

Supplementary materials for

Vilendrer S, Brown-Johnson C, Kling SM, et al. Financial incentives for medical assistants: a mixed-methods exploration of bonus structures, motivation, and population health quality measures. *Ann Fam Med*. 2021;19(5):427-436.

Supplemental Appendix 1. Semi-Structured Focus Group Protocol

Perceptions of control over quality metrics

- Can you give us in a single word or phrase what you most like about being a medical assistant?
- Do you typically work with the same provider in clinic?
 - How many different providers on average do you work with?
 - How many different MAs does each provider work with?
- What quality metrics for population health are you aware of?
- Do you know your providers' performance on the quality metrics? If yes, how do you know this information?
- Which quality metrics for population health do you feel you have the most control over as a medical assistant?
- I am going to pass out a worksheet. Please flip to the side where it says "Medical Assistant Control over Quality Metrics" and answer the following question: How much control you as a medical assistant have over improving the percentage of patients meeting each of the following quality metrics? [Pass out worksheet].
- Which metric would you like to talk about first where you think you might have the *most* ability to improve?
- For this metric, can we hear from someone who put a high score? Why did you put this score?
 - o Can we hear from someone how put a low score? Why did you put this score?
 - o What are the workflow steps involved in improving this performance? What might be easier or difficult about those steps?
 - o What other thoughts do people have? What was surprising?
- What is another metric where you might think you have the most control? [Repeat activity above]
- What is another metric where you might think you have the least control? [Repeat activity above]

Perceptions of hypothetical bonus

We would like to shift the topic slightly to understand your thoughts on a bonus for MAs to improve quality measures.

- Thinking exclusively about your career as a medical assistant, has anyone ever the ability to earn a bonus in clinic before? What did that look like?
- To be clear, there are no plans currently to create an MA bonus at [INSTITUTION]. However, there is some thought that a bonus could help improve the quality measures at

[INSTITUTION]. I would like to get your thoughts on a hypothetical bonus. Please flip the sheet over, and I will read aloud a hypothetical bonus described.

- What does this mean to you? Can someone take a stab at describing what this means in your own words?
- What do you think about this bonus?
- How would this promise of a bonus change how you do your job?
- What reasons might make it difficult for you to earn the bonus?
- How would you improve this bonus program?
 - Is there anything you would add to the way this bonus is structured?
 - Is there anything you would take away from how this bonus is structured?
- What aspects attracted you most when considering this or any other MA job? [Remaining conversation on MA career ladders, outside the scope of this analysis]

Supplemental Appendix 2. Focus Group Worksheet

How much control do you as a medical assistant have over improving the percentage of patients meeting each of the following quality metrics?

Metric	Level of control				
	No control	A little control	Moderate control	A lot of control	Complete control
Diabetes eye exam	<input type="checkbox"/>				
BMI screening	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Control of high blood pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Screening for depression	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Use of imaging studies for low back pain	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Influenza vaccination	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Tobacco screening	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Breast cancer screening (mammography)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Colorectal cancer screening	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pneumococcal vaccination for older adults	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Diabetes A1C good control	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Hypothetical Medical Assistant Bonus Plan:

Medical assistants will receive a bonus of \$250 for every 3 months in which their partnering providers' patients achieve satisfactory goals (at least 80-90% compliance) for each of the following measures: BMI screening, depression screening, smoking screening.