

Questions Colorado State Legislators Can Ask in SMART Act Hearings to Activate Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Introduction

This cue card provides legislators with a set of questions they can ask presenters during SMART Act Hearings. *SMART Act Hearings are a key opportunity to promote Colorado's approach to [evidence-based decision-making \(EBDM\)](#) in state government.*

These questions can help legislators better understand the *quality of existing research evidence being shared* as well as identify *opportunities for future research, evaluation, and data use*. By thinking about evidence as a continuum, legislators can ensure that the state is simultaneously using the best available evidence to inform decisions on practices and policies and working to test innovative and promising practices that can best serve all Coloradans.

How do I use this card?

These are questions that you can ask presenters during SMART Act Hearings. Questions are not in any order—select the most relevant questions from the “menu.”

Questions help you judge the quality of the research evidence being presented; understand how agencies are using research evidence alongside other factors like resourcing, cultural values, community voice, and feasibility of implementation; and identify opportunities to build new evidence.

What is EBDM?

Research evidence is not the only contributing factor to policy and budget decisions. EBDM is the intersection of the best available research evidence, decision-makers' expertise, and community needs and implementation context.



Menu of Questions

Understand What Evidence is Available

- What makes this a promising practice or policy?
- How is this practice or policy expected to drive change?
- How does community define the “success” of this practice or policy?
- How does this practice or policy align with your agency’s strategic goals?
- How does this practice or policy align with family needs and community priorities?
- What do we know about what is needed to support effective implementation of this practice or policy?

Assess the Strength and Quality of the Research Evidence

- What is the source of the evidence? Why is this a credible source?
- Did you consider one source or did you summarize data from multiple sources? If only one source, why was this source selected?
- How did you consider both quantitative and qualitative data?
- How does the specific data/research you are presenting fit within the larger “balance of evidence” on the topic?
- What conclusions are you drawing from the evidence? What makes these conclusions reasonable and well-founded?
- Have there been studies that have found something different?
- With whom/where was the study/research conducted? How does the landscape/population align with our local context?

Identify Opportunities to Build Evidence

- What additional information, if any, do you need to support decision-making? What do we not know about the problem or solution?
- What are you doing to build evidence on this practice or policy?
- What systems do you have in place to collect data on implementation and outcomes? What is your plan for learning from and sharing this data?
- How are you involving community in building evidence?
- Where are there opportunities to gather additional information or build research evidence? What do you need to make that happen?

