

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, May 5, 2011

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GREATER BOSTON ALLIANCE RECEIVES \$1.3 MILLION TO LIFT THE QUALITY OF BOSTON'S HEALTH CARE

*The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation selects Greater Boston alliance
to continue participation in national quality improvement initiative*

Boston (May 5, 2011) – The Greater Boston Aligning Forces for Quality (GB AF4Q) alliance announced today that it has been selected to receive a grant of \$1.3 million over the next two years from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's *Aligning Forces for Quality* (AF4Q) initiative, a national effort to improve the quality and value of health care in communities across America.

GB AF4Q is one of 16 organizations across the United States that has been designated as an *Aligning Forces* community. GB AF4Q has been participating in the initiative since 2010.

The *Aligning Forces for Quality* program was originally launched by the foundation in 2006 and remains the largest effort of its kind ever undertaken by a U.S. philanthropy. Through the program, GB AF4Q works to improve health care in Greater Boston by engaging patients in their care, publicly reporting on the performance of physicians and hospitals, and implementing quality improvement techniques. The foundation hopes to develop national models of reform based on the lessons learned by GB AF4Q, as well as the other *Aligning Forces* communities.

In this third phase of AF4Q, GB AF4Q will contribute to the development and testing of models of paying for health care as the alliance continues to build momentum to improve the quality of care delivered locally.

“As Massachusetts focuses on cost and quality in the next phase of health care reform, this grant offers us an important opportunity to bring together community and health care leaders and find ways to ensure the delivery of appropriate care – the right care provided at the right time and the right place,” said Barbra G. Rabson, M.P.H., GB AF4Q co-chair and executive director of Massachusetts Health Quality Partners (MHQP). “Our focus on patient and public engagement, reducing disparities and better integrating our health care system with our community gives this effort a fresh new approach.”

In the next two years, GB AF4Q and the 15 other AF4Q communities will take the tools of measurement, improvement and engagement and use them to demonstrate change outside their markets. The program will work to expand the fundamental, cutting-edge changes already implemented in local communities to meet the goals of a reformed health care system: better value, greater transparency and improved care coordination.

“The *Aligning Forces* communities are models of health care improvement. The community organizations working on this effort have pioneered ground-breaking concepts that are also being explored through federal reform and have attracted bipartisan support, such as physician performance reports, patient-centered medical homes, and of late, payment reform,” said Anne F. Weiss, M.P.P., team director and senior program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “In this next phase, communities will continue to make

measurable improvements in quality by placing greater focus on increasing the value of health care delivered.”

GB AF4Q, its leadership and its partners work to align efforts that have a direct impact on improving the health care system for people living and working in the Greater Boston area. For example, MHQP is nationally recognized for leadership and innovation in the development and large-scale implementation of performance measurement and reporting initiatives as well as reporting reliable, actionable performance data on clinical quality and patient experience to providers and the public. The Boston Public Health Commission built a system for collecting data on the race, ethnicity, language and education of patients admitted to area hospital and emergency departments in order to identify and address disparities in health and health care. This process has been adopted by the state to collect this information from hospitals across Massachusetts. The Eastern Massachusetts Healthcare Initiative has spearheaded efforts for interoperability and variation analysis among area hospitals and ambulatory care networks.

AF4Q is designed to drive quality improvement by aligning key players in local communities, and brings an unprecedented commitment of resources, expertise and training to turn proven practices into real results. GB AF4Q’s continued participation brings direct financial support and technical assistance and training from national experts, coordinated by the Center for Health Care Quality at The George Washington University, the national AF4Q program office.

Additional grant recipients include:

- Albuquerque Coalition for Healthcare Quality – Albuquerque, N.M.
- Alliance for Health – Grand Rapids, Mich.
- Better Health *Greater* Cleveland – Cleveland, Ohio
- Community Health Alliance of Humboldt-Del Norte, Inc. – Eureka, Calif.
- Greater Detroit Area Health Council – Detroit, Mich.
- Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati – Cincinnati, Ohio
- Healthy Memphis Common Table – Memphis, Tenn.
- Healthy York County Coalition – York, Pa.
- Kansas City Quality Improvement Consortium – Kansas City, Mo.
- Maine Aligning Forces for Quality – Augusta, Maine
- Minnesota Community Measurement – Minneapolis, Minn.
- Oregon Health Care Quality Corporation – Portland, Ore.
- Puget Sound Health Alliance – Seattle, Wash.
- P² Collaborative of Western New York – Buffalo, N.Y.
- Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality – Madison, Wis.

For more information about GB AF4Q and its work, visit www.mhqp.org.

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*The **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years, the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.*

*The **Greater Boston Aligning Forces for Quality Initiative (GB AF4Q)** is a multi-stakeholder collaborative working to reduce disparities in care and improve the quality of care for residents of Greater Boston. Led by Massachusetts Health Quality Partners (MHQP) and supported by more than 35 Boston-area stakeholders and organizations, its mission is to create substantive change and improvement in health care in Greater Boston.*