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# Engaging national and regional partners to accelerate broad-scale implementation of nurse-developed interventions

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#### ABSTRACT

Only a small proportion of research-tested interventions translate into broad-scale implementation in real world practice, and when they do, it often takes many years. Partnering with national and regional organizations is one strategies that researchers may apply to speed the translation of interventions into real-world practice. Through these partnerships, researchers can promote and distribute interventions to the audiences they want their interventions to reach. In this paper, we describe five nurse scientists' programs of research and their partnerships with networks of national, regional, and local organizations, including their initial formative work, activities to engage multi-level network partners, and lessons learned about partnership approaches to speeding broad-scale implementation.

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#### Introduction

Only a small proportion of research-tested interventions translate into broad-scale implementation in real-world practice, and when they do, it often takes many years (Stevens & Staley, 2006). The field of implementation science addresses this challenge by identifying strategies to raise awareness of effective interventions and speed their adoption and integration into a range of practice settings (National Institutes of Health, 2016). To further accelerate the translation of effective interventions into practice, a growing number of implementation scientists are recommending that

researchers use marketing strategies to distribute and promote their interventions (Dearing, Maibach, & Buller, 2006; Kreuter & Bernhardt, 2009; Maibach, Van Duyn, & Bloodgood, 2006). One of these recommended strategies is for researchers to identify and partner with the national and regional organizations that are already promoting and distributing interventions to the audiences they want their interventions to reach. This underused strategy has potential to accelerate the broad-scale adoption and implementation of nurse-developed interventions. In this article, we describe five nurse scientists' programs of research and their partnerships with networks of national and regional organizations, including their initial formative work,

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activities to engage multilevel network partners, and lessons learned about partnership approaches to facilitate broad-scale implementation. The purpose of this paper is to describe how these nurse scientists developed strategies to speed the translation of nurse-developed interventions into practice.

#### Conceptual Framework

The examples provided in this paper is guided by a conceptual framework that integrates marketing strategies and Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Figure 1; Dearing & Kreuter, 2010; Kreuter & Bernhardt, 2009). The framework describes how nurse researchers partner with national and regional organizations to customize and promote their interventions; distribute interventions to local organizations; and provide support for implementation. Throughout the partnership, nurse researchers and their national and regional partners also learn from local organizations' experience implementing interventions.

#### Partner to Customize and Promote Interventions

The customer or audience is central to marketing science (Storey, Saffitz, & Rimon, 2008). For health interventions, audiences include not only the intended beneficiaries of the intervention (e.g., patients) but also decision makers and staff within the intended adopting organizations (Dearing et al., 2006). The audience may also include key decision makers within national and regional organizations that might promote, distribute, and support the intervention. To facilitate more rapid adoption, an intervention and its promotion need to be tailored or customized to intended audiences' needs and preferences and to fit within those audiences' practice contexts. Customization also includes packaging intervention products into attractive and ready-to-use formats and promoting them with messages that address the priorities of each intended audience (Dearing & Kreuter, 2010). Through partnerships with national and regional organizations, nurse researchers have greater access to their intended audiences and therefore opportunities to conduct formative research to understand their needs, preferences, and practice contexts.

#### Partner to Distribute Interventions

In the absence of partnerships, nurse researchers' options for distributing their interventions are often

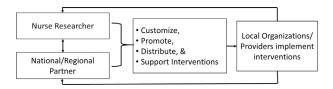


Figure 1 — Conceptual framework: National and regional partnerships to accelerate broad-scale implementation.

limited to presentation at conferences, publication in journals, consultations, or local partnerships. Although several websites disseminate interventions to a national audience, the translation of those interventions into practice has been limited (Hannon et al., 2010). Partnering with national and regional organizations provides an opportunity for nurse researchers to reach a large audience and to distribute their interventions through venues that their intended audiences are already accessing (Kreuter & Bernhardt, 2009). Partnerships further facilitate broad-scale implementation by coupling distribution with training, technical assistance, and other supports for local implementation of the intervention into practice.

#### Partner to Support Implementation

Audiences often need training on how to implement an intervention and technical assistance to troubleshoot problems as they arise on use (Kreuter & Bernhardt, 2009). Training may take the form of a manual, online videos, or in-person instruction. Technical assistance often is provided online or by telephone. By partnering with national and regional partners, intervention developers have the opportunity to build on existing infrastructure to support local implementation of their interventions more extensively and efficiently than may otherwise be possible.

## Partner to Learn from Local Organizations and Providers

Nurse researchers can learn a great deal from local organizations' and providers' experience implementing their interventions into practice. Researchers can learn how local organizations adapt interventions, strategies they use to implement and sustain interventions, and contextual factors that influence both adaptation and implementation. Local organizations also are an important source of innovative approaches to intervening (Leeman & Sandelowski, 2012). Nurse researchers can incorporate what they learn from local experience to further improve their interventions and the guidance they provide to support local implementation.

A range of national and regional organizations promote and distribute health-related interventions and provide support for local implementation (Maibach et al., 2006). For example, at the federal government level, the School Health Branch of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention promotes and distributes intervention guidance to state departments of public health and education who then partner with others to promote and distribute that guidance to school systems and support local implementation. The American Cancer Society and Oncology Nursing Society are national nonprofits that promote and distribute interventions through their state and regional offices and provide trainings to support implementation. The Veterans Administration and other national and regional health care systems promote and distribute

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