Identifying Professional Practice Gaps

PeerPoint takes a very strategic, stepwise approach to the uncovering of professional practice gaps and conducting a gap analysis. We begin with Step 1: *What is the quality gap to be addressed? What is the professional practice gap? What are the health professional target audiences?*

In order to identify a professional practice gap, we utilize many sources of various types of data, both objective and subjective, including but not limited to the following:

a. Review of evidence-based clinical literature and recommended practice guidelines and metrics from reputable sources located at, for example, but not limited to, www.ncqa.org, www.ama-assn.org, www.clinicaltrials.gov, www.aafp.org, and www.pubmed.gov
b. Review performance metrics and why they were established
c. Determination if pay for performance (P4P) instruments are in place and if payer organizations have notices the problem as well, through discussions and websites such as www.cms.hhs.gov/pqri/
d. Review of current events in industry-based media outlets
e. Interview recognized thought leaders for the specific topic of interest/therapeutic area to review and validate the research and data PeerPoint has obtained
f. Interviews with quality improvement personnel, executive committees from medical societies, potential partnering organizations and past and potential faculty
g. Interviews with nurse planners, the target audience and patients
h. Surveys of the target audience and others that might be influenced or affected by the professional practice gaps
i. Random surveys of a cross spectrum of past and present participant/learner recommendations for subsequent learner needs
j. Review of past learner feedback and recommendations for subsequent learner needs
k. Discussions with our informal CME Committee

Using the data gathered by through steps, the assessment addresses the central question: *"Based on these materials, is there a professional practice gap, and if so, what is it?*

As mentioned above, a survey of the target audience is often conducted to further qualify that a gap indeed exists. These surveys are typically aimed at validating potential practice gaps and to assist us in determining the impact these gaps may have on their practice. They may be asked for diagnosis or treatment scenarios based on a set of assumptions or case study, where the "correct" answer is taken from the established guidelines. Depending on how the survey respondents answer the question will help confirm or deny the existence of particular line items associated with our research as deficits in care.

Typically the survey results are discussed, along with the other sources of information gathered, with a recognized thought leader who will assess the results and may further determine if a professional practice gap exists. Once this has been validated, we use this information in the formation of a Needs Assessment.

By taking a strategic, stepwise approach, PeerPoint believes that it can confidently determine what the gaps are, the type of gaps, and ways to close them.