About the National Institutes of Health Pathways to Prevention (P2P) Program

The goal of the Pathways to Prevention (P2P) program is to host workshops that identify research gaps in a selected scientific area, identify methodological and scientific weaknesses in that scientific area, suggest research needs, and move the field forward through an unbiased, evidence-based assessment of a complex public health issue. P2P workshops are designed for topics that have incomplete or underdeveloped research and for which it is difficult to produce a report synthesizing published literature.

The P2P program is strategically located in the NIH Office of Disease Prevention (ODP), which provides the leadership, infrastructure, funding, and coordination necessary to conduct P2P workshops. This program was developed out of a need for a process that addresses topics with methodological weaknesses. An evidence report, which provides an objective description of the state of the science, a summary of ongoing research, and information on research needs, serves as the foundation for each workshop. The evidence reports are prepared by one of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality’s (AHRQ) Evidence-based Practice Centers.

Topic Selection Criteria

Topic proposals are submitted online and reviewed by the NIH ODP on a rolling basis. Workshop proposals are typically submitted by an NIH Institute or Center (IC), or Office, and may have multiple co-sponsoring organizations. Other groups, such as other government agencies or trans-agency workgroups, professional societies, and advocacy organizations, may also propose topics with an NIH IC or Office as a sponsor. The following major criteria must be met for a topic to qualify for a P2P workshop:

- Have a primary or secondary disease prevention focus.
- Have broad public health importance. Key considerations are the severity of the problem and the feasibility of interventions.
- Have limited published data, or incomplete or underdeveloped research.
- Have an insufficient evidence base for conducting a substantive systematic review (e.g., lack of randomized controlled trials).
• Have two or more NIH ICs or Offices committed to addressing the topic by participating in workshop activities (i.e., sponsor, organizational meeting, post-workshop meetings).

**Workshop Process**

Planning for each P2P workshop is carried out by the Workshop & Panel Chair and the Content-Area Expert Group. This group provides recommendations to the Workshop & Panel Chair regarding the questions that frame the workshop, the agenda, and nominations for panelists and speakers. After the questions have been finalized, an evidence report is prepared by an Evidence-based Practice Center of AHRQ. The evidence report provides an objective description of the state of the science, a summary of ongoing research, and information on research needs.

Over the course of the workshop, expert speakers directly address workshop questions in their presentations. Workshops feature several discussion sessions, in which open dialogue occurs among speakers, panelists, and attendees from the general public.

Immediately following the workshop, the panel convenes in executive session and develops a draft report. The draft report is posted on the ODP website, and public comments are accepted for 4 weeks. The panel may edit its statement for clarity, correct any factual errors that might be discovered, and revise the draft report according to public comments. The date for the release of the final report is posted on the ODP website after the schedule is set. (Additional information on dissemination plans can be found in the Dissemination section below.)

**Workshop Products**

Each workshop panel results in an evidence report and panel report on the workshop topic. Every panel report reflects an independent panel’s assessment of the medical knowledge available at the time the statement is written; as such, it provides a “snapshot in time” of the state of knowledge on the workshop topic. It is not a policy statement of the NIH or the federal government.

**Dissemination**

P2P workshop panel reports have robust dissemination:

• Draft and final panel reports are posted online.
• A press telebriefing is held with the release of the final panel report, enabling reporters to question panelists about their findings.
• The final panel report and a summary of the evidence report may appear in a peer-reviewed journal.
Panelists

Each [workshop panel](#) is intended to be an unbiased, independent group who gives balanced, objective, and informed attention to the topic. Panel members, including the Workshop & Panel Chair:

- Must not be employees of the U.S. federal government.
- May be knowledgeable about the general topic under consideration, but must not have published on or have a publicly stated opinion on the topic.
- Must not have intellectual conflicts, such as participation in statements by professional societies or participation in advocacy groups on the topic.
- Must not hold financial or career (research) interests in the workshop topic.
- Represent a variety of perspectives, including
  - Biostatisticians
  - Epidemiologists
  - Practicing and academic health professionals
  - Clinical trialists and researchers
  - Non-health professionals with expertise in fields relevant to the specific topic (e.g., ethicists, economists, attorneys)
  - Individuals representing public-centered values and concerns.

The panelists are recruited with the aim of appropriately reflecting a diverse set of professional and experiential perspectives within the workshop panel. Panel members are not paid a fee or honorarium for their efforts; however, they are reimbursed for travel expenses related to their participation in the workshop.

Speakers

Workshops feature speakers who are subject matter experts and have published and conducted research on the issue. Additionally, they may have strong opinions or beliefs on the topic. These experts present information directly addressing workshop questions. Where multiple viewpoints on a topic exist, every effort is made to include speakers who address all sides of the issue.