

Coalition to Improve Diagnosis – CODE Partners Program Proposal

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) (now National Academy of Medicine [NAM]) recently highlighted the major public health impact of diagnostic errors in a landmark 2015 quality and safety in medicine report entitled [Improving Diagnosis in Healthcare](#). Their conclusion was clear and their language stark:

“Improving the diagnostic process is not only possible, but also represents a moral, professional, and public health imperative.” The report called unambiguously for “dedicated funding for research on the diagnostic process and diagnostic errors” to improve diagnostic safety and quality.

In support of that recommendation, the Coalition to Improve Diagnosis (CID) advocates for increased funding for research in diagnostic safety and quality. The Coalition recommends that the increased federal support be allocated to, and administered by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Further, the Coalition recommends the formation of a Centers of Diagnostic Excellence (CODE) Partners Program to begin operationalizing and implementing a coordinated research agenda.

CODEs would be partnerships of research ‘hub’ institutions and other key stakeholders with capabilities relevant to research in improving diagnosis. CODE Programs would focus on safety, quality, and implementation research and scalable operations improvement programs to speed national change towards improving diagnosis. Each CODE Partnership would bring a focused approach to one or more key research areas outlined in the IOM report (Ch. 8, Box 8-1).

We recommend a one-time appropriation to AHRQ to fund four to eight partnership CODEs at a level of approximately \$2 million per year each, and each for five years. An open grant competition would be held by AHRQ through a Request for Applications (RFA). Preference would be given to CODE proposals that (a) address one or more key areas of research for improving diagnosis, as identified in the IOM report; (b) bring together key stakeholders in the field as collaborative partners to enhance the proposed research program; and (c) demonstrate a prior track record of research success in relevant areas.

Research ‘hub’ institution(s) would develop and propose research initiatives in partnership with one or more independent partner agencies or organizations to enhance the strength of the proposed effort (Table). Each CODE application would outline a 5-year collaborative research program around its area of focus. Proposed research could include methods or metrics development, creation and validation of tools as potential solutions, or implementation and dissemination programs to test interventions.

Table. Examples of potential CODE Partners Programs that might seek to apply for research funding

<i>Possible CODE Research Focus</i>	<i>Research “Hub”</i>	<i>Partner Agencies & Organizations</i>
Electronic health record (EHR) standards related to diagnosis and test results reporting	Experts in EHR triggers, informatics, human computer interfaces	Health IT standards-setting agencies; EHR developers; quality standards and hospital accrediting bodies
Use of claims data, incident reporting, and structured root cause analysis to identify causes	Experts in claims data, root cause analysis, cognitive psychology	Malpractice carriers and healthcare risk management organizations
Big data mining for operational diagnostic error measures, process improvement, & diagnostic decision support	Experts in large data set analysis, dashboards, visualizations, statistics, computer science	Quality measure developers; integrated health delivery networks; regional health information exchanges; large clinical data research networks
Research in training and assessment tools to ensure diagnostic competence	Experts in education research, simulation, assessment methods	Professional societies and associations; credentialing & certification community