Performance Improvement FAQ

1. **I'm clinically active but do not see continuity family medicine patients. Am I still required to complete a Performance Improvement (PI) Activity?**

   Yes, all family physicians who see patients in any setting or practice type are required to complete a clinically-based improvement project. American Board of Family Medicine has options for you to meet this requirement in a meaningful way, regardless of your scope of practice or interests. In the Physician Portfolio, you can answer a few, short questions when you first select Performance Improvement Activities and our new **PI Locator** will help provide you with a list of activities that are most relevant to your practice. Occasionally, these curated preferences may inadvertently limit some options that you would find relevant and interesting. You may still select the option to view all PI Activities on the Performance Improvement landing page if you wish to see more options. Additionally, ABFM staff are available to consult with you to answer any questions you may have about the PI Activities.

2. **How long will it take to complete my PI Activity?**

   The time required to complete the PI Activity varies by activity with a range of one week to one year. You can narrow your search by the length of time you wish to invest in completing the activity by using the advanced search options. Alternatively, the description of each activity will indicate the minimum time or range needed for completion of that activity.

3. **Is there an extra charge for completing PI Activities?**

   While some activities sponsored by other organizations do include a separate charge, most PI Activities do not cost anything additional to complete. All ABFM sponsored PI Activities are covered in your annual certification fees of $200/year.

4. **I already participate in quality improvement activities as part of my practice. Can I receive credit for this?**

   The Self-Directed Performance Improvement (PI) Activity allows you to easily and efficiently report your own clinical improvement projects, regardless of the focus of the improvement effort(s), metric(s) used, and/or scope of care you deliver. You can use this pathway whether you see patients in a continuity setting or if you are providing episodic care (e.g. hospitalist, sports medicine, telemedicine, locums, urgent care, emergency department, nursing home, hospice care, etc.). You may report on a project that you conducted on your own, within a single practice group, or as part of an ACO, Clinical Quality organization, or large group practice effort. Please note that there is also an Organizational PI option for groups larger than 10 or ACOs/health system that you may wish to consider with group administrators or leaders.

   If you are part of a practice in which 10 or fewer physicians are working on the same improvement activity, all of the physicians who meaningfully participated can receive credit without submitting additional activities. Once the first physician submits, they will be provided a code that the team members can use to attest to their participation when completing their application. To submit a self-directed activity, log into your Physician Portfolio, click "Access Performance Improvement Activities" and "View All PI Activities." Locate Self-Directed Clinical Activity and click "Start" to create your application. To submit your group code, follow the same process above while in the application and Find the first box and click "Join a Group;" then add your group code.

5. **Can I estimate the baseline and follow-up data for improvement projects if I don't have the exact numbers?**

   No, you must use real data from your practice to do meaningful improvement. This data may be related to clinical outcomes (e.g., blood pressure control, use of asthma action plans, Hgb A1C levels); preventive screening activities (e.g., colon cancer screening rates, immunizations, depression screening); and/or practice data that supports practice transformation (e.g., time to next new patient appointment; patient satisfaction, medication reconciliation, etc.). Data can be on a subset of patients and does not require practice-wide or full panel data. Describing the denominator regarding which patients are included is an important aspect of understanding your improvement activity, but you may choose this yourself for most activities.

6. What are the basic steps required for creating a PI project?

    1. Select something about your practice (process or outcome) that you want to improve.
    2. Utilize your practice staff and partners to discuss ideas for improvement and plan an intervention to improve care. (Note: You can complete the project alone if no team is needed)
    3. Collect baseline data.
    4. Develop your project aim statement (What you are trying to improve? By how much? By when?)
    5. Identify the measure(s) you will use. You can most easily do this by answering the question: How will I/we know that the change(s) resulted in an improvement?
    6. Complete the intervention over the selected time period.
    7. Collect the follow-up data to determine if the change resulted in an improvement. (Note: evidence of actual improvement is not required — often in PI Activities an intervention fails to result in an improvement. The goal is to learn from that and try something different.)
    8. Submit your project to ABFM through the pathway that best supports your needs.

7. I don't have access to patient records after the visit or I can't run reports from our Electronical Health Records. How can I collect data?
    If you are not able to access patient records after the visit you will need to collect your data at the point of care. Data can be collected simply by recording the information you need on paper or computer file such as Word® or Excel®. If you cannot run a report from your EHR you or your staff can do a record review and record the information manually.

8. How long is the approval process for submitted PI projects?
    Applications are reviewed in the order received. Depending on the time of year, the review process can take anywhere from 1–10 business days before feedback is provided or a decision is rendered.

9. How do I submit a Recognition or Certification?
    Log into your Physician Portfolio, click "Access Performance Improvement Activities." Under Set Preferences find the Recognitions and Awards. Check the box that matches your recognition or award and upload a copy of the certificate.

10. How do I know if my institution is an Organizational sponsor?
    To find a list of approved organizational sponsors through ABFM, log into your Physician Portfolio, click "Access Performance Improvement Activities" and click on "View Organizations" at the bottom of the page.
    To find a list of American Board of Medical Specialties® Portfolio Program Sponsors visit **www.theabfm.org/portfolio-program-sponsors**.

    ABFM Additional Support
    You may always call the ABFM Support Center at 877-223-7437 or reach them through email at help@theabfm.org. You may also reach ABFM's Performance Improvement Manager at awilliamson@theabfm.org.