PROMs Tips & Tricks

Implementing PROMs can seem overwhelming, but thoughtful planning can help streamline the process. This document outlines practical strategies and best practices to support successful PROM implementation, improve patient participation, and integrate data collection into existing clinical workflows.

1 Start Small and Stay Focused

When implementing a PROMs program, begin with a limited number of validated measures that align with your clinical goals and patient population.[1]

- Start with 1-2 standardized PROMs (e.g., PROMIS, KOOS-JR, HOOS-JR) rather than attempting to collect multiple measures at once.[1]
- Focus on collecting data that will be used to support clinical decision-making, quality improvement, or reporting requirements.[1,3]
- Avoid survey fatigue by limiting the number and frequency of questionnaires whenever possible.[1]
- As workflows mature and staff become comfortable with the process, additional measures can be incorporated as needed.[1,4]

Tip: A smaller, consistently administered PROMs program may provide more actionable data than a larger program with low completion rates or inconsistent collection.[1,4]

2 Collect Baseline PROMs Before Treatment

- Collect PROMs before surgery or other interventions whenever possible to establish a baseline for measuring improvement over time and to help inform shared decision-making.[1,5]
- Baseline assessments are critical for evaluating outcomes, supporting value-based care initiatives, and meeting reporting requirements for programs that require both pre- and post-procedure data.[5,6]
- Whenever possible, send surveys electronically prior to appointments to allow patients time to complete them before arriving in the clinic.[1]
- Pre-visit collection can reduce clinic bottlenecks, improve workflow efficiency, and minimize the burden on staff during patient visits.[1,2]
- Develop a standard schedule for collecting pre-treatment and follow-up PROMs to ensure consistent data capture over time.[1,5]

3 Engage Patients and Key Stakeholders

Successful PROMs programs require engagement from patients, clinicians, staff, and organizational leaders.

- Educate patients on why PROMs matter and how their responses will be used to inform care, monitor recovery, and improve outcomes.[1,3]
- Share PROM results with patients and clinicians when appropriate to encourage engagement and demonstrate the value of participation.[1]
- Train staff on program goals and workflows so they can confidently support PROM collection and answer patient questions.[1]
- Engage practice administrators and leadership early to help secure the resources, staffing, technology, and long-term support needed for program success.[1,4]

4 Use a Multimodal Collection Strategy

Patient participation improves when PROMs programs are designed to be accessible, convenient, and meaningful to patients. Consider:

- Offering multiple completion options, including
  - Pre-visit electronic surveys (email, text message, patient portal)
  - In-office completion
  - Follow-up reminders for patients who do not initially respond.[2]
- Providing surveys in the patient's preferred language whenever possible to reduce barriers and improve understanding.[1]
- Educating patients on the purpose of PROMs and how their responses will be used to inform their care, monitor recovery, and improve outcomes. Patients are more likely to participate when they understand the value of the information they are providing.[1,2]
- Using automated reminders and follow-up outreach to improve completion rates over time.[2]

A multimodal approach can improve participation and support more complete and representative data collection.[2]

5 Build PROMs into Existing Clinical Workflows

PROMs collection is most successful when it's incorporated into existing clinical processes rather than managed separately. Key workflow steps include:

1. **Deploy surveys** to eligible patients at predetermined time points.[4]
2. **Collect responses** through electronic, in-office, or hybrid methods.[4]
3. **Track completion rates** and identify patients requiring follow-up.[4]
4. **Review results** to inform clinical discussions and decision-making.[4]

5. **Document data** within the EHR or other reporting systems to support clinical care, data analysis, and future reference.[4]

Tip: Clearly define who is responsible for each step of the process. Operational tasks such as survey deployment, completion monitoring, and patient follow-up may be managed by medical assistants, care coordinators, or other designated staff, allowing clinicians to focus on interpreting results and using the data to inform patient care.[1,3]

6 Use Technology Strategically

Technology can streamline PROM collection and reporting, but successful implementation requires planning, coordination, and ongoing oversight.

- **Use automation when appropriate** to reduce manual survey distribution, reminders, and follow-up activities.[1]
- **Integrate PROMs into EHR whenever possible** to improve accessibility, support clinical decision-making, and reduce duplicate documentation.[1,7]
- **Coordinate with organizational stakeholders early,** including IT, quality, compliance, and clinical leadership teams, to support implementation and long-term sustainability.[4,7]
- **Consider enterprise-wide PROM initiatives** to avoid duplicative data collection, workflow conflicts, or survey fatigue across specialties.[7]
- **Ensure compliance with organizational policies and data privacy requirements** when collecting, storing, and reporting patient data.[4,7]

References

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