Research Questions

The central question guiding this program evaluation is: How does the CCEHS link IPCE to patient outcomes? This gap is critical to address, as it represents a missing connection essential to promoting the value of IPCE and its long-term success. More specifically, this program evaluation will seek to answer three related questions:

- Which components are essential in an evaluation and assessment plan to provide objective evidence of impact on patient outcomes? Which essential components are feasible to implement?
- Can new technology be leveraged to improve the analysis of evaluation data?
- What types of IPCE activities are more/least likely to achieve higher-level patient and/or health system outcomes?

Methodology

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation's logic model (Figure 4) guided this program evaluation and provided the overarching framework for strengthening and sustaining the CCEHS Evaluation Plan. A logic model is defined as "a systematic and visual way to present and share understanding of the relationships among the resources available to operate a program, the activities planned, and the changes or results intended" (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 1). Consistent with this approach, an outcomes-oriented logic model was used to organize and articulate how accredited continuing education activities were expected to contribute to learning, behavior change, and downstream health and system outcomes by aligning with the IPEC competencies, expanded Kirkpatrick Model and modern validity theory.

The model functioned as an ongoing evaluation framework that explicitly links program inputs, activities, and outputs to intended outcomes, emphasizing evaluation as a continuous feedback process. By visually displaying the interrelationships between educational activities and anticipated outcomes, the logic model supports monitoring, interpretation, and purposeful use of evaluation data over time. This approach supports clarity, alignment, and sustainability in evaluation design by reinforcing the intentional connection between educational interventions and desired outcomes.

The logic model was applied to analyze and systematically assess the current CCEHS Evaluation Plan. This approach supported intentional evaluation planning by strengthening alignment between educational interventions, evaluation questions, and appropriate levels of outcome attribution, thereby enhancing sustainability and interpretability of evaluation findings over time.

Our focus centered on Regularly Scheduled Series (RSS) because they represent 52% of learners, use retrospective evaluation, and include both CE and IPCE. The results informed a structured crosswalk to map evaluation questions to intended outcomes, identify gaps, and guide revisions to strengthen alignment between expectations and measurement.

Figure 4

Basic Program Logic Model Approach (W.K. Kell0gg Foundation, 2004, p. 3)