



Healthcare

Turning Research to Clinical Practice

The United States encompasses some of the finest hospitals and best-trained medical professionals in the world. Our healthcare system is capable of delivering revolutionary, life-saving medicine that enhances the quality of people's lives. However, despite the sophistication of the U.S. healthcare system and the billions of dollars invested annually in research, our Nation lags behind others in certain basic outcomes such as infant mortality and life expectancy. Many cite the slow rate at which research evidence effects changes in medical practice for the traditionally inadequate return on research investments. Facilitating the transfer of research evidence into clinical practice and policy development is imperative, and government agencies and private granting organizations have begun to place greater importance on communicating research findings to practitioners and promoting knowledge uptake by providers, system managers, and policymakers.

Our Approach

The dissemination and adoption of evidence-based practices are critical parts of a continuous cycle of research, development, implementation, and evaluation. To assist in disseminating research findings and sharing evidence-based practices, ICF International operates several innovative resource centers for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and other federal agencies. Our expert staff builds bibliographic and programmatic databases that include all salient research and contain training literature, audiovisual materials, profiles of national organizations, descriptions of replicable programs, summaries of state statutes, and relevant grants funded. In addition to maintaining these resources, ICF transfers the information to providers, policymakers, researchers, and patients using the latest Web portal technologies, customer service lines, and outreach programs.

ICF also provides technical assistance to practitioners who adopt and implement evidence-based practices, delivering tailored technical assistance that meets program needs and respects time and financial constraints. Both proactive and responsive technical assistance services are developed and delivered in partnership with our clients, based on an assessment of need. Our technical assistance portfolio includes improvement advisor services, through which our experts help organizations enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. Using improvement model concepts, our staff incorporates evaluation and feedback mechanisms to ensure the technical assistance is on target and productive in achieving desired outcomes.

ICF also evaluates pilot programs and new initiatives to determine the impact of interventions in realistic settings. Our team develops customized designs based on the evaluation objectives and available time and funding. As appropriate, our experts engage in primary data collection through interviews, focus groups, and field surveys, and mine information from existing administrative data. ICF is experienced in applying rigorous experimental methods to measure program impacts. Additionally, our staff often conducts process and impact evaluations as complements to summative evaluations to reveal how services are actually delivered and the degree of variation among sites, which assists in interpreting the results of impact analyses.



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Featured Solutions

Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA)

BIAA is the leading national organization serving and representing individuals, families, and professionals who are touched by a life-altering traumatic brain injury. ICF transformed the BIAA library into an efficiently organized clearinghouse collection that is easily accessible to all BIAA staff and their constituents. Our staff reorganized the existing collection, developed formal selection criteria to guide the continued growth of the collection, and added new material to the database. ICF also gave recommendations to enhance the clearinghouse's retrieval and dissemination capabilities and expand the acquisitions network. In addition, ICF developed and delivered training on the new systems and procedures to BIAA staff.

Healthy Steps for Young Children

Healthy Steps is a national initiative to redesign primary healthcare for young children by providing a patient-responsive, developmentally oriented approach to pediatric primary care. ICF is responsible for overall program management, including oversight of the national evaluation of Healthy Steps on health outcomes and costs. ICF also provides technical assistance to operating sites, serves as the program office, and actively recruits new sites. (See www.healthysteps.org.)

Maine Obesity Primary Prevention Project (MOPPP)

With financial support from The Bingham Program and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, ICF designed and evaluated the MOPPP pilot test. This program provided clinical counseling on healthy dietary and physical activity patterns to pregnant women and their young children. Our team evaluated the MOPPP pilot project at four participating sites to determine if the information was being received and transmitted successfully from clinician to patient and if patients subsequently made behavioral changes. ICF found MOPPP was successful in changing provider practices as well as patient perceptions, physical activity, and nutrition behaviors.

National Evaluation Data Services (NEDS)

The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment established the NEDS contract to help foster knowledge transfer, uptake of evidence-based practices, and collaboration among the

public and private sectors along the federal, state, and local community-based treatment continuum. ICF conducted data analysis to provide scientifically based evidence to answer vital questions in the substance abuse treatment field. The team produced more than 100 products to help guide treatment practice. The technical reports explored a variety of issues of interest, including cost-benefit analyses of treatment, effects of treatment service components on outcomes, analyses of special populations, and HIV/AIDS risk behaviors.

Nutrition Education Intervention for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Clients

ICF assisted the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for WIC in Washington, DC. To assess the needs of African-American and Hispanic WIC clients, ICF conducted a literature review and focus groups that explored current eating habits, perceived nutrition needs, motivators and barriers to the adoption of healthy behaviors, and favored communication channels. Using these data, our staff designed an outreach plan with recommendations for culturally appropriate interventions, including a cooking video series and supplemental materials and an evaluation plan that identified specific measurable outcomes related to increased health awareness and the use of healthy cooking techniques.

Evaluating New Initiatives in Substance Abuse Treatment

For the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, ICF conducted the National Cross-Site Extension and Support Project. Our experts helped to design and execute evaluations of the Residential Women and Children/Pregnant and Postpartum Women Program, Juvenile/Criminal Justice Treatment Networks Program, and the HIV Outreach Program. The objective of these programs was to try new substance abuse treatment approaches and effectively treat difficult subpopulations. ICF worked with grantees and their local evaluators to develop consensus-based designs, outcome measures, and data elements for managing and tracking the programs as well as conducting cross-site program evaluations.

About ICF International

ICF International (Nasdaq: ICFI) partners with government and commercial clients to deliver consulting services and technology solutions in the energy, environment, transportation, social programs, defense, and homeland security markets. The firm combines passion for its work with industry expertise and innovative analytics to produce compelling results throughout the entire program life cycle, from analysis and design through implementation and improvement. Since 1969, ICF has been serving government at all levels, major corporations, and multilateral institutions. More than 2,000 employees serve these clients worldwide.

For more information, contact:

Laurie May
lmay@icfi.com
1.703.934.3273

ICF International
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031