

Enhancing State Policymakers Ability to Use Evidence

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Background

The Center for Evidence-based Policy at Oregon Health & Science University, in collaboration with the Milbank Memorial Fund, developed Evidence-informed Health Policy (EiHP) workshops to provide state policymakers with knowledge, skills, and resources for the use of evidence in policymaking. The EiHP workshops were developed in response to:

- Economic conditions intensifying need for new approaches
- Recognition of the value of evidence in policymaking
- Bipartisan request for assistance

Aim

Build capacity within state governments to use research evidence in health policymaking

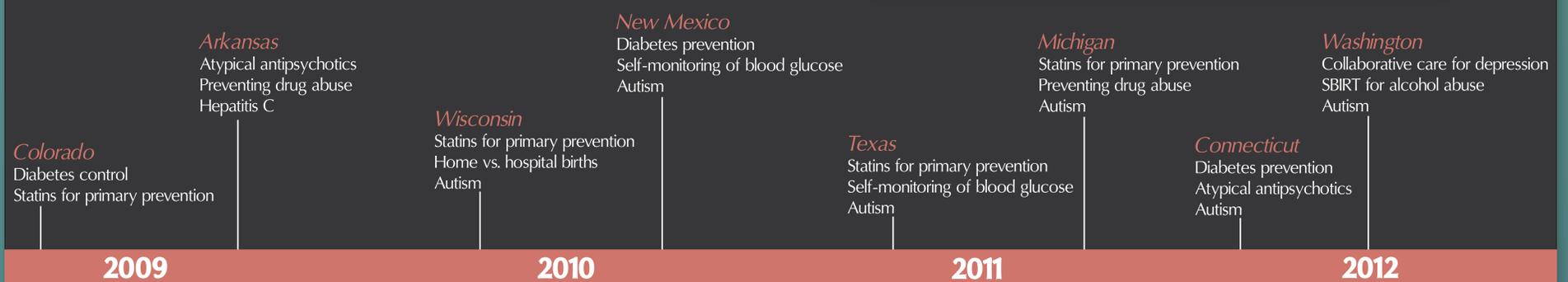
Methods

The two-day EiHP workshops:

- Introduce key evidence-based medicine concepts
- Foster relationships & collaborations
- Identify & introduce evidence resources
- Are convened by senior state officials
- Include legislative & executive branch representatives with influential roles
- Focus on health topics relevant to each state

Core Components

- Advanced preparation
- Team building & networking
- Focus on problems important to participants
- Planning for implementation



Results

The EiHP workshops give state policymakers a concise introduction to concepts in evidence-informed policymaking, and provide an opportunity to strategize about implementing these processes. Of the 172 EiHP participants, most completed evaluations.

Participants were better equipped to acquire, appraise and apply evidence, and challenge claims made by others, although some found the content too detailed for policymakers.

“My expectation for this workshop was higher because of the people involved, and you’ve exceeded my expectations.”

“I’m going to ask for real research instead of asking how many states do it.”

Evaluation Question (n=118)	Mean Response (range 0-6)
How much have you learned?	5.4*
How was the amount learned to the time spent ratio?	4.7 [†]
How were the course materials?	4.9 [†]
How were the small group sessions?	4.9 [†]
How were the large group sessions?	5.1 [†]

* 0=nothing, 2=not much, 4=some, 6=a lot
[†] 0=terrible, 2=not good, 4=good, 6=great

Lessons Learned

- Policymaker and researcher co-facilitators reinforce the message that collaboration is important
- Relevancy increases by identifying and addressing health issues important in the state
- Relevancy increases when senior legislators convene and select workshop participants
- Unscheduled time allows participants to enhance networking and trust

