A Note from the Project Director

Leaders Committed to Collaboration

Healthier Roxbury: Coordinated Community Action

GB AF4Q: Bringing Resources to Greater Boston

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Selects GB AF4Q to Continue in National Effort

A Note from the Project Director...

I am pleased to announce that the Greater Boston Aligning Forces for Quality Initiative has been awarded a grant of $1 million over the next two years for the final phase of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q) initiative, a national effort to lift the quality and value of health care in communities across America.

I would like to thank the members of our Steering Committee and Leadership Team for their participation and support in developing an exciting proposal to the foundation that places Healthier Roxbury, our innovative community-based initiative, at the forefront of our 4.0 efforts. Doing so has resulted in a major shift in vision for the GB AF4Q community from the "Right care at the right time in the right place," to the triple aim of "Better health, better care, and lower cost." The triple aim is the context for a community-based approach to health and health care improvement that includes social, civic, education, recreation, faith-based and health institutions and services, as well as residents in efforts to improve the overall health of the people who live and work in the community. Healthier Roxbury is an exciting and multi-faceted program that focuses on community engagement and shared accountability for improving health focusing first on children with asthma and adults with diabetes. With this final phase of funding, we will be working with a number of new partners, including the Boston Public Schools and the Boston Alliance for Community Health as we move beyond the traditional provider centric model of improvement to a model that places the community at the center.

Read further in this newsletter to learn more about Healthier Roxbury and the work of the Greater Boston Aligning Forces for Quality. I can also be reached at lkirle@mhqp.org.
Regards,
Leslie Kirle, MPH
GB AF4Q Project Director

GB AF4Q Leadership Team: A Group of Leaders Committed to Collaboration

A Note from Barbra Rabson, GB AF4Q Co-Chair

MHQP is thrilled to continue the work of the Greater Boston AF4Q initiative with this last and final round of funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. It is gratifying to see what we have accomplished in the relatively short period of time that we have been participating in the National Aligning Forces for Quality Initiative, particularly around consumer and community engagement.

It has been my privilege to co-chair and work with a committed group of healthcare stakeholder leaders that is our GB AF4Q Leadership Team and Steering Committee over the past five years. At our most recent site visit with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the enthusiasm and excitement in the room for focusing our collective efforts over the next two years was palpable and energizing. It is a testament to our leadership that RWJF views the Greater Boston community as innovators in our collective approach to health and health care.

In these early months of the new funding cycle, we will be searching to recruit a new co-chair to fill the role previously held by Stuart Altman, who left our team last fall to lead the State's newly formed Health Policy Commission. We will also be reaching out to new members from the community-based sector to improve the depth and breadth of leadership, influence, and engagement.

Congratulations to the Greater Boston AF4Q Community on this accomplishment of continued funding from RWJF. I look forward to continuing our progress and work together over the next two years.

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GB AF4Q's Healthier Roxbury Initiative

American Diabetes Association
Atrius/Harvard Vanguard
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Boston Alliance for

Healthier Roxbury: Coordinated Community Action for Better Health

How can the principal of "it takes a community" be applied to health care system improvement and better health outcomes? In fact, what does health care quality improvement really look like from a community perspective? The Greater Boston Aligning Forces for Quality initiative is exploring these questions with its Healthier Roxbury project, an innovative community-based approach to improving the overall quality of health and health care for neighborhood residents. The hypothesis: that working with the community to develop and strengthen connections between hospitals, primary care practices, health centers, and community programs will result in better health, better care, and lower costs.
Why focus on Boston's Roxbury neighborhood? The health of a community depends on many factors, including access to high quality health care, the availability of healthy, affordable food, and the presence of safe public spaces and exercise facilities. While Roxbury has a solid infrastructure of programs, institutions, and groups dedicated to improving the health of community residents, its rates of hospitalization for adults with diabetes and emergency department visits for children with asthma are the highest among all Boston city neighborhoods.

Through the Healthier Roxbury project, residents, community leaders, health care providers, social service agencies, and government partners will be able to share knowledge about factors that are improving health in Roxbury, learn more about what is missing or not working, and explore ways to make measurable progress, starting with the health of children with asthma and adults with diabetes. Components of the comprehensive community approach include:

- Developing community-based indicators and measures for monitoring impact.
- Organizing for community engagement to improve care and chronic disease management.
- Employing a virtual, shared-benefits (gain-sharing) model to explore scenarios for regional health system change.
- Developing a road map for a Community Centered Health Improvement Institute that would provide a sustainable, collaborative, quality improvement infrastructure and learning environment.

Health care and community leaders see the project as a possible model for much broader engagement in improving health outcomes. "If this works in Roxbury, it has the potential to be scaled up across the city to reach other neighborhoods," says Barbara Ferrer, executive director of the Boston Public Health Commission. And what Tom Lee, MD, former chief executive officer at Partners Community Healthcare, Inc., finds most innovative and exciting about the project, is that, "Healthier Roxbury brings a new partner, the community, into a dialog on cost and quality that has traditionally been largely between payers and providers."

Healthier Roxbury will be a cornerstone of the final phase of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Aligning Forces for Quality Initiative in Greater Boston, and will be closely monitored for progress and challenges with the goal of ensuring that health care stakeholder and community commitments and resources are sustained and expanded, in Roxbury and beyond.
Aligning Forces for Quality 3.0: Bringing Resources to the Greater Boston Community

GB AF4Q has brought unprecedented resources to bear on our community through the Aligning Forces for Quality program. Beyond the AF4Q grant, the community has received additional funding in part because of its AF4Q designation. Here are a few of the benefits and accomplishments attained with the support of these generous resources.

MHQP’s Patient and Public Engagement Council has been developed and convened for the last two years as part of both MHQP’s statewide commitment and GB AF4Q’s regional commitment to engaging patients, families and consumer voices and perspectives to improve care. The Patient and Public Engagement Council has helped to integrate the patient and consumer voice into our work and helped change the conversation to ensure all GB AF4Q projects include patient perspectives.

Partnership with Consumer Reports to publish patient experience ratings of providers across Massachusetts

RWJF funded a special partnership between three AF4Q communities and the Consumers Union, including MHQP as part of GB AF4Q, to publish health care quality data within a consumer context. MHQP and Consumer Reports launched the insert in June 2012. The insert was available both online at MHQP’s website and to subscribers, and on the newsstand in the July issue.

This special MA edition of the magazine saw a 110% jump in newsstand sales in the Commonwealth, an unprecedented jump in print publication sales given consumer preference for online media. Patients and consumers alike responded positively to the ratings, noting this is information they want and need to make informed decisions about health care in today’s rapidly changing system. Reader feedback was extremely positive: 39% said they plan to change what they do or say during future doctor’s office visits and 25% said they felt better about the state of health care in Massachusetts after reading the report.

The success of this publication and partnership has led to additional work with Consumers Union to re-purpose the editorial content to reach a broader audience with varied health literacy levels, which we will be piloting in community health centers this fall.

Funding to implement a Super Utilizer Program in Greater Boston

Greater Boston’s participation in AF4Q brought $200,000 in funding for a two year program to address "super-utilizers," patients who make frequent return trips to emergency departments (EDs) or repeated inpatient hospital stays, as highlighted in a feature by Dr. Atul Gawande in The New Yorker in 2011. The project in Boston is leveraging a pilot community-based team program (Healthy Lives) out of the Brookline Community Mental Health Center in partnership with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. It has shown initial success at improving quality outcomes and reducing costs for super-utilizers through a combination of active engagement, care coordination, and wellness activities.
Assessing a Return on Investment for Patient Experience

Given the growing importance and demand for patient experience information, MHQP and GB AF4Q are building a business case for PES information. Using ROI modeling that is supported with funding from an AF4Q consumer engagement sustainability grant, MHQP hopes to gain insights about building a sustainable PES business model for providing patient experience information to consumers. The project will start this summer and run through next January.

Helping Patients and Physicians to Choose Wisely

MHQP was recently awarded a two-year grant from the ABIM Foundation to extend the reach of the foundation's nationally renowned Choosing Wisely® campaign, which focuses on encouraging physicians and patients to consider and talk about medical tests and procedures that may be unnecessary and that, in some instances, can cause harm. The ABIM Foundation has spearheaded the campaign with national specialty societies and Consumer Reports. The campaign partners have collectively developed materials for physicians and patients to help guide conversations about specific tests, treatments and procedures.

The Choosing Wisely effort in Massachusetts correlates to MHQP and GB AF4Q work as an alliance with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Aligning Forces for Quality program. MHQP is one of five regional health collaboratives awarded a grant from the ABIM Foundation that are also designated Aligning Forces for Quality alliances.