and supports them in disseminating information to their practice membership.

### Training for new investigators and mentoring to develop research skills

- Research empowerment courses for clinicians introducing principles of practice-based research.
-  Webinars focus on timely topics, the [evolving PBRN workforce](#) and [practice transformation implementation strategies](#).
- The [MAFP Research Forum](#), held in Spring 2015, is a chance for researchers at all levels to present findings and further develop research skills.

### Clin-IQ

OKPRN, a CoCoNet2 member, developed a training program on [Clin-IQ, \(Clinical Inquiries\)](#), a research process where the clinical community can work together to identify, ask, and answer clinical questions by assessing published literature.

- Clin-IQ collects the questions that clinician members care about within the context of *residency* practices where there is the added pressure of participating in scholarly activities.
- Clin-IQ is an ongoing community engagement program of the [Oklahoma Clinical and Translational Research Institute \(OSCTRI\)](#).

*“The [P30] opportunity enabled us to integrate six PBRNs, which has increased the number and quality of our grant applications.”*

*“We support PBRNs to be successful in adopting best practices and to continue to seek collaborative, multi-PBRN projects.”*

*Jim Mold, M.D., M.P.H.  
University of Oklahoma*

## Practice Facilitation Leading to Quality Improvement

All members of CoCoNet2 employ practice facilitators (PF) in their clinics. Practice facilitation helps improve processes and outcomes by creating a sustained relationship between an external change agent and the primary care practice team. PFs help practices grow and improve care through audits and feedback, staff training, sharing innovative ideas, supporting system and infrastructure development, and coordinating quality improvement activities. PFs also help practices participate in primary care practice-based research.

*“UNYNET is instrumental in assembling practice facilitator experts from across the country to guide, direct, and contribute to the materials in the Practice Facilitator Professional Development and Training Program.”*

*Chester H. Fox, M.D.,  
University at Buffalo, UNYNet*




### Training Program

A national [Practice Facilitator Professional Development and Training Program](#) was developed, disseminated, and implemented through a partnership of several CoCoNet2 members. The certified program consists of lectures, virtual group discussions, presentations by national experts, and a preceptorship that allows trainees to gain practical experience at facilities around the country. Program graduates help practices establish methods, processes, and infrastructure leading to measurable improvements in service delivery. Through the work being done by CoCoNet2 members, practice facilitation is becoming a career for people interested in positive and sustainable change in the delivery of primary care.

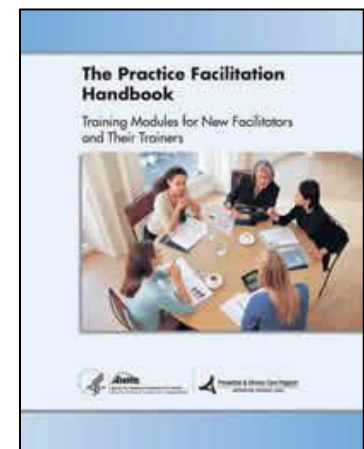
### Handbook

Lyndee Knox, the director of CoCoNet2 member PBRN LANet, has worked extensively with AHRQ to develop the [Practice Facilitation Handbook](#). It is designed to assist a clinic or network director in developing, administering, and maintaining a practice facilitation program to make meaningful practice changes and improve patient outcomes.

#### Helpful resources related to Practice Facilitation:

-  [Frontline Innovation Video: Practice Enhancement Assistants](#) from the AHRQ Innovations Exchange
- [Implementing the Patient Centered Medical Home: Practice Facilitation How-To Guide](#) from AHRQ
-  [Practice Facilitation Webinars](#) from AHRQ
-  Webinar on [Exemplar Primary Care Practice Facilitation Training Programs](#), featuring Dr. Knox, LA Net

#### AHRQ Practice Facilitation Handbook



## Getting to Know CoCoNet2's Key Personnel

**Zsolt Nagykaldi, PhD**

**Director OKPRN, Director CoCoNet2**

"As a P30 Center for Research and Learning, CoCoNet2 is able to more effectively respond to funding opportunities than a single PBRN could. The golden thread that connects our members is the use of practice facilitation, but the true benefit of the coalition is the ability to maximize resources through partnerships that can answer complex research questions on the national level."

**Kevin Peterson, MD**

**Director, Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians Research Network**

"Health systems embrace research, but have limited experience in engaging with and learning from providers through bottom-up research. Working through the P30 mechanism promotes cooperation between the networks and affords the opportunity to involve more providers who want to build a strong, research-oriented relationship."

**Christi A. Madden, MPA**

**Research Programs Coordinator, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center**

"The collaboration made possible through the P30 mechanism is an amazing asset to CoCoNet2 members and practices. It provides a platform for idea exchange, and capitalizes on unique resources and expertise of each member network. Partnering with Westat supports the work we do by seeking funding opportunities, helping with grant writing, and applying best practices to our research pursuits."

### Special Mention

OKPRN's founder, Dr. James Mold, celebrates his retirement after more than 20 years of commitment to OKPRN, almost 100 articles published, millions of dollars received in grant funding, and a career dedicated to innovation, implementation, and dissemination research. Dr. Mold received the [Pioneer in PBRN Research award](#) at the 2014 North American Primary Care Research Group meeting honoring his distinguished service. Pictured: Drs. Rowena Dolor and LJ Fagnan present Dr. Mold with his award.



### What is next for CoCoNet2?

CoCoNet2 plans to continue to partner with the other AHRQ P30s to review, finalize, and adopt the [PBRN Research Good Practices \(PRGPs\)](#) being developed by Dr. Victoria Neale's PBRN Quality Improvement Initiative. Member networks have reviewed and provided feedback on the development of the PRGPs and Drs. Zsolt Nagykaldi and Elizabeth Wickersham of OKPRN will lead CoCoNet2 in disseminating the document and implementing the practices. Based on national feedback, the PBRN-Quality Improvement group is assembling a finalized PRGP document.

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## Get to Know the Members of CoCoNet2

Who, Where, When	How	What	
		Key publication	Recently funded project
<b>LA Net Community Health Network (LA Net)</b> <a href="http://www.lanetpbrn.net">www.lanetpbrn.net</a>			
<b>Director: Lyndee Knox</b> <b>1,000 Clinicians in 100 Clinics</b> <b>Location: California</b> <b>Founded in 2002</b>	LA Net works to improve primary health care services and quality of life for low-income minority and underserved families living in Southern California.	<a href="#">An overview of practice facilitation programs in Canada: current perspectives and future directions.</a>	<a href="#">Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) management among safety-net practices.</a> In collaboration with safety-net practices, an LA Net facilitator conducted a 6-question survey to determine which patients might test positive for COPD. If survey results indicate potential symptoms, patients are further screened with the use of a handheld Spirometry device.
<b>Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians Research Network (MAFPRN)</b> <a href="http://www.maftp.org/research">www.maftp.org/research</a>			
<b>Director: Kevin Peterson</b> <b>258 Clinicians in 135 Clinics</b> <b>Locations: Minnesota, Wisconsin</b> <b>Founded 1979</b>	MAFPRN works to support and promote family medicine research.	Improving evidence-based primary care for chronic kidney disease: Study protocol for a cluster randomized controlled trial for translating evidence into practice ( <a href="#">TRANSLATE CKD</a> ). PDF of the Translate Model.	<a href="#">Measuring Variation in the Engagement of Primary Care and Public Health and Impact on Population Health.</a> This project examines integrating primary care delivery and public health services to benefit community health, specifically health outcomes related to immunizations, tobacco use, obesity, and physical activity. It also involves PBRNs in Colorado, Washington, and Wisconsin.



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<b>Oklahoma Child Health Research Network (OCHRN)</b> <a href="http://osctr.ouhsc.edu/practice-based-research-networks">http://osctr.ouhsc.edu/practice-based-research-networks</a>			
<b>Director: Paul Darden</b> <b>93 Clinicians in 16 Clinics</b> <b>Location: Oklahoma</b> <b>Founded 2009</b>	OCHRN provides community pediatricians and child health care providers with access to information, education, research and technology.	<a href="#">Trends in Obesity Prevalence and Disparities among Low-Income Children in Oklahoma, 2005 – 2010.</a>  <a href="#">Impact of a Physician Recommendation (on childhood vaccines).</a>	Reasons for not vaccinating adolescents, National Immunization Survey of Teens; 2008-2010.  This project sought to determine the reasons adolescents did not receive specific vaccines and how these reasons have changed over time.
<b>Oklahoma Physicians Research/Resource Network (OKPRN)</b> <a href="http://www.okprn.org">www.okprn.org</a>			
<b>Director: Zsolt Nagykaladi</b> <b>264 Clinicians in 136 Clinics</b> <b>Location: Oklahoma</b> <b>Founded 1994</b>	OKPRN supports primary care clinicians through a professional network for peer learning, sharing of resources for best practices, and practice-based research.	<a href="#">Visit the OKPRN Web site for a full list of publications</a> , including: <a href="#">Practice-based Research Networks at the Crossroads of Research Translation</a> . Nagykaladi Z. J Am Board Fam Med. 2014 Nov-Dec;27(6):725-9. <a href="#">PBRNS engaging the community to integrate primary care and public health</a> . Westfall JM, Dolor RJ, Mold JW, Hedgecock J. Ann Fam Med. 2013 May-Jun;11(3):284-5.	<a href="#">Visit the OKPRN Web site for a full list of projects</a> , including: Implementing a Sustainable Model for Delivery of Preventive Services in Rural Counties (2014 – 2018).  IMPaCT: Primary Care Extension in Oklahoma: An Evidence-Based Approach to Dissemination and Implementation (2011 – 2013).





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<b>Upstate New York Network (UNYNet)</b> <a href="http://fammed.buffalo.edu/UNYNET">fammed.buffalo.edu/UNYNET</a>			
<b>Director: Chet Fox</b> <b>211 Clinicians in 49 Clinics</b> <b>Location: New York</b> <b>Founded 1994</b>	UNYNet improves patient care by translating research into practice and by involving practices in research.	<a href="#">Visit the UNYNet Web site for a full list of publications</a> , including: Fox CH, Swanson A, Kahn L, Glaser K. <a href="#">Improving Chronic Kidney Disease Care in Primary Care Practices: An Upstate New York Practice Based Research (UNYNET) Study</a> . JABFP.	<a href="#">Visit the UNYNet Web site for a full list of projects</a> , including: Implementing Evidence Based Diabetes Guidelines in Rural Practices Using Practice Enhancement Associates (PEAs).
<b>Wisconsin Research and Education Network (WREN)</b> <a href="http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/research/wren">www.fammed.wisc.edu/research/wren</a>			
<b>Director: David L. Hahn</b> <b>241 Clinicians in 80 Clinics</b> <b>Location: Wisconsin</b> <b>Founded 1987</b>	WREN improves health outcomes for the people of Wisconsin through education, and through promoting and conducting primary care research in partnership with primary care clinicians and the community they serve.	<a href="#">Visit the WREN Web site for a full list of publications and presentations</a> , including: Reiter J, Demirel N, Mendy A, Gasana J, Vieira ER, Colin A A, Quizon A, Forno E. <a href="#">Macrolides for the long-term management of asthma – a meta-analysis of randomized clinical trials</a> . Allergy 2013; 68: 1040–1049. Louks HA, Fixmer JM, Baumgardner D. <a href="#">Clinical Approach to Non-Responsive Pneumonia: A Survey of Wisconsin Primary Care Clinicians</a> . Oral presentation presented at the 2013 Wisconsin Health Improvement & Research Partnerships Forum.	<a href="#">Visit the WREN Web site for a full list of projects</a> , including: <a href="#">Building on the WREN and Diabetes Leadership Initiative Experience: Implementing Chronic Kidney Disease Guidelines at University of Wisconsin Medical Foundation</a> . The project will use practice facilitators to develop workflow changes, offer tools to enhance patient education, develop a statewide local learning collaborative, and implement changes to HealthLink to increase efficiency and sustainability of workflows for CKD care and pilot test the changes.

Also of note, the [“Improving evidence-based primary care for chronic kidney disease: study protocol for a cluster randomized control trial for translating evidence into practice \(TRANSLATE CKD\)”](#) study protocol, a project done jointly by several CoCoNet2 members, was featured in the August 2013 issue of *Implementation Science*.



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**For more information about CoCoNet2, contact:**

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**For more information about the AHRQ PBRN Resource Center,**  
please visit [pbrn.ahrq.gov](http://pbrn.ahrq.gov) or email [PBRN@ahrq.hhs.gov](mailto:PBRN@ahrq.hhs.gov)



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