

Contact: Barbara Lambiaso
Project Manager, Communications

Phone 617.402.5023
Fax 617.924.0761
blambiaso@mhqp.org

**Greater Boston
Aligning Forces For
Quality Initiative**

Press Release

Greater Boston Unites to Transform Healthcare

Region selected by premier healthcare foundation to create substantive change for quality and delivery

Boston, MA, June 15, 2009. A coalition of organizations representing healthcare stakeholders throughout Greater Boston has been selected by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to participate in a planning grant to become part of the *Aligning Forces for Quality* (AF4Q) initiative. AF4Q is the Foundation's signature effort to lift the overall quality of healthcare in targeted communities, reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and provide models for national reform.

The Boston-area coalition, that includes consumers, providers, payers, employers, and local government representatives, has been awarded a six-month planning grant of \$200,000 to develop a plan of action to better align efforts and create concrete and long-lasting systems change that have an impact on the way care is provided, received, and paid for in the region. More than 35 Boston-area organizations, representing the breadth of the region's healthcare stakeholders, have committed to the Greater Boston AF4Q planning initiative, showing a groundswell of support for this opportunity.

"Healthcare reform in Massachusetts has created a new environment and level of commitment among stakeholders to work together to preserve and enhance the gains brought by this universal coverage," says Stuart Altman, Sol C. Chaiken Professor of National Health Policy at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and chair of the Eastern Massachusetts Healthcare Initiative (EMHI) Executive Committee. Altman, who co-chairs the Greater Boston Aligning Forces Initiative, adds, "There is widespread support for using the opportunity AF4Q provides to demonstrate the sustainability of healthcare reform."

For Release 6 a.m. EDT, June 15, 2009

more

“Greater Boston is primed to take great advantage of this opportunity,” says Barbra Rabson, executive director of Massachusetts Health Quality Partners (MHQP) and co-chair for the Greater Boston Aligning Forces Initiative. “Healthcare reform, combined with a rich tradition of collaboration and huge reservoirs of talent and expertise, positions Greater Boston on the brink of healthcare transformation. The Aligning Forces initiative offers a framework for focusing our efforts to meet this potential.”

Through a competitive process, Greater Boston was identified as a community best positioned to make fundamental and cutting edge changes to rebuild its healthcare system. Over the next six months, the Greater Boston community will establish a roadmap for developing key programmatic areas identified by RWJF. The AF4Q initiative takes specific actions to improve the quality of healthcare in communities including:

- Helping physicians improve the quality of their care
- Encouraging people to become better partners with their doctors
- Improving care inside hospitals, with special focus on the role nurses play
- Reducing inequality in the care for patients of different races and ethnicities

AF4Q, a long-term, comprehensive effort to improve the quality of care in communities, is the signature program in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s \$300 million commitment to improve the quality of U.S. healthcare. The program recognizes that though healthcare quality is a national problem, healthcare is delivered locally and fixing it requires local action. To date, RWJF has invested in 15 regions across the nation, including Albuquerque, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Humboldt County (CA), Kansas City (MO), Maine, Memphis, Minnesota, Puget Sound (WA), South Central Pennsylvania, West Michigan, Western New York, Willamette Valley (OR) and Wisconsin.

Greater Boston healthcare stakeholders are working together to build and deliver a compelling proposal to become one of the next AF4Q communities.

About Greater Boston Aligning Forces for Quality Initiative

The Greater Boston Aligning Forces for Quality (Boston AF4Q) Initiative is a multi-stakeholder collaborative with a mission to create substantive change and improvement in our region’s healthcare system. Massachusetts Health Quality Partners (MHQP) and the Eastern Massachusetts Healthcare Initiative (EMHI) are partnering to spearhead this effort. MHQP, the operational home for the planning grant, is a non-profit, broad-based collaborative that has been collecting and reporting on healthcare quality information for providers and the public since 1995. EMHI is a collaborative of hospitals, health plans, and universities with the shared vision for creating a high performance healthcare system for the region. The following 35+ organizations represent the broad range of stakeholders coming together to develop a transformative approach that will reduce disparities in care and improve the quality of care for residents of Greater Boston.

Supporting Organizations

Atrius Health/Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Boston Medical Center
Boston Medical Center HealthNet Plan
Boston Public Health Commission
Cambridge Health Alliance
Children's Hospital Boston
Eastern Massachusetts Healthcare Initiative (EMHI)
Employers' Action Coalition on Healthcare (EACH)
Foundation for Informed Medical Decision Making
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care
Harvard University
Health Care for All
Institute for Nursing Healthcare Leadership, Inc.
Lahey Clinic
Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors
Massachusetts Consortium for Children with Special Healthcare Needs
Massachusetts eHealth Collaborative
Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary
Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Massachusetts Health Quality Partners (MHQP)
MHQP Physician Council
Massachusetts Health Data Consortium
Massachusetts Hospital Association
Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
Massachusetts Medical Society
Massachusetts Organization of Nurse Executives
Masspro
Mount Auburn Hospital
Neighborhood Health Plan
Network Health
Partners Healthcare
Partnership for Healthcare Excellence
Tufts Health Plan
Tufts Medical Center
Tufts University
Winchester Hospital
