Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project Marketing Plan: Summary of Recommendations for Two-Year Implementation Plan

Introduction

In researching and developing the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project marketing plan, GYMR gathered a significant amount of information relevant to the marketing of HCUP products. Based on this information, we proposed a set of strategies, tactics, and core components as well as major promotional activities. In recognition of AHRQ's need to operationalize the marketing plan and, simultaneously, prioritize work elements over a two-year period, GYMR is pleased to present this summary of recommendations. The purpose of this document is to provide a concise roadmap to guide and prioritize the implementation of plan elements, but not to limit it. It is important to note that these recommendations represent some, but not all of the tactics, proposed in the marketing plan. As the plan unfolds, we envision that AHRQ/Medstat will monitor its processes and progress, refine the marketing effort, and add new plan elements as appropriate. An estimated budget is included in the next section of this summary document.

Setting Priorities: Short- and Long-Term HCUP Marketing Plan Elements

Based on the research phase of the marketing plan development, GYMR made a number of recommendations at strengthening the overall AHRQ basis for marketing HCUP products and taking advantage of and enhancing relationships with current user audiences. During conversations with AHRQ/Medstat staff, it became clear that many of the proposed activities – such as revamping HCUP promotional publications to address the marketing plan objectives – comprise foundation-building tasks that will create an improved platform for the entire marketing effort. Thus, in the initial phase of the marketing plan implementation, GYMR proposes that AHRQ focus heavily – but not exclusively – on critical foundation building activities necessary to strengthen and sustain the HCUP marketing program. The following sections outline in bullet form each key plan component – proposing foundation-building efforts coupled with promotional activities that GYMR recommends. This plan can span a one or two year period, depending on the pace at which AHRQ wishes to adopt.

Partnership Building and Third Party Outreach

Foundation Building

- Conduct leadership briefings with identified organizations, along with a needs assessment, to develop a list of specific and feasible opportunities to maximize exposure to HCUP products and research.
- Create a finalized two-year timeline that reflects all desirable partnership activities, from initiation to evaluation.

Promotional Activities

- Identify and provide support for 3 sponsor events – i.e., program advertising, breakfast or lunch sponsorship, giveaways, tote bag inserts, etc.
- Research and purchase lists from leadership organizations to disseminate flyers or promotional post cards.
- Create and secure placements for three article(s) about HCUP products, services, and research for partner newsletter and print promotion.

- Conduct electronic promotion of traffic to HCUP Web site (coordinating links and/or outreach opportunities with third-party organizations).
- Purchase mailing lists from HCUP current and potential partners and disseminate flyers or promotional postcards.

Exhibits, Presentations, and Training Programs

Foundation Building

- Develop and regularly update a master calendar of HCUP activities that includes activities under the User Support Contract.
- Conduct a review of all exhibit materials, including the current booth or HCUP tabletop, demonstration materials, handouts, and other takeaways
- Determine which exhibit materials are outdated and need to be discarded and replaced by more current materials.
- Develop a timeline and plan for revamping the HCUP exhibit, revising existing materials, and creating new ones tailored to the marketing plan
- Determine available financial resources and schedule exhibits for meetings held by the priority organizations in 2004/2005 identified by the strategic marketing plan (AAMC, American Hospital Association, American Statistical Association, NCSL/ASTHO joint meeting).
- Review list of organizations identified by marketing plan for additional exhibit opportunities.
- Assess feasibility of providing concurrent HCUP technical training sessions or vendor presentations at 2004/2005 meetings.
- Review conference agendas for meetings where AHRQ will exhibit in 2004 and identify potential platforms for AHRQ HCUP staff presentations.

Federal Vendor Presentations

Foundation Building

- Create an attractive template PowerPoint presentation. This overview presentation should include some general facts and features of HCUP products, as well as the benefits and uses of HCUP data and testimonials from satisfied users.
- Meet with public affairs liaisons to promote availability of HCUP staff for presentations and secure assistance in getting the word out.
- Conduct research and develop list of appropriate contact persons within Federal groups to facilitate the promotion and scheduling of presentations to professional staff.
- Draft and send a letter of introduction to familiarize the key contacts with HCUP's general purpose. This letter could include additional introductory materials such as an informational brochure.
- Follow up with organizations to schedule presentation or to provide access to an HCUP staff member if there are questions.
- Maintain calendar of presentation dates and times.
- Create background profiles on organizations that schedule meetings.
- Support presenter in tailoring existing template PowerPoint and additional materials/research to reflect specific audiences' information needs.
- Develop survey/evaluation tool for Federal vendor presentations.
- Attend presentations, provide logistical support, and administer and collect surveys and/or one-on-one evaluations of presentations, review and summarize evaluations for Medstat/AHRQ.

Policy Maker, Media, & Legislative Outreach

Foundation Building

- Develop media and government contact lists (Hill staffers and health policy media).
- Draft list or calendar of research reports or papers that are anticipated to be released over the 6 months and send out to key health policy reporters and Hill staffers every quarter to keep them updated and constantly aware of HCUP studies.
- Conduct briefings with different groups of health legislative assistants to demonstrate the uses and value of HCUP data.
- Initiate limited media monitoring as part of process evaluation of HCUP marketing/promotion efforts.

Promotion Activities

- Hold press conference to publicize HCUP data findings, if there is compelling news to report to consumer media and third party groups.
- Conduct roundtable discussion to highlight HCUP data/new findings on key Federal policy issue.
- Develop and promote backgrounders/policy briefs on emerging health policy or healthcare topics using HCUP data.
- Disseminate news releases on major HCUP data reports to policymaker/Hill media and key Hill staffers.
- Develop handouts and a CD-ROM presenting the data in summary text and accessible charts and graphs that can be quickly accessed and used for presentations or briefings.

Web Outreach

Foundation Building

- Review options for making it possible for users to sign the data user agreements online, thus opening the door for HCUP users to purchase major database projects online for immediate use.
- Review and determine if HCUP publicizes the availability of additional data through external data links to qualified researchers.
- Develop an online “real time” searchable database of all HCUP information products, including reports and publications.
- Make available AHRQ reports using HCUP data available online and publicize their availability.
- Revamp and streamline HCUP Web materials to create greater impact and ease of use.
- Create an online tutorial workbook for new product users.
- Register HCUP site with search engines and embed meta tags within the site.

Promotional Activities

- Contact third party consumer health organizations and professional associations and request reciprocal web links for HCUP Web launch.
- Create and promote HCUP listserv and a template for e-newsletter.
- Develop a postcard mailer to announce the launch w/brief testimonials from satisfied users.
- Develop a press release, distributing it to key stakeholders, and asking them to post a notice on their site with the Web site link.
- Develop a flyer to handout at exhibits and presentations with testimonials from satisfied users and the Web site address.

- Develop and post a compelling notice on the AHRQ site promoting the launch.
- Distribute tchachkes and giveaways promoting the site at meetings and conferences.
- Develop an interactive HCUPnet tutorial for Website.

Messages and Materials Development and Dissemination

Foundation Building

- Create a comprehensive timeline to use as the basis of all HCUP marketing and promotion efforts, including presentations, exhibits, new publications and reports, and trainings.
- Update and consolidate HCUP promotional materials based on GYMR materials audit.

Promotional Activities

- Create a user-friendly workbook for use at HCUP technical and vendor presentations and training sessions.
- Create additional materials that can be tailored to specific HCUP target audiences.
  - Develop, publish, and disseminate broadly an HCUP Annual Pocket Index to key HCUP leadership groups, health and policy media, and other influential thought leaders or stakeholders
  - Develop a set of user-friendly fact sheets providing key information on HCUP products
- Develop dissemination plan for each product, new study releases and overarching communications, including HCUP fact books, news releases announcing new HCUP research and events, and HCUP communiqués covering all of the products.
- Develop and publish a list of AHRQ published reports using HCUP data w/brief content summary within key category areas.